

Illinois Reading Council



Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

Communicator

1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2
Normal, IL 61761

Phone: 309-454-1341
Fax: 309-454-3512

Email: irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org
Web: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

 @IllinoisReadingCouncil

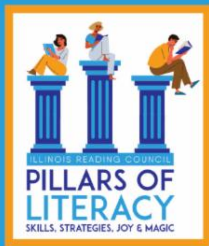
 Twitter @ILReadCouncil #ircreads

 [Instagram.com/ilreadcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/ilreadcouncil)

 [Pinterest.com/illinoisreading](https://www.pinterest.com/illinoisreading)

“Through engagement with others, literature lets us imagine what it would be like to be different.”

~ Denis Donoghue



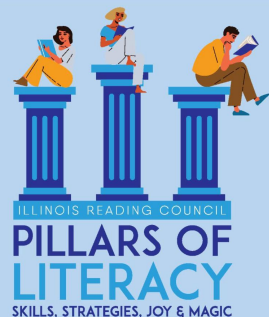
2024 IRC CONFERENCE March 14-15, 2024 Springfield, Illinois

The Illinois Reading Council is excited to share that registration and housing are open for the

**2024 IRC Conference,
Pillars of Literacy:
Skills, Strategies, Joy & Magic
on March 14-15, 2024
in Springfield, Illinois.**

Download the [2024 Preliminary Program](#) to find out all about the conference and all of the **featured speakers and presenters** that will be joining us this year at the conference. You will also not want to miss the **Wednesday Welcome Reception**, the **Hear the Authors Read Event**, the **Illinois Reads Author Luncheon**, and over **200 PD Sessions** that are being planned. To find out more about the conference, visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

2024 IRC CONFERENCE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM



March 14 - 15, 2024
Springfield Illinois



2024 ILLINOIS READS BOOK LIST

The Illinois Reading Council has just released the list of **Illinois Reads books for 2024**. Illinois Reads is a statewide program that promotes reading for all Illinois citizens. The program promotes six books in each of the six different age categories by authors and illustrators who have ties to Illinois. The books range from read-to books for infants to books for adult readers. Bookmarks and posters highlighting the Illinois Reads books will be available in early 2024. Order early as supplies are limited!

Birth-4

- *My Hair Is Like the Sun* by St. Clair Detrick-Jules and illustrated by Tabitha Brown
- *Mine!* by Candace Fleming and illustrated by Eric Rohmann
- *No Fair!* by Jacob Grant
- *You Are New* by Lucy Knisley
- *A Book About You and All the World Too* by Jean Reidy
- *Ethan and the Strays* by John Sullivan

3-5

- *Cornbread & Poppy at the Museum* by Matthew Cordell
- *The Enchanted Bridge* by Zetta Elliott
- *Etta Invincible* by Reese Eschmann
- *Josephine and Her Dishwashing Machine* by Kate Hannigan
- *Mayor Good Boy Turns Bad* by Dave Scheidt and Miranda Harmon
- *The Stupendous Switcheroo: New Powers Every 24 Hours* by Mary

K-2

- *Lila Greer, Teacher of the Year* by Andrea Beaty
- *3x4: TOON Level 1* by Ivan Brunetti
- *The New Bicycle* by Darcy Day Zoells
- *Not a Monster* by Claudia Guadalupe Martínez
- *You Are A Story* by Bob Raczka
- *How to Explain Coding to a Grown-Up* by Ruth Spiro

6-8

- *The Bravest Warrior in Nefaria* by Adi Alsaid
- *It Found Us* by Lindsay Currie
- *Restoring Prairie, Woods, and Pond: How a Small Trail Can Make a Big Difference* by Laurie Lawlor
- *Lo & Behold* by Wendy Mass and illustrated by Gabi Mendez
- *World Made of Glass* by Ami Polonsky
- *The Lost Ryū* by Emi Watanabe Cohen

9-12

- *Messenger: The Legend of Muhammad Ali* by Marc Bernardin
- *Wolfpack: A Novel* by Amelia Brunskill
- *Saint Juniper's Folly* by Alex Crespo
- *Whalefall: A Novel* by Daniel Kraus
- *Graceland Cemetery: Chicago Stories, Symbols, and Secrets* by Adam Selzer
- *If I Have To Be Haunted* by Miranda Sun

