

Illinois Reading Council



Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

Communicator

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***"The books which help you most are those
which make you think the most."***

~ Theodore Parker

FROM THE DESK OF THE IRC PRESIDENT By Julie Hoffman

Greetings IRC Members,

The Illinois Reading Council's mission is to provide support and leadership to all who promote and teach lifelong literacy.

In doing so, we celebrate authors of childrens' and young adult literature and make every effort to invite authors we know and love to our annual conference and our webinars.

We make the same effort to include the professional voices of literacy experts and scholarly peer-reviewed researchers who add to our body of pedagogical knowledge and share our heart for lifelong literacy.

For that reason IRC is invested in changing our policies and procedures around our vetting process for inviting speakers and presenters to our conferences, professional development, and Wednesday webinars. Stay tuned!

Vision Statement

The Illinois Reading Council advocates for high-quality literacy opportunities that empower all learners. As a leading literacy organization, the IRC provides access to research, materials, and methodologies to teach literacy and promote lifelong learning. As an active well-organized system of local and special interest councils and state committees, the IRC provides a supportive network for grassroots involvement and the exchange of information for a diverse membership.

Professional Learning and Development Committee

By Laura Beltchenko, Chair

Quality, targeted and meaningful professional learning is what all educators require to stay current in practice. According to the [International Literacy Association](#) “Beyond research and evidence-based standards and high-quality preparation for future teachers, leaders, and specialized literacy professionals, *there is also a great need for robust and ongoing professional learning.*” 2019, p. 4

With this in mind, the Illinois Reading Council has a cadre of outstanding professionals who can customize for your district, school, or grade level, professional learning in literacy development.

Our literacy professionals are grounded in the beliefs of the professional learning organization, [Learning Forward](#). These beliefs are:

- “Professional learning that improves educator effectiveness is fundamental to student learning.
- All educators have an obligation to improve their practice.
- More students achieve when educators assume collective responsibility for student learning.
- Successful leaders create and sustain a culture of learning.
- Effective school systems commit to continuous improvement for all adults and students.”

Learning forward's vision, mission, and beliefs. Learning Forward. (2022, October 18). Retrieved Sept. 13, 2023, from <https://learningforward.org/about/vision-mission-beliefs-values/>

The IRC and the Professional Learning Cadre welcome your inquiries for professional learning and development in all aspects of literacy development. Our cadre members are located in differing areas of Illinois to support your need for quality professional learning for educators and administration. Please consider the services of IRC. This link will take you directly to the [IRC Professional Learning and Development Webpage](#)

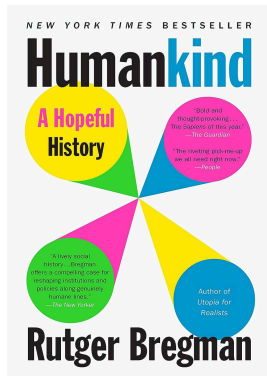
If you are in need of updated literacy articles, new professional books or websites that support your needs without having to pay for the resource then the [IRC Literacy Learning Links and Resource Padlet](#) is where you should click right now! This Padlet has been the effort of many educators making contributions from IRC councils around the state as well as individual teachers who have utilized a website, read an article, or found a resource that has benefited their delivery of instruction for their students. Updates are ongoing and new categories and resources are always being added. If you have a resource to share please complete the Google Form for [Share a Resource](#) and it will be reviewed and posted in the appropriate category on the Padlet.

#WhatIAmReading



I am reading *Humankind: A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman.

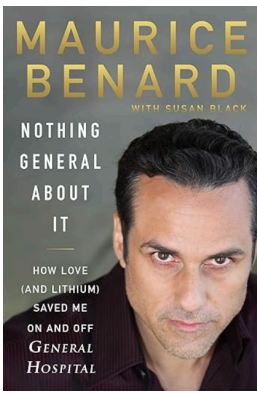
~ Cindy Wilson, Prairie State Award Committee Chair



It is an especially important book right now because we are so inundated with the sheer badness of people, singularly and collectively, and while I do not like to stick my head in the sand, I also do not want to believe that this is the best we can do as a people. Bregman addresses history, literature, religion, psychology, and geography (and probably a few perspectives I've omitted) to demonstrate that humans are not as intrinsically awful as we are often led to believe. It is a relatively easy read, and definitely a thoughtful one. For someone who finds themselves in a general funk these days, this book will help. For someone who is generally curious about the human race, this book will tip the mental scales in an upward position. Bregman finds the threads of humanity that reflect kindness and uses them to weave a sunnier tapestry than the one currently cloaking the world.

