



FVRC August Newsletter

EMBRACING READERS, TEACHERS AND THE COMMUNITY

President's Letter

As I write this letter, we just wrapped up our second of three institute days. My school is celebrating its 60th anniversary, and much of the day had the underlying theme of a birthday party. We received swag, talked about community and gratitude, and sang our fight song (I am a high school teacher) 😊. As we got in the full swing of the day, we focused on formative assessments, EL programming, the Acceleration Act, using AI for the classroom, and PLTs. To say my head is spinning is an understatement, and to say I don't have questions or concerns would be untrue. Whether you have already had your institute days or they are coming up, you know this feeling.



In a matter of days, we will all jump feet first into filled hallways, engaged classrooms, busy libraries, and excited students. Adults and students, alike, have hope for the upcoming school year (even if they don't outwardly show it). This is probably my favorite time... the newness, the eagerness, the anticipation; I could go on and on!

I know you are all busy preparing for the end of summer and the start of a new year, and your Fox Valley Reading Council Board members want to support all of you as you go through the emotions of not just this month, but the whole year! We hope to help you keep the same energy and excitement (minus the head-spinning part) at the start of the school year.

Please take a minute to dive in to our August newsletter. You will find an invitation to a membership meeting in the beginning of September, details about the Fall Book Talk with Anderson's Book Shop and Crossland Literacy at the end of September, information on upcoming IRC events and grants and some absolutely amazing book recommendations!

My hope for each intertwined in a school, classroom, and staff who have students' best interest at heart. Please support one another and find the joy in each day!

Inspire Growth,
Camille Lutz, FVRC President

Meet Your FVRC Board Members!

President-Camille Lutz
Secretary-Katina Kastrantas
Treasurer- Diana Wilke
Membership-Kristen Walsh
Social Media-Ashley Falkos (not pictured)
Past President-Dawn Lutz



4th Annual Wine, Dine & Collaborate a Success!

In May of this year, Fox Valley Reading Council again held their annual Wine, Dine & Collaborate at Up North Wine Tasting Room in Geneva. As usual, it was a lovely get-together to celebrate friendships, colleagues, the end of the school year and to share some stories. This year there was a fun surprise as author Adi Alsaid joined us for some discussion about his books and his writing process! We enjoyed a glass of wine and a beautiful charcuterie board prepared by Amy of the mother and daughter

pair, Cathy Humphreys and Amy Goedken who run this cozy establishment. A free membership and some free books were also given out. Please join us again next year, and get ready for our winter event with Adi Alsaid!

Welcome New Members!

Welcome to our new FVRC members!
Edward Kim



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Member Spotlight: Megan Truax

1. What is your position and district(optional) you work in?

4th grade teacher, CUSD 308

2. Briefly describe yourself. I am starting my 18th year in the teaching profession, with this being my 8th year in my current

position. I am lucky enough to work in a school where I truly enjoy coming to work each day. Even though I'm now solidly in the "veteran teacher" category, I still absolutely love what I do. My favorite thing about teaching is that it's NEVER boring! Outside of school, I enjoy reading, hiking, bird-watching, walking my 4-year-old golden retriever, Lucy, and traveling with my husband of 16 years, Eric. I am also a proud auntie of 6 (soon to be 7!) nieces and nephews.

3. *What are you reading?*

I love reading most



smore

193

reading *The Sun*

Down Motel by Simone St. James as a physical book and *Finding Me* by Viola Davis as an audiobook. Because I believe it's important to be well-informed about books that my students would want to read, I'm also reading *Trouble at the Tangerine* by Gillian McDunn. She's one of my favorite middle-grade authors!

4. *What are some of your students' favorite books?*

Like most kids, my students love graphic novels! Recently, many have gotten into the *Amulet* series and the *Katie the Catsitter* series. I also enjoy reading aloud the first book in a series so that kids have a list of books to continue reading if they're interested. Series that my students have enjoyed diving into include the *Eerie-on-Sea* series by Thomas Taylor, the *Percy Jackson* series by Rick Riordan, and the *Winterhouse* series by Ben Guterson. Also, my text clubs last year really enjoyed *Hatchet* and *Stormbreaker*-- proof that sometimes the oldies are still the goodies!