Adult

- *Good Night, Irene: A Novel* by Luis Alberto Urrea
- *A Taste for Poison: Eleven Deadly Molecules and the Killers Who Used Them* by Neil Bradbury, Ph.D.
- *King: A Life* by Jonathan Eig
- *I Have Some Questions for You: A Novel* by Rebecca Makkai
- *Ghostly: A Collection of Ghost Stories* by Audrey Niffenegger
- *On Rotation: A Novel* by Shirlene Obuobi

On December 8, 2023, Prairie Area Reading Council will host the **Illinois Reads Sneak Peek** from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Anderson's Bookshop, 5112 Main Street, Downers Grove, Illinois.

The 2024 Illinois Reads Program will also be featured at the **Illinois Reads Book Festival** at Westmont High School on February 3, 2024. Readers throughout Illinois are invited to this free event.

The Illinois Reads Program will also be featured at the annual **2024 IRC Conference** in Springfield, Illinois on March 14-15, 2024. Conference registration is now open for educators, librarians, and others interested in promoting literacy.

Visit www.illinoisreads.org to find out about more about each book and other upcoming Illinois Reads events.

FROM THE DESK OF THE IRC PRESIDENT

By Julie Hoffman

Greetings IRC Members,

It's autumn! It is a time that fills the senses. Our eyes take in the beautiful colors as the leaves begin to change. We can smell bonfires and pumpkin spice. We feel the warmth of flannels, sweaters, and hoodies. We can taste caramel apples and apple cider. And we can hear the ongoing debates as the "Reading Wars" continue.

It is a good time to take a deep breath, and reflect. Go ahead, breathe. Take a deep breath in through the nose. Hold it for a second. Now, really slowly, exhale through your mouth. Let's do it one more time. Deep breath in ... hold ... Exhale slowly. Reading wars. It sounds like a new thing, but it's been going on for decades.

The power of story has been part of our humanity from the beginning. We passed knowledge and wisdom to others through poetry, storytelling, fables, and folktales before we had stories in print.

In school, in the mid-1800s, children learned to read based on learning the alphabet, oral reading, and practicing enunciation (Smith, 2002). With a focus on nationalism, students were

reading nonfiction texts about history, math, and science.

After the Civil War, the United States settled back into security with music, art, and literature making their way into the school system. Educators were encouraged to let children choose reading materials, experience the stories, and connect with characters.

World War II presented a new set of issues in education. In spite of decades focused on reading instruction and silent reading, just as had been the case during World War I, there were "thousands of young men in the military who could not read well enough to follow the simple printed instructions for camp life (Smith, 2002, p. 251)." This generated an interest in systematic reading instruction, generating new terms such as *structural analysis*, *remedial reading*, and *comprehension*.

On the other side of this, World War II opened our eyes to the evils of the world and how power can be misused. Reading as sociology and reading in a democracy became major themes among those in literacy. We focused on reading for humankind—to find ourselves and each other (Rosenblatt, 1938/1995).

In 1957, when Russia launched Sputnik, American power was threatened (Alexander & Fox, 2008). Many blamed American schools and American education, demanding an emphasis on specific comprehension skills, individualized instruction, and newfound attention to phonics.

The rest of the 1900s were as "back-and-forth" as the centuries prior — whole language, authentic texts, alphabetic principle, letter-sound-correspondence, multicultural and diverse texts, multimodal texts, and close reading — back-and-forth.

With each "new" approach to reading instruction we have missed the mark and some of our readers have struggled. When we choose one method of reading instruction, at the exclusion of other methods, we fail to meet the needs of every student. When we are at war, there are casualties.

When we stand on the shoulders of the literacy giants who have paved the way, when we recognize that reading instruction is multifaceted, when we pay attention to the fact that different children learn to read through different routes, and when we respect all of the possibilities, more readers thrive.

Author Steven Layne said it best:

The idea in creating true readers is that we teach the skill and we teach the will. I am hoping you will decide how to integrate the will part into your reading instruction and whatever way works best for you, remembering that the skill and the will are, in my humble opinion, equally necessary if we want to create true readers (Layne, 2009, p. 146).

