



FVRC April Newsletter

May 7, 2024

Letter from the President

I feel like so much has happened since our last newsletter! IRC put on an amazing conference in March, and we had some of our very own FVRC board members present! We collected more books (and received monetary donations) for our Love Smiles project! And finally, we hosted an incredible event with John Schu! As I think about each one of these activities, I am reminded of a quote:



"Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has." ~ Margaret Mead.

The dedication of the IRC board, FVRC board, authors, presenters and council members like you makes us all that small group of committed people changing the world!

Our year is not over! Please consider celebrating the school year with us at our annual Wine, Dine, and Collaborate event on May 17th at Up North Wine Tasting Room from 5:30-7:30 pm. From what I hear, an Illinois author will be our surprise guest that evening! (Find the link further in this newsletter.)

And, as the school year winds down, your FVRC board is working hard on next year's events. So, if you have any recommendations or would like to play a role in our events/council, please feel free to email me @ illinoisfvrc@gmail.com

Our May newsletter
all of the informat



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nts to look over

Inspire Growth,
Camille Lutz

Your 2023/2024 Fox Valley Reading Council Board:

Camille Lutz – President
Dawn Lutz – Past President
Diana Wilkie – Treasurer
Katina Kastrantas – Secretary & Illinois Reads Chairperson
Membership Chair – Kristen Walsh
Social Media Chair – Ashley Falkos

2024-25 Board Elections

Voting window closes on May 10th,

If you haven't voted yet for the 2024-25 Board click on the [link](#).



Welcome to Fox Valley's Wine, Dine, & Collaborate!

Fox Valley Reading Council (FVRC) invites you to join us for our 4th annual teacher appreciation night, Friday May 17 from 5:30-7:00 PM. YOU deserve it! This enjoyable opportunity allows you to experience Up North Wine Tasting Room in Geneva at 9 N 2nd St. AND decompress with friends and fellow educators. One free membership will also be raffled off for a non-member friend along with some free books. There will also be a chance to rub elbows

with a surprise IL author. Meet the FVRC Board and consider becoming involved. Donations accepted. [RSVP today!](#)



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Welcome to Fox Valley's Wine, Dine, & Collaborate!
 Friday May 17, 2024
 5:30-7:00pm.
 Up North Wine Tasting Room
 9 N. 2nd St. Geneva, IL



RSVP

Think about joining our Board and sharing your ideas!

Come network with fellow teachers and enjoy a drink and some snacks at FVRC's Annual Wine, Dine, & Collaborate!

Bring a friend and get the chance for them to win a membership in Fox Valley Reading Council!

The Illinois Reading Conference Review

The Illinois Reading Conference, held on March 14-15, 2024, in Springfield, IL, centered on the theme "Pillars of Literacy: Skills, Strategies, Joy, & Magic." The event brought together educators, authors, and literacy enthusiasts to explore various facets of literacy development.



The highlights of the conference included sessions led by notable authors, providing insights into effective literacy instruction, and fostering a love for reading. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with authors during luncheons and dinners, offering unique networking and learning experiences.

In addition to author council chapters,



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ing local reading tors. The expo

area offered attendees the chance to explore resources from vendors and publishers, enriching their teaching toolkit.

One of the valuable aspects of the conference was the opportunity for attendees to earn PD clock hours, contributing to their professional development and ongoing learning in the field of literacy education.

Overall, the Illinois Reading Conference provided a rich and immersive experience for attendees, emphasizing the importance of foundational literacy skills, effective instructional strategies, and cultivating a joyful and magical reading culture in schools and communities.

By Ashley Falkos, FVRC Social Media Chair

Recap of John Schu Event

In need of educational inspiration with Elphaba/Elsa vibes, I was blown away by FVRC's presenter John Schu's event at Geneva Public Library March 11! John Schu is an acclaimed local author from Naperville. This former elementary educator and public-school librarian has made a career out of advocating for the people and things he cares about most: kids, books, and the people who connect them.



He is the children's librarian for Bookelicious and the author of *This is a School* (2022), *This is a Story* (2023), *Louder Than Hunger* (2024), and *The Gift of Story: Exploring the Affective Side of the Reading Life* (2022).

So excited to dive into this all you can read book buffet!!!

By new member Jennifer Erickson

May's Book Reviews From Kristen Walsh, FVRC's Membership Chair

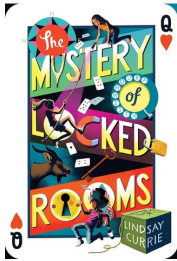


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en by Michelle

Elementary School

On a street of old houses, a big hairy spider is searching for a home with dark corners to hide in. But when he wakes up, he finds a hand reaching for him and a lady proclaiming that she has always wanted a kitten—and will name him Luigi! At first, a somewhat puzzled Luigi, used to being left alone to creep and dangle and spin webs, resists her kind advances. But soon, tasty breakfasts and getting tucked into bed — no one's ever wished him good night before — have him thinking that kittens surely live magical lives. He decides to be a kitten, but how long can he keep up his façade, and what might be at stake in pretending to be someone you're not? This beautiful story is marked by humor and depth, endearing characters, and the assurance that the right people will accept and adore us, unconditionally, just as we are.



