

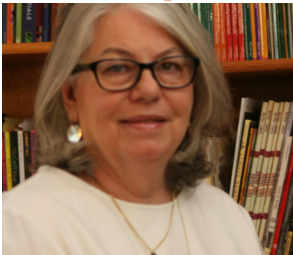
# Happy Holidays

## The Chicago Area Reading Association

*Supporting literacy learning since 1957*

December 2020

### Message from the President



Greetings Everyone,

To begin with, I want to wish everyone a warm and happy greeting during this winter season. I appreciate your hard work and understand how stressed and tired you might be.

Your resilience, hard work, dedication to your teaching and students' learning needs to be applauded. I want to give a special thanks to those working on the CARA board for their services to CARA, teachers, and students. I know that this fall semester has not been easy, and you have done a fantastic job. In November, CARA hosted the dynamic Allen J. Bryson. For those members who registered or would like to rehear this event titled "The Pathway to Decisions, Directions, and Destiny: Prize to Success," you can access it on our website and stream for the next few weeks. His positive energy and excellent information uplifted my spirit, and it seems like many members agreed. So to access the recorded event, go to this link, <https://www.carareads.org>.

During this pandemic, we are transitioning our format to be more active and supportive. Last summer, we hosted a virtual teacher sharing session that was well received and seemed to enable teachers to share. So on January 14, 2021 (Thursday), we will be hosting *the CARA Literacy Spa* (an unwinding form of remote learning). Members will be able to obtain one clock hour of PD. *The CARA Literacy Spa* will be an Ed Camp style event, with participants choosing the topics they most want to discuss. Please come and join us to replenish your spirit as we start this new year.

We at CARA want to hear from you and would like your input as CARA transitions. We would like to know what type of support, events, and professional development would help you. Your thoughts and ideas can help the CARA executive board plan and produce events for the coming years. Please go to our website [CARAREADS.org](https://www.carareads.org) or click this link to join <https://www.carareads.org/> and leave your thoughts and ideas.

There are a few other items that I want you to make a note about that will appear in this newsletter. One of the board members, Denise Gamble, will be sharing Winter Literacy and Writing Tips, and a former CARA Member, the Principal from Fulton School will share highlights from their Family Reading Night that occurred in November. Mary Grace Farina has some information about "The New Teacher's Guide

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 14, 2021

- *CARA Literacy Spa*  
4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m

February 6, 2021

- Literacy is a Political Act with Professor David Stovall

March 11-12, 2021

- Illinois Reading Council's 53rd Annual Conference

April 24, 2021

- Strengthening the Core with Fluency, Vocabulary and Language with Tim Rasinski - followed by Vocabulary Instruction, Literacy Instruction for the English Language Learner and Cognitive Demands of Reading and Writing for High School. Guest Speakers: Char Cobb, Kristin Lems and Greg Jones

to Overcome Challenges." Launa Mitten, a book publisher located in Florida, will tell us about her small business and some very unusual new books that her company posted.

Some of our upcoming events are:

Thursday, January 14, 2021, we will host the CARA Literacy Spa (an unwinding of remote learning). See further information about this later in the newsletter.

Remember to save the date for the winter event, which will also be on a Saturday, February 6, 2021. We will host "Literacy is a Political Act" with David Stovall from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm via Zoom.

Save the date for our big spring CARA conference:

April 24, 2021: Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA) will host Strengthening the Core with Fluency, Vocabulary, and Language featuring Tim Rasinski, followed by breakout sessions on Vocabulary Instruction with Char Cobb, Literacy Instruction for English Learners with Kristin Lems, and Cognitive Demands of Reading and Writing for High School with Greg Jones. This event will be from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at the Chicago Literacy Alliance, 641 West Lake Street, Suite 200, Chicago, Illinois.

Please join us for our fabulous upcoming events, and thank you for being part of CARA. Thank you for being hardworking and dedicated educators during this unprecedented time. I look forward to seeing you virtually at our events.

Happy Holiday and have a safe and restful winter break!

Becky McTague  
President of CARA

## Executive Board

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## Winter Literacy and Writing Activities for Families

Adapted from article - Winter Vacation: 10 Reading Ideas for Families by Lydia Breiseth in Colorín Colorado and 26 Ways to Visit Your Favorite Chicago Places Without Leaving The House by Chicago Parent Staff

Submitted by Denise Michelle Gamble – CARA Board Member

### Being together

- **Read together:** Look for some time to read together and talk about the books you read. If you have extra time, read a longer chapter book or children's novel out loud to your child. You will enjoy being together and discovering a good story.
- **Tell stories:** Use some of your holiday time together to tell stories from your childhood. Ask relatives and friends to share their own stories too. Storytelling helps children become better readers. **Family stories** are also an important part of your child's heritage.

### At the library

- **Visit the library online:** Check out online resources at <https://www.chipublib.org/kids-subject/kids-dbs-a-to-z/>

### The gift of reading

- **Give books:** Give your child a book for the holidays. It doesn't have to be new — you can share one of **your favorite books** or look for a special old book from a used bookstore! If relatives are looking for gift ideas for your child, ask them to give a book this year.
- **Look for other reading and writing gifts:** Give your child some **comic books, magazines, or special note cards** for writing letters. This is a great time to find something connected to your child's interests, like sports, nature, or art.