Let's make peace, and offer our students everything they need to thrive, as readers and otherwise. Why wouldn't we want them to have it all? Illinois Reading Council is a great place to find it all, as we support educators and facilitators of literacy learning by providing high-quality professional development, local literacy events, monthly webinars, and a phenomenal conference with access to authors of childrens' literature, young adult literature, and professional books for educators. Fill your toolbox with strategies, techniques, and pedagogy that will equip you to help readers be able to read and *love* to read. I know I am ready to take another deep breath and fill my senses with reading joy.

Happy autumn!

-Julie

Alexander, P. A., & Fox E. (2008). Reading in perspective. In M. J. Fresch (Ed.) *An essential history of current reading practices* (pp. 12-32). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Layne, S. L. (2009). *Igniting a passion for reading*. Stenhouse.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1995). *Literature as exploration*. The Modern Language Association. (Original work published 1938).

Smith, N. B. (2002). *American reading instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Advocacy Committee Update

By Cindi Koudelka and Julie Hoffman

In July, the IRC Advocacy Committee and IRC board members met during Summer Leadership and tabulated a list of our beliefs. This list went before the board and was unanimously approved as our core beliefs about literacy. These beliefs will drive our decisions, policies, and procedures. You will find this list on the IRC website.

IRC believes...

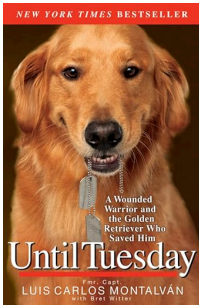
- ★ literacy is a fundamental human right.
- ★ literacy is a powerful tool for justice and equity and must be protected as a right for all students.
- ★ in diversity, equity, and inclusion because representation matters.
- ★ in protecting reader's rights, which include access to learning in a variety of methods, access to books, and access to choice.
- ★ in the importance of libraries and librarians.
- ★ in promoting the joy of reading, writing, and the power of story for lifelong learning.
- ★ educators need to be equipped with peer-reviewed, sustainable, research-based practices.
- ★ equitable assessment is a blend of informal and formal measures that informs instruction.
- ★ that learners have different strengths and needs, and therefore should have access to peer-reviewed, research-based strategies, methods, and practices within differentiated multi-tiered systems of support.
- ★ educators need access to high quality resources and professional development that prepares them to be flexible and adaptable to best serve their students.
- ★ families are an integral part of children's literacy lives.
- ★ in celebrating creators of children's literature and young adult literature.
- ★ that education is a valued profession, and therefore educators must be trusted and empowered as decision-makers.
- ★ in community, collaborative conversations, and collegiality.

#WhatIAmReading



I am reading *Until Tuesday* by Luis Carlos Montalvan and Bret Witter.

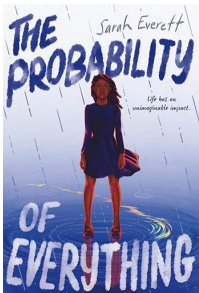
~ Kimberly Bork, Sauk Valley Reading Council President



Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him is about how a service dog and a wounded warrior save each other. It is written as a personal narrative by wounded warrior, Luis Carlos Montalvan. The writing is beautiful, with vivid detail. I have used excerpts with my class on writing so the reader can visualize the scenes. Fantastic book!

I am reading *The Probability of Everything* by Sarah Everett.

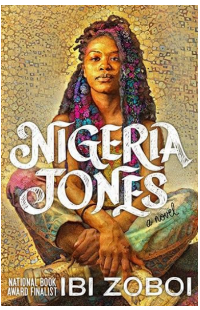
~ Alaina Weatherford, Starved Rock Reading Council President



Kemi Carter is an 11-year-old who loves scientific facts, especially probability. So, when everyone finds out that an asteroid is hurtling toward Earth and has an 84.7% chance of hitting the planet, she realizes that in 4 days the world as she knows it will probably end. Kemi decides to put together a time capsule that will capture her amazing family. This is a great read, and comes with a twist that the reader never sees coming.

I am reading *Nigeria Jones* by Ibi Zoboi.

~ Cindi Koudelka, IRC Vice President



Nigeria Jones: A Novel is a gorgeous book that explores the complexity of family, identity, race, and feminism all rolled into Nigeria's journey to be her own person.



