

READ ALOUD

WEST VIRGINIA

NEWSLETTER

All through the grades



Photo courtesy of Buckhannon-Upshur High School

Caden Andrick, Cameron Zuliani, Kiara Woods, and Katie Pearson, students at Buckhannon-Upshur High School

In Upshur County, high schoolers find and swap books that keep them reading

By Dawn Miller

For School Library Appreciation Week, Buckhannon-Upshur High School Librarian Angie Westfall put the word out to students each day – there will be free books in the library at the end of the week.

Westfall, a member of the Upshur

County Read Aloud chapter board, arranged to have enough books for all 1,000 high schoolers to choose a book to keep.

Back in Charleston, Read Aloud West Virginia Board member Mike Proops and wife Jo Proops, a volunteer, helped prepare and pack books. Becca Revercomb, a retired Kanawha County teacher and a volunteer reader, drove the truckload to Buckhannon.

In advance, Buckhannon-Upshur teachers read some of the books, and were seen doing it. They previewed titles and discussed choices with students. Westfall and her volunteers arranged the merchandise invitingly

around the library.

On the day, groups of students, all masked, rotated through the library every 15 minutes to choose a book to keep and to talk about what they enjoy. By the afternoon, 400 books were gone.

“Everyone in the building promotes literacy,” Westfall wrote later. “Pictures of teachers and the books they were reading were put on our closed-circuit TV to add excitement. After the event, students with their choices were also added to the TV lineup.

“Teachers said that it was nice to see so many students reading! They

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SUMMER 2021

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The next normal, whatever it is

All year, Read Aloud chapters around the state have adapted and adapted again to best serve children, families and schools as conditions have changed. Volunteers read online when possible, by recording when desired, and ramped up book distributions. They handed out books with meals, at special drive-through events and increasingly, as schools have re-opened, first to students, then to guests, at more traditional in-person events.

Many volunteers have expressed interest in reading at programs this summer, they miss their classes so much. We are taking requests from summer programs and matching them with eager volunteer readers. (To arrange yours, contact your local chapter or email stateoffice@readaloudwv.org.)

While readers were cut off from their classrooms and students were cut off from their classroom libraries, Read Aloud doubled up on its usual book distribution efforts. In a good year, Read Aloud gives away 10,000 books and magazines to children around the state. Since Jan. 1, 2020 to this spring, Read Aloud has given out more than 25,000.

As regular volunteers know, Read Aloud is particular in how it gives out books. All of Read Aloud's efforts emphasize choice because choice is an important factor in motivating children to read for pleasure, just as it is important to adults.

With the restrictions of the past year,

volunteers sought and found new ways to engage students, to ask, "What are you reading?"

We adapted classroom "book tastings" where students get to discuss and recommend books. They, their teachers and volunteers may read excerpts. After a chance to "taste" a variety of books, children choose a book to keep.

Thanks to a windfall of books for middle- and high schoolers, we were able to offer a school wide book tasting at Buckhannon-Upshur High