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## **LOCAL AUTHOR AWARDED FIRST UTAH AMBASSADOR OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE MEDAL.**

The Utah Educational Library Media Association (UELMA) is pleased to announce that author Jennifer A. Nielsen has been chosen by its membership to receive the first Utah Ambassador of Young People's Literature Medal. As the inaugural Utah Ambassador of Young People's Literature, Nielsen will travel the state over the next two years presenting to and visiting with young readers and writers to inspire a love of reading. UELMA recognizes Jennifer A. Nielsen for her award-winning body of work and tireless service to Utah's young people through her professional and charitable efforts.

Jennifer A. Nielsen is the #1 *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of more than 20 books for young readers. Born in Utah, Nielsen's early life was marked by a love for writing and reading. She attended Weber State University and graduated with a composite major in Theater Arts and Communication Education, and a minor in History. She and her family currently reside in Northern Utah.

Jennifer A. Nielsen's breakthrough as an author came in 2010 with the release of her debut novel, *Elliot and the Goblin War*. However, it was her subsequent series, *The Ascendance Trilogy*, which includes *The False Prince*, *The Runaway King*, and *The Shadow Throne*, that catapulted her to literary acclaim. Other notable books by Nielsen include *A Night Divided*, *Resistance*, *Iceberg*, and *The Traitor's Game* series. Nielsen's works have won multiple awards notably the Sydney Taylor Notable Book Award for *Resistance*, the Outstanding Achievement Award, and other Whitney Awards, and 35 state book honors and recognitions including awards from Washington, Georgia, California, and Utah.

Throughout her career, Nielsen has written compelling middle-grade and young-adult novels that explore a range of genres, from historical fiction to fantasy. Her works often feature strong-willed protagonists, moral dilemmas, and thought-provoking themes that resonate with readers of all ages. Jennifer Nielsen's dedication to crafting engaging narratives and exploring the complexities of the human experience ensures that her work will remain a source of inspiration for readers and aspiring young writers alike.

The Utah Ambassador for Young People's Literature Medal recognizes a respected author and/or illustrator either born or living in Utah chosen by the UELMA membership whose creative work represents the aspirations, imaginations, and stories of and for young people. Like the Library of Congress's National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, the Utah Ambassador is appointed to "raise [state] awareness of the importance of young people's literature as it relates to lifelong literacy, education, and the development and betterment of the lives of young people."

The Utah Ambassador of Young People's Literature program was made possible by a grant from the Utah State Library Division. Funds are provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act. Nielsen will be awarded the Utah Ambassador of Young People's Literature Medal this fall in front of a student audience. Schools in central Utah are invited to [apply for the honor of hosting the event here](#). Over the course of the next two years, schools in other areas of the state will be invited to apply for a free school visit by Ambassador Nielsen as she shares her inspiring message about the power of story and the love of reading.

**Contact UELMA President Gretchen Zaitzeff at [board@uelma.org](mailto:board@uelma.org) or at 385-270-2548 and Jennifer A. Nielsen at [jen@jennielsen.com](mailto:jen@jennielsen.com)**