NO TIME TO CONFERENCE? TRY COACHING

By Andrea Mear, USD 300 Literacy Coach

Quick 5-7 minute coaching sessions can provide the same targeted feedback to students that they would receive in a 10-15 minute conference. Coaching instead of conferencing allows the teacher to move freely around the room instead of being stationary throughout the work time. Below illustrates how coaching sessions can provide feedback to all students in a short amount of time:

Instead of pulling 5 students back to the table to work on the learning target, determine the theme of the text, while the other 25 students worked on a separate task, all students worked in collaborative groups to determine the theme while I took turns popping into each group to do the following three things in my 5-7 minutes of coaching specific to our learning target:

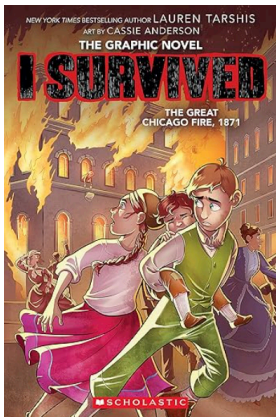
- **Observe their conversation and determine where they would need support or affirmation:** I noticed the group was struggling to figure out what the main character believed at the beginning of the text.
- **Ask a probing question that supports students in their analysis:** “How did the author use the character’s actions, dialogue, or thoughts to show you how they feel about ...”
- **Summarize the learning before moving on and offer additional guidance:** “To determine what a character believes about something or what their perspective is, we look for what three clues from the author?...” Now that you found what the character believes in the beginning, use the same strategy to analyze how they feel in the end.”

After coaching all groups, summarize the learning for the class and share out the analysis that was done by each group. Each group will have the opportunity to talk with the teacher, receive targeted feedback on their analysis, and receive recognition for their hard work. This method works with any learning target for teaching reading, writing, or any language skill.

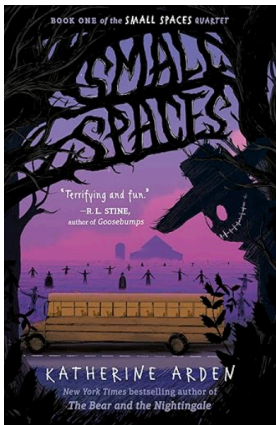
Family Literacy Bookshelf

By Barb Ashton

The leaves have started to change color, the farmers are harvesting their crops, and fall decorations and fests are welcoming drivers throughout Illinois. October has arrived. This month we're reminded about bullying and hazing prevention, school safety, fire prevention, and family history month. Columbus Day or Indigenous People Day and Halloween are also part of October's calendar of events.

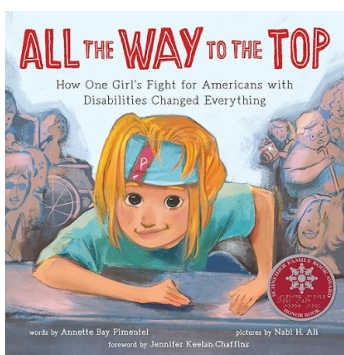


Can a city really burn to the ground as a result of a devastating fire? In the graphic novel adaptation of *I Survived the Great Chicago Fire, 1871* by Lauren Tarshis we meet Oscar Starling and his family as they move from their farm to the big city of Chicago. Shortly after arriving, Chicago is ablaze with fire everywhere. While trying to save himself and get back to his family, Oscar ducks into a building and discovers Jennie and Bruno huddled in a corner of a soon to be fire-engulfed building. While running through the streets, joining the fleeing people, and heading towards the lake, will Oscar and his friends ever find his parents? Read this fast paced and exciting graphic novel of the Great Chicago Fire. The back of the book contains additional information about the fire, as well as how the city rebuilt and became the major city it is today. You can also view this story on YouTube.



Halloween will soon be here. To get yourself into the creepy, screaming season, a good mystery story such as *Small Spaces* by Katherine Arden will certainly give you a bone chilling adventure. This is the story of Olivia "Ollie" Adler who finds solace in reading books in her favorite spot by the river, especially after the recent death of her mother. While at the park by the river Ollie spots a woman throwing an old book into the river. Ollie is able to snatch the book and run away. While reading the spooky mystery book Ollie learns that it is a personal history from the 1800s about a tale of disappearance and someone called "Smiling Man." On a class field trip to the Misty Valley Farm, which is known for its haunting history, Ollie discovers three graves and soon realizes they're the people she's reading about in the old book. She also discovers the lady tossing the book is the owner of the farm. On the way home the bus breaks down near a dark forest.