The Mystery of Locked Rooms by Lindsay Currie

Middle Grade

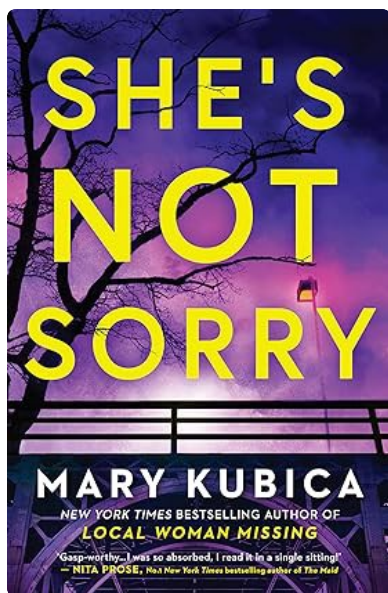
Crack the codes. Find the treasure. Escape the house. New from author Lindsay Currie comes an action-packed adventure about three friends who team up to find a hidden treasure in an abandoned 1950's funhouse. Twelve-year-old Sarah Greene wants nothing more from her seventh-grade year than to beat the hardest escape room left in her town with her best friends, West and Hannah. But when a foreclosure notice shows up on Sarah's front door, everything changes. Since her father became ill two years ago, things have been bad, but not lose your house bad...until now. Sarah feels helpless until the day Hannah mentions a treasure rumored to be hidden in the walls of an abandoned funhouse. According to legend, Hans, Stefan and Karl Stein were orphaned at eight years old and lived with different families until they were able to reunite as adults. Their dream was to build the most epic funhouse in existence. They wanted their experience to be more than mirror mazes and optical illusions, so they not only created elaborate riddles and secret passages, but they also claimed to have hidden a treasure inside the funhouse. Once in, Sarah, West and Hannah realize the house is unlike any escape room they've attempted. There are challenges, yes, but they feel personal. Like the triplets knew who would get in. It seems impossible, but so does everything about the house. As soon as they're in, she immediately worries that attempting the funhouse is a bad idea but Sarah has no choice ... since her future is at stake.



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by Jackson

Eighteen-year-old Bel has lived her whole life in the shadow of her mom's mysterious disappearance. Sixteen years ago, Rachel Price vanished and young Bel was the only witness, but she has no memory of it. Rachel is gone, long presumed dead, and Bel wishes everyone would just move on. However, the case is dredged up from the past when the Price family agrees to a true crime documentary. Bel can't wait for filming to end, for life to go back to normal. And then the impossible happens. Rachel Price reappears, and life will never be normal again. Rachel has an unbelievable story about what happened to her. Unbelievable, because Bel isn't sure it's real. If Rachel is lying, then where has she been all this time? And—could she be dangerous? With the cameras still rolling, Bel must uncover the truth about her mother, and find out why Rachel Price really came back from the dead.



She's Not Sorry Paperback by Mary Kubica

Adult

Meghan Michaels is trying to find balance between being a single mom to a teenage daughter and working as a full time nurse. While on duty at the hospital one day, a patient named Caitlin arrives in a coma with a traumatic brain injury, having jumped from a bridge and plunging over twenty feet to the train tracks below. When a witness comes forward with shocking details about the fall, it calls everything they know into question. Was Caitlin pushed and if so, by whom and why? Meghan has always tried to stay emotionally detached from her patients, but this time, she mistakenly lets herself get too close until she's deeply entangled in Caitlin's and her family's lives. Only when it's too late, does she

realize that she and her daughter could be the next victims.

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.

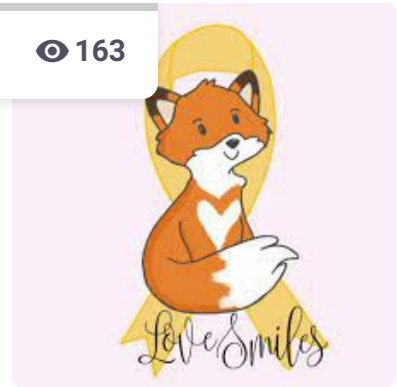
This month, we delivered several boxes of books from Maria Walther, John Schu and Ashley Falkos. THANK YOU! And also thank you to members for cash donations. We appreciate you!

We accept donations
contact [dianawilk](#)
event.



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



Welcome to our Newest Members!

Our membership keeps growing!

Rebecca Adamitis

Kaley Aughenbaugh

Simona Bardan

Andy Barrett

Brandon Biggs

Jeff Craig

Michelle Cufu

Michelle Dixon

Paul Gordon

Linda Hansen

Susan Harkin

Jennifer Norrell

Suzanne Johnson

Andalib Khelghati

Tom Kim

Annette LaVine

Todd Leden

Kristi Mathre

Esther Mongan

Rachel Pinkepank

Jennifer Erickson

Shannon James

Juliette Khames

Heidi Padjasek

Brittany Signa

Jessica Walsh

Courtney Wagner





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Become a Member and Enjoy the Benefits!

Join the **Illinois Reading Council** to promote reading and literacy for all ages.

We hope you will consider becoming a member of the Illinois Reading Council. IRC offers parents, teachers, and communities the opportunity to share the fun of literacy for all ages through local and statewide events. IRC also offers a discount to preservice teachers who have not yet been certified in the teaching profession and are working toward an initial teaching certificate.

What does your membership include?

The Illinois Reading Council publishes newsletters and journals. These publications provide members with current news, events and research. Members also have access to empowering literacy webinars throughout the school year and opportunities to participate in online book clubs. The price of joining a local or special council is included in the \$50 fee.

FVRC host local events such as speakers and Family Reading Night at a local libraries. It's a great way to network and make new friends in the education field. We are always looking for new members to join our FVRC board.

Join today with the [Online Membership Form](#) and select Fox Valley Reading Council as your local council.

Follow us!



Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/illinoisfvrc?igsh=d3R2cGE4OWE3MjJv>

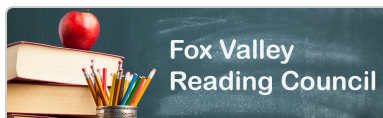


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Fox is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

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](#)