5. *What strategy or instructional tip do you love and why?*

My absolute FAVORITE thing to do as a teacher is read aloud to kids. It is such a fantastic way to build community with your class, and it truly becomes something sacred that the kids look forward to each day. One thing I learned from Dr. Steven Layne is to carve out enough time to successfully "launch" a new read aloud so that the kids are hooked and can't wait to continue reading the next day. I also love that moment when I start to close the book on a cliffhanger and all of the kids start yelling, "NOOOOOOOO!"

6. *Why is reading a passion for you?*

Personally, reading is something I truly look forward to doing every single day. I hardly ever feel the need to turn the TV on; I find that curling up with a good book is all the entertainment I need-- bonus points if it's storming or snowing outside! I still vividly remember my elementary school librarian, Mrs. M., introducing me to Sharon Creech's books when I was in 5th grade. She instilled a love of reading in me that has only grown over time. When she introduced me to those books, she truly changed the trajectory of my life. I hope that I can give that same gift to my students.

Join FVRC!

Always wonder about the inner workings of Fox Valley Reading Council? Want to get to know some fun professional and involved colleagues and get involved yourself? Do you have some ideas about new educational practices, authors or speakers? Here is your chance!

Fox Valley Reading Council is inviting you to join us at a regular **Board meeting on Wed. Sept. 11, 2024 at St. Charles Public Library's Bisbee Conference room from 6-8PM**. We will have snacks, run our meeting, and welcome you with open arms.

Take a chance and check that box for Domain 4 on your eval and challenge yourself to be a more involved professional educator!

FVRC MEMBERSHIP MEETING SEPT. 11, 2024





BOOK TALK
*with Bert Crossland and
Anderson's Book Shop*
123 W JEFFERSON AVE,
NAPERVILLE
SEPTEMBER 28TH
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM



RSVP BY 9/26

Fall Event



FVRC Fall Book Talk

Eventbrite - Fox Valley Reading Council presents FVRC Fall Book Talk - Saturday, September 28, 2024 at Anderson's Bookshop, Naperville, IL. Find event and ticket information.

[FVRC2024FallBookTalk.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fvrc2024fallbooktalk-tickets-758484888888)

IRC Webinars

IRC is offering some incredible webinars this school year!

All webinars are for IRC members only and will begin at 7:00 pm. Members who watch the live or recorded webinars can earn one professional development clock hour for each webinar.

Mark your calendar



FREE IRC membership benefit.

<https://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/webinars>

193

Webinar Series
All webinars will begin at 7:00 p.m.

September 4, 2024 - Peter H. Johnston
Classroom Talk and Literacy Learning

October 2, 2024 - Felicia Shah
All in the Literacy Classroom: Friend or Foe?

November 6, 2024 - Jan Hachway
Understanding, Assessing, and Teaching Our Students with Dyslexia

December 4, 2024 - Kelly H. Cartwright
Why Don't My First (Third/Second) Graders Comprehend Text? Reading Strategies to Support Self-Regulated Comprehending

January 8, 2025 - Becky Anderson
Understanding the 2025 Illinois Reading Book(s)

February 5, 2025 - Edwinda H. Herbert
Applying the Science of Reading in Vocabulary to Build Comprehension and Engagement

March 5, 2025 - Chae Young
Nurturing Fluent Readers

April 2, 2025 - St. Clair Derrick-Johns
Empowerment Through Storytelling

May 7, 2025 - Gallitza Krasnani
Abstract Conceptualizations of Trauma

June 4, 2025 - Rachel Lendzinski-Roscoe
Students Should CHAT: Fostering Secondary Students' Ability to Independently Navigate Complex Texts

To register, sign into your IRC Membership Account at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org



Fall 2024 IRC Book Club!

Join educators from all over the state in the online Fall 2024 IRC Book Club! Choose one, two, or all three books!

Read, reflect on, and respond to *The Playful Classroom: The Power of Play for All Ages* by Jed Dearybury and Julie P. Jones and/or *Get Free: Antibias Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers* by Tricia Ebarvia and/or *Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals: Inclusive Teaching in the Linguistically Diverse Classroom* by Danling Fu, Xenia Hadjioannou, and Xiaodi Zhou.