I am reading *Nothing General About It: How Love (and Lithium) Saved Me On and Off General Hospital* by Maurice Benard.

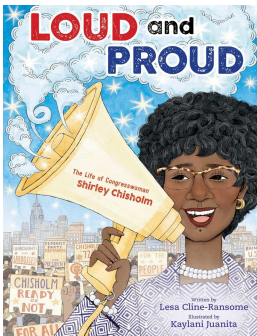
~ Diana Wilkie, IRC Treasurer



The Emmy-award winning actor who plays Sonny Corinthos tells his powerful personal story in this memoir. He shares the parallels between his own life and that of his character through his show business journey, family, and his struggle with mental health. This is a story of perseverance and acceptance of who you truly are. Benard now uses what he has learned to help others. He continues the conversation in his podcast, "State of Mind."

I am reading ***Loud and Proud: The Life of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm*** by Lesa Cline-Ransome and illustrated by Kaylani Juanita.

~ Julie Hoffman, IRC President



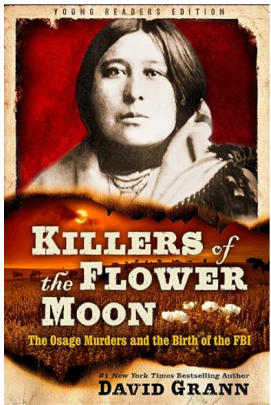
This beautiful picture book is a biography of the first African American woman in Congress. Shirley Chisholm was also the first woman and African American to run for president in the United States. Shirley Chisholm is one of my intellectual heroes. I feel empowered when I think about how she used to say, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."

Family Literacy Bookshelf By Barb Ashton

The crisp and cooler days of autumn have arrived along with Mother Nature's annual colorful display of autumn foliage. During November we're reminded that it's Diabetes and Epilepsy Awareness Month and Native American Heritage Month. On Veteran's Day we honor those who served our country as well as those who paid the ultimate price for preserving freedom. Let's not forget to "Give Thanks" for the many blessings we've received this year on Thanksgiving Day.

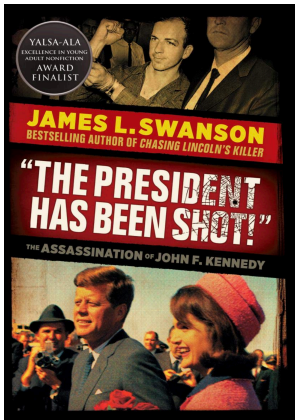


Remember by Joy Harjo, written in free verse, invites the reader to stop and reflect on the beautiful world that surrounds them and their place within the world. The poet, the 23rd Poet Laureate of the United States and a member of the native American Mvskoke Nation, encourages the reader to reflect on their family, nature, and their heritage. Within the poem, Harjo further reminds the reader that as inhabitants of the earth we are all interconnected and that each of us has a part to play within this world. The beautiful watercolor illustrations by native American artist Michaela Goade, a member of the Tlingit Culture, enhance the written word and make the message of the poem come alive. *Remember* is a great book to share with



Killers of the Flower Moon: Adapted for Young Reader Edition: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann is the story of the Osage Nation during what is known as the Reign of Terror period within their Native American community. It's the 1920's and oil has been discovered on their reservation in the state of Oklahoma. As a result of this discovery the Osage people became very rich. They built beautiful mansions, bought and drove luxury cars, formed successful businesses, and built schools, with some Osage parents sending their children to Europe to be educated. At the same time members of this Native American community who were targeted for their wealth began to lose their lives. Not knowing who would be next and with the number reaching over 24, the newly formed FBI took over the case to solve the mystery. This case eventually became the FBI's first major homicide investigation, for which they formed an undercover team that included the only Native American agent within the FBI.

While struggling to use early known forensic and investigative techniques, the agents began to put the pieces of the puzzle together. With the assistance of many Osage people the agents began to expose one of the most shocking crimes in American history. *Killers of the Flower Moon* is a true story of how greedy and prejudiced white men treated Native Americans and how the cases were eventually solved and brought to court. This is a very well written and informative book that provides many opportunities for discussion on injustice, prejudice, greed etc. The back of the book provides a wealth of information associated with the story. You can also hear David Grann explain how he wrote the book on YouTube.