### Future Holiday travel

- **Make travel fun:** Look for maps and tourist books about different destinations. These are a great way to prepare for a future trip. Check out resources from National Geographic <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/> - .
- **Listen to audiobooks:** Listen to an audiobook from the library. (You can also buy books from **Audible.com** or iTunes.) Ask your child to help choose a couple of books.

### Writing ideas

- **Write letters and thank-you notes:** Help your child **write letters** or e-mails to relatives and friends. Show your child how to write thank-you notes for holiday gifts.

## Family Activities



- **Make lists:** Ask your child to help write shopping lists, activity ideas, or television and movie schedules. This is good writing practice — and a big help to the adults too!
- **Create plays:** Help your child develop characters and story plots. Listen to and view holiday plays that are online.

#### Book ideas

Take a look at these stories!

- [Snow Stories](#)
- [Let It Snow!](#)
- [Snow Days](#)

Even if your time is limited, a few extra minutes or hours reading together can make an important difference to your child. Who knows? You may even create a new reading routine for the New Year!

#### Museums, Theatre, Etc. In Chicago

<https://www.chicagoparent.com/play/indoor-fun/virtual-experiences-for-chicago-kids/>



Chicago Area Reading Association Newsletter



## **Mix it Up! A Simple and Fun Online Activity**

*by Laura St John, CARA Past President and Treasurer*

I've been starting the sessions of my drama based reading program in the Google Classroom with a simple but fun activity that my students of all ages enjoy: Mix it Up!

To play, I begin by modeling the activity.

I strike a pose in the confines of my "box" or "screen space" and hold that pose for the count of 5-4-3-2-1. Then I turn my camera off, also for a count of 5-4-3-2-1.

While my camera is off, I change something about my pose. Maybe I've removed my glasses. Maybe I've gone from sitting to standing. Maybe the serious look I had had in my original pose has turned into a frown. When I turn my camera back on, my students figure out what is different about me. Whoever figures it out gets the next turn.

After a few students have had a turn individually and we are ready to move on to the lesson, I ask the whole class to try. Everyone strikes a pose for the count of 5, then turns their camera off for the count of 5, and finally returns with a new pose.

A few things happen with this activity. First, most of my students become active participants and are laughing and enjoying themselves. To me, there is no better way to start our time together. Additionally, almost always, there is someone who doesn't participate. They don't turn their camera off or change their pose. Then I can see immediately that they're having a hard time engaging. I might ask them to help me identify the changes in the poses of their classmates, or might send them a private message and ask if everything is okay, and find out if I can offer any kind of support.

I think you'll find this activity easy to implement and a great way to bring focus and fun to your online classroom. Mix it up!



## **Book for Beginning Teachers and All Educators Released in October**

**by MaryGrace Farina**

### *The New Teacher's Guide to Common Challenges*

*The New Teacher's Guide to Common Challenges*, has been published and is available for purchase. "It's utilization of P-12 teacher expertise and creative utilization of networking and social media make it a unique and valuable resource for both teacher educators and new teachers," said Ken Zeichner, Boeing Professor of Education Emeritus at Routledge.

#### **Celebrating Teacher Voice**

The book has information that can be used by teachers of all age groups and has material that reflects rural, urban, and suburban school settings. The authors represent classroom teachers, department chairs, principals/assistant principals, curriculum directors, assistant superintendents, educational consultants, and teacher educators. Dr. Marygrace Farina, who sits on the Board of Directors of CARA contributed the piece titled *Get Empowered: How to Use Your Professional Learning Community* to the chapter devoted to *Professionalism/School Culture*, and the piece titled *Checks for Understanding: Maximizing Student Learning* to the chapter devoted to *Student Assessment and Data Literacy*.

#### **The New Teacher's Guide to Common Challenges Availability**

We hope this book and its wider online community brings teachers together to have professional conversations. We designed this book to leverage a high tech, high touch approach in order to foster and build a community of practice around new teachers.

#### **For more information on The New Teacher's Guide to Common Challenges:**

<https://www.routledge.com/The-New-Teachers-Guide-to-Overcoming-Common-Challenges-Curated-Advice/Quinzio-Zafran-Wilkins/p/book/9780367409791>



# Books in Review

BeaLu Books is an independent book publisher that seeks to educate and motivate young readers in every genre. Each title is crafted with the kid-reader in mind, providing content that supports and challenges K-8 readers to broaden their vocabulary and more closely examine the world around them. Our goal is to bring our authors' stories to life and produce books that a diverse group of young readers can both deeply connect with and derive inspiration from. Our team of editors, illustrators, and designers have years of industry experience. Our team includes current and former teachers, so we know how important teaching resources are. We provide the resources you need in our books and on our website at [www.BeaLuBooks.com](http://www.BeaLuBooks.com).