Beginning **October 20th**, educators will participate in online discussions for the next seven weeks. With *The Playful Classroom*, participants will learn how and why they should bring play into the classroom to make learning meaningful, relevant, and fun. With *Get Free*, participants will explore a framework that can help implement transformative and anti-bias literacy instruction where students better understand themselves, others, and the world. With *Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals*, participants will examine the development, evolution, and current realities of educating emergent bilinguals and where the future of emergent bilingual education lies in an inclusive translanguaging pedagogy.

Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive 15 PD clock hours for each book club. Register by October 20, 2024, to participate in the book club. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$50, which includes IRC membership for one year. PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.



leaves breadcrumbs from chapter to chapter foreshadowing the reason why. It would be great to use as an example for teaching unreliable narration. If you enjoyed Jennifer Chan is Not Alone by Tae Keller, this would make an ideal companion novel!

Fox Valley Reading Council's Literacy Project Partnership with Love Smiles

Love Smiles is an Illinois-based 501 non-profit organization dedicated to bringing awareness to pediatric cancer while providing moments of peace to those diagnosed and their families.

We accept donations of any age books. If you would like to donate, contact dianawilkie@aol.com, or bring books to our Fall Book Talk at Anderson's Bookshop in September!

<https://www.love-smiles.org/>



Book Reviews

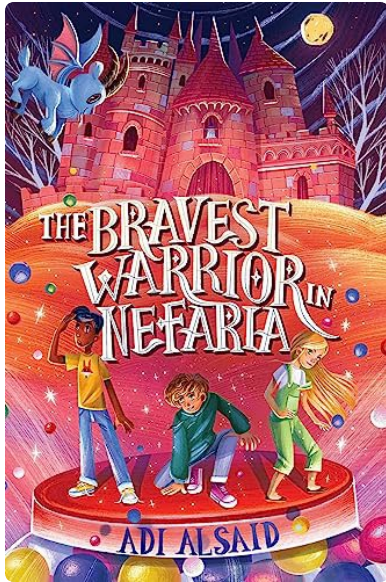
Picture Book

Angela's Glacier by Jordan Scott

As soon as she's born, Angela's father introduces her to her glacier. He carries her on his back up the icy expanse as the wind makes music of the snow and the water underneath. Over time, Angela gets big enough to walk beside him, and then, to go alone. She tells her glacier everything, and it answers.

But then, life gets busy. Angela's days fill up with school, homework, violin and soccer and friends. Until one day, Angela's heart doesn't





Middle School

Welcome to Nefaria, where nearly every day the kingdom faces another evil scheme.

Most are harmless, though, so the citizens of Nefaria simply learn to live with the latest hijinks and go on with their lives. This includes Bobert Bougainvillea, who is much more concerned with the fact that he seems to be invisible. From the teachers in his school to his classmates, almost no one notices Bobert, no matter how visible he tries to be. Then everything changes when Bobert follows his classmates to a cursed gumball machine.

Before he knows it, Bobert is sucked into one of Nefaria's most villainous evil schemes, a plot that has been a long time in the

making—too long, in the evil wizard Matt's opinion. And retreating into invisibility this time won't do, not when Bobert is the only one with the drive, knowledge, and—if his newfound courage doesn't fail him—bravery to foil Matt's plan.

YA:

Before Takeoff by: Adi Alsaid

James and Michelle find themselves in the Atlanta airport on a layover. They couldn't be more different, but seemingly interminable delays draw them both to a mysterious flashing green light — and each other.

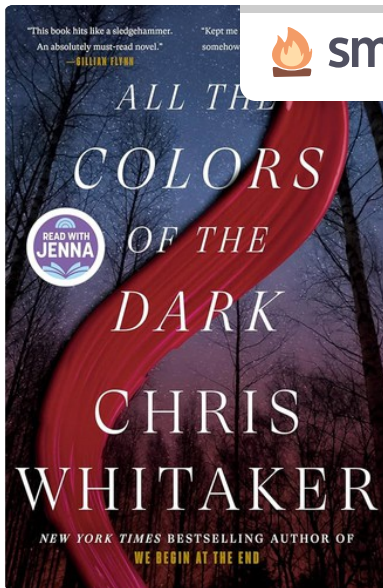
Where James is passive, Michelle is anything but. And she quickly discovers that the flashing green light is actually... a button. Which she presses, and it may or may not unwittingly break the rules of the universe — at least as those rules that apply to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta.