On November 22, America will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. To understand this horrific event read ***The President Has Been Shot: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*** by James L. Swanson. This book is adapted for young readers to introduce John Kennedy, the son of a wealthy political New England family, war hero, family man, and U.S. Senator. The author tells Kennedy's story by giving a quick overview of Kennedy's early political life, election as president, and his first years in office that were marked by the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Space Race. The author then takes the reader to Lee Harvey Oswald, an impoverished, temperamental, attention-seeking individual, and his life in the days before and after the assassination. While on a political trip to Texas, riding in an open car motorcade, enjoying the cheering crowds, Kennedy is shot and killed. The pursuit, arrest, assassination of Oswald, the somber funeral of

Kennedy, and FBI investigation add further details to this horrific event that changed America. The use of charts, diagrams, maps, and numerous period photographs engages and shows the reader the real places that these events occurred. The back of the book includes source notes, a bibliography, and places to visit in Dallas, Texas. *The President Has Been Shot* is an interesting and fascinating book for students to read and would make a great resource for all libraries.

Looking Ahead

November 1: All Saints Day

November 2: Dia De Los Muertos – A celebration of the life and death of family members

November 4: Book Lovers Day – Relax and enjoying reading a good book

November 11: Veteran's Day – Thank veterans for their service

November 17: Word Peace Day – This day encourages us to be kind to others and be peaceful

November 23: Thanksgiving Day – Time to give thanks and be grateful for blessings received

November 24: Black Friday



UPCOMING PD EVENTS

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **November 1, 2023: IRC** is accepting submissions for the following awards and grants:
 - **IRC Service Award:** This award will recognize an outstanding IRC Leader for time, commitment, and service to the Illinois Reading Council.
 - **IRC Hall of Fame Award:** This award recognizes significant contributions to reading and reading education.
 - **Barack Obama Library Award:** This award is a classroom library valued at \$1,000 that is given to a teacher of 5th to 8th grade students each year.
 - **Family Literacy Award:** This award recognizes an IRC member who promotes and supports parent involvement in children's reading.
 - **Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award:** This award will recognize an outstanding teacher who makes significant contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities.
- **November 1, 2023: IRC Webinar on Liven Up Your Library: Inclusive and Engaging Programs for Teens and Tweens** with **Julia E. Torres** from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **November 1 to December 31, 2023: Macon County Reading Council** will host **The Body Keeps the Score Book Club – Part 1** via Google Classroom.
- **November 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024: Macon County Reading Council** will host **The Body Keeps the Score Book Club – Part 1 and 2** via Google Classroom.
- **November 2, 2023: Macon County Reading Council** will host **Teaching for Maximum Impact with Culturally Responsive Teaching & Leading Standards** from 4:15 to 6:15 pm at the Decatur Public Library, 2nd Floor Children's Auditorium, 130 N Franklin St, Decatur, Illinois.
- **November 2, 2023: Will County Reading Council** and **Lewis University** will co-host the **Fall Author Visit with Srividhya Venkat** from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at Lewis University, De La Salle Hall Room 250, One University Parkway, Romeoville, Illinois.
- **November 7, 2023: MID-State Reading Council** will host **How to Love Teaching Again Book Club** at 4:30 pm at Gill Street Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **November 8, 2023: Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA)** will host **Illinois State Literacy Plan** with Laura Beltchenko from 4:30 to 6:00 pm at National Louis University, 1000 Capitol Drive, Wheeling, Illinois.

- **November 14, 2023: West Suburban Reading Council** will host the **Book Gossip** with Kathleen March on the newest and latest literature books for children and educators from 6:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom.
- **November 16, 2023: Illinois Family Reading Night** is an annual statewide event sponsored by Alexi Giannoulis, Secretary of State and State Librarian, and the Illinois Center for the Book at the Illinois State Library that encourages families to spend quality time reading together.
- **November 16, 2023: Sauk Valley Reading Council** will host a **Family Reading Night with Project Vital** at the Sauk Valley Community College, 173 IL-2, Dixon, Illinois.
- **November 16, 2023: Fox Valley Reading Council** will host an **Illinois Reads Family Reads Night** from 10:00 to 11:00 am at Aurora Santori Library, 101 S River Street, Naperville, Illinois.
- **November 16, 2023: Lewis and Clark Reading Council** will host the **Books, The Blues, and Brews** from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Stubborn German, 119 S Main St, Waterloo, Illinois.
- **November 28, 2023: Western Illinois Reading Council** will host **Art Defined** from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Art Defined, 306B E Simmons Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

#WhatIAmReading: Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences. Creative pictures of you and your book in your favorite reading spot are encouraged.

IRC Highlight Reels: Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

Other Literacy Topics:

- Books the Kids Loved This Year
- My New Favorite Professional Books and Resources
- Skills and Strategies
- Current Research in Literacy
- And any other literacy topics that interest you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

QUICK LINKS

Visit the IRC Website

Full IRC Events Calendar

Latest on the IRC Conference

Available IRC Awards and Grants

Bring IRC PD to your School District

Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