## *What Makes Me Feel, A Refugee Story*

Author Devendra Veda

Available January 2021

Through his books, author Devendra Veda aims to bring awareness, stimulate discussion, and encourage action on some of the issues children face today. In his debut picture book, Devendra builds empathy for the tens of millions of people whose lives have been upended by global conflict. Nearly half of those affected are children. *What Makes Me Feel – A Refugee Story* follows the lives of three children from different parts of the world as their lives are turned upside down due to conflict. Inspired by the true stories of millions of refugee children, the central characters of this emotional story must overcome tragedy and remain hopeful in search of a brighter tomorrow.

## *Cloudy Days, When Anxiety Hides the Sunshine*

Author Sarah Frank

Illustrator Katie Bell

Available now

Now, more than ever, kids (and adults) are coping with anxiety. Written in verse by teen author Sarah Frank and illustrated by teen artist Katie Bell, *Cloudy Days* introduces young readers to what anxiety is through the story of best friends, Tulip and Lily. Reading *Cloudy Days* is a wonderful way to start a conversation about anxiety. Kids who have anxiety will connect with Tulip and can see they are not alone in their anxiety. Kids who do not have anxiety will learn from Lily how they can help a friend who has anxiety.

Since they were young, both Sarah and Katie have lived with anxiety. They chose to represent anxiety as cloudy days to help kids understand that just like the weather, you have cloudy days and sunny days.

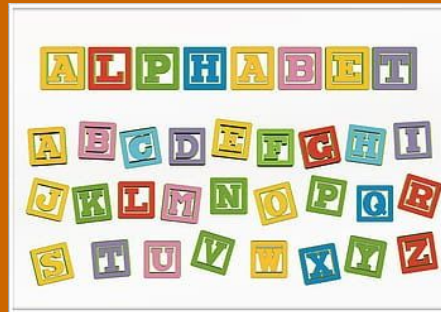
Facebook and Instagram: [@BeaLuBooks](https://www.facebook.com/BeaLuBooks)



# Fulton Elementary School Virtual Family Reading Night Elwanda D. Butler - Principal and Former CARA Board Member

Family Reading Night is officially celebrated across the state of Illinois on the 3rd Thursday in November. On November 19, 2020, Robert Fulton Elementary School joined in on the fun and held a Virtual Family Reading Night. Students, Parents, Community Members, Staff, and guests participated in this event. The Fulton team celebrated Family Reading Night by engaging in a variety of activities, such as Read Alouds, Literacy Games, Videos, Poetry session, and Raffles. Participants had the option of selecting activities in both English and Spanish. Principal Butler and Assistant Principal Coleman were excited about this event and all of those who presented and attended. Principal Butler and AP Coleman lead Read Alouds of their own with students and their families using the books "The Rainbow Fish" and "Dreamers".

Special guests who were in attendance included Denise M. Gamble, CARA Board Member, Javie Cervantes and daughter, representative from Alderman Stephanie Coleman's office, City Year Corps Members, and Lala Rodgers, Branch Manager of the Chicago Public Library, Sherman Park Branch. Students and their families got the opportunity to pick up a bag of books from Fulton to continue family reading nights at home. Feel free to visit the [fultonfalcons.org](http://fultonfalcons.org) website for future literacy events.





## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Literacy is a Political Act with Dr. David Stovall

Online Workshop  
Saturday, February 6



[Register Here](#)



### Strengthening the Core: Fluency, Vocabulary, Language with Dr. Tim Rasinski Keynote Speaker

Followed by Breakout Sessions



Char Cobb  
Vocabulary Learning



Greg Jones  
Meeting the Cognitive  
Demands of Reading and  
Writing in High School



Kristin Lems  
Language Learning

[Register Now](#)

## CARA Literacy Spa (an unwinding from remote learning)

We hope to see many of you via Zoom at our free upcoming event, the *CARA Literacy Spa*, on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. One clock hour will be available to registrants.

When we last met as a board, we talked about the stress and strain that our sector is feeling and wished we could provide our members with a spa-like retreat. While we won't have any hot towels or salt scrubs, we will provide a few self-care activities as well as an opportunity to unwind through discussion with your peers across the community.

This event will provide you with an opportunity to offer up the topics you'd most like to discuss, and then move among breakout rooms based on your interests. We hope that after a tough day, either online or in-person, we will be able to provide you with a few moments of the clarity and comfort we find through connecting.



## Not a Member?

Don't miss out on CARA News and Events! Join CARA and Illinois Reading Council today to ensure that you have access to all the wonderful professional learning opportunities!

- Discounted registration fees to all CARA and IRC events, including conferences!
- FREE members-only access to IRC's Wired Wednesday Webinars – great PD, and you can participate in your PJs at home!
- AND you can earn free clock hours!
- FREE members-only access to IRC's Book Clubs – great online book discussions with other teachers about some of the seminal professional books in literacy, and another PJ PD opportunity! AND free clock hours!
- Information about upcoming events from professional organizations throughout the state



Here are some good resources to support remote learning from the Illinois Reading Council.

Great ideas from trusted authors, teachers, and companies:

[IRC Resources for Remote Learning](#)



Chicago Area Reading Association Newsletter