Before they can figure up from down, strange, impossible things start happening: snowstorms form inside the B terminal; jungles sprout up in the C terminal; and earthquakes split the ground apart in between. And no matter how hard they try, it seems no one can find a way in or out of the airport. James and Michelle team up to find their families and either escape the airport, or put an end to its chaos—before it's too late.

Adult

All the Colors of the Dark by: Chris Whitaker



Monta Clare, Missouri, girls are disappearing.

When the daughter of a wealthy family is targeted, the most unlikely hero emerges—Patch, a local boy with one eye, who saves the girl, and, in doing so, leaves heartache in his wake.

Patch and those who love him soon discover that the line between triumph and tragedy has never been finer. And that their search for answers will lead them to truths that could mean losing one another.

A missing person mystery, a serial killer thriller, a love story, a unique twist on each, Chris Whitaker has written a novel about what lurks in the shadows of obsession, and the blinding light of hope.

Grants That May Interest You

- **International Grant.** The International Committee of the Illinois Reading Council has created a grant to promote literacy projects internationally. Studies indicate that poverty levels and literacy rates are inversely proportional. By supporting our international community in the areas of literacy, it in turn improves our universal society. The IRC wants to support these efforts. The [Grant Application and Guidelines](#) are available online. The maximum amount per grant is \$500, and the application deadline is May 1. Grants will be awarded for the next fiscal year from July to June. Awards will be announced by July 15.
- **Literacy Support Grant.** The Illinois Reading Council will award financial grants to local and special interest councils and individuals council members for the purpose of promoting literacy development in the school and community, and/or providing professional development opportunities related to the improvement of reading and writing instruction. If fulfilling one of the above stated purposes requires a joint effort with another school, district, or other agency, letters stating their intended involvement are required from these agencies. **The grant application can be submitted through the [Online Grant Application Form](#).** There is no specific amount per grant. The amount awarded for each grant may be less than the amount requested. Application deadline is May 1. Grants will be awarded for the next fiscal year from July to June. Awards will be announced by July 15.

For more information, contact irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.



IRC Announces 2024-2025 Grant Recipients

REGION 1

Starved Rock	Brandy McQuen	\$500	The Power of One Book Project (International Grant)
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REGION 3

Fox Valley	Dawn Wolber	\$1,180	Book of the Month/"Libro del Mes"
Fox Valley	Diana Wolf	\$700	Building Empathy Through Book Clubs
Prairie Area	Katy Boehm	\$1,500	Writing Workshop with Kate Hannigan

REGION 4

Black Hawk	Lynn Keck	\$1,475	Community Reads
Western Illinois	Patricia Bertelsen	\$1,300	Collaborating for Success: Using Literacy to Strengthen the Home to School Connection

REGION 5

Will County	Lisa Kissel	\$1,500	Motivating Kids to Read with Informational Text
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REGION 6

Central Illinois	Danica Luttrell	\$250	Creating Community Through Rebecca Caudill Books
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REGION 8

National Road	Andrea Kinder	\$800	Ready to Read the Magnificent Monarch Books of 2025
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REGION 9

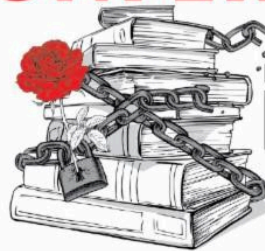
Southern Illinois	Melinda Graham	\$1,300	Keeping Cultural Connections with Books
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REGION 10

CIRP, Fox Valley, & Northern Illinois	Kristen Stombres	\$500	UnBelizeable Literacy (International Grant)
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2025 IRC CONFERENCE

March 13-14, 2025
Springfield, Illinois



ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL
**LIBERATING
LITERACY**
Embrace Love, Joy, & Empowerment

IRC Conference proposals are due September 1st & housing opens October 1st!



FVRC IS ONLINE!



Stay up to date with events and literacy resources!

Insta: @illinoisfvrc

X: @IllinoisFVRC

Facebook: Fox Valley Reading Council



illinoisfvrc@gmail.com

Fox Valley Reading Council

Fox is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

Created with  smore

Communicate quickly and effectively with interactive newsletters.

Smore empowers educators to connect with their community, streamline school communications, and increase engagement.

[Create a newsletter](#)