This begins a creepy and terrifying adventure as nightfall is fast approaching. Will Ollie and her classmates make it safely back to school and their parents? Read *Small Spaces* for a good spooky Halloween read that is fast paced along with some typical autumn ambiance. *Small Spaces* makes a good alternative to the *Goosebumps* series.



People and children with disabilities were often excluded and overlooked when it came to doing things that were taken for granted by normal people. ***All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything*** by Annette Bay Pimentel tells the story of young Jennifer Keelan's determination to make a change for people with disabilities. Needing a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy, she just wanted to do everything her sister could, such as crossing the street where the curb didn't look like "a cliff" or "joining her classmates in the cafeteria for lunch." Determined to bring about change and with her parents' encouragement, Jennifer at age 8 joins diverse activist groups. With her family's assistance Jennifer goes to protests around the country and

becomes part of the movement to get Congress to pass the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). Joining other people with disabilities, Jennifer leaves her wheelchair and begins the Capitol Crawl up the steps of the U.S. Capitol to advocate for the passage of the ADA Bill. Pictures of her climb became a major news event and were shown around the world. The ADA Bill was finally passed by Congress. With the help of this bill Jennifer continued her education, graduated from college and continues to advocate for children with disabilities. The back of the book contains additional information about disabilities, a timeline of the Disability Rights Movement, and a bibliography for additional reading. This is a book that can be read by all grade levels and a great book to share with parents.

Looking Ahead

October 1-7: Banned Book Week – Check out all of the resources for [Let Freedom Read!](#)

October 5: World Teacher Day

October 9: Columbus Day

October 12: Illinois Great Apple Crunch Day – Visit [Illinois Farm to School](#) for Activities!

October 16: National Dictionary Day

October 20: National Day of Writing

October 24: United Nations Day

October 23-31: Red Ribbon Week

October 31: Halloween



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

- **October 4, 2023: IRC Webinar on When Kids Can't Read: Strategies that Build Success** with **Kylene Beers** from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **October 10, 2023: MID-State Reading Council** will host S'More Book Talks at 6:30 pm at Gill Street Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **October 12, 2023: Southern Illinois Reading Council** will host No Matter How You Slice It, We've Got a Book For You from 5:15 to 7:30 pm at Pagliai's Pizza, 509 S. Illinois

Ave, Carbondale, Illinois.

- **October 15, 2023: IRC** has extended the date to submit Program Proposals to present at the 2024 IRC Conference planned for March 14-15, 2024 in Springfield, Illinois.
- **October 18, 2023: Starved Rock Reading Council** will host Book & Wine Tasting from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Prairie Fox Books, 719 LaSalle St, Ottawa, Illinois.
- **October 22, 2023: Fall 2023 IRC Book Club** begins with choice of books: *Teaching Fiercely: Spreading Joy and Justice in Our Schools* by Kass Minor and/or *The Final Strife: A Novel* by Saara El-Arifi and/or *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Conceptos Fundamentales* by David Schwarzer, Mary Petron, and Clarena Larrotta.
- **October 25, 2023: Will County Reading Council** will host the Technology Innovation and Teacher Resource Swap from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm at Lewis University, Lewis University, 1 University Parkway, Romeoville, Illinois.
- **October 28, 2023: Sauk Valley Reading Council** will host Trunk or Treat Event from 9:00 to 11:00 am in Dixon, Illinois.
- **October 30, 2023: Secondary Reading League (SRL)** will host the Day of Reading: Growing a Culture of Literacy with Adam P. Schmitt from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at Northern Illinois University, Naperville Campus, 1120 E Diehl Rd, Naperville, 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.

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

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

[Early Childhood Position University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#)

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is hiring for a specialized faculty member at the rank of instructor or lecturer to join the Department of Curriculum & Instruction. They are seeking candidates with expertise in early childhood education (birth through grade 2). Teaching assignments will primarily focus on reading and language arts methods courses in the online early childhood licensure program; other on-campus and online Curriculum & Instruction courses

will be assigned based on candidate's additional areas of expertise. To find out more, click on the above link or email the search chair, [Anne Pradzinski](#).

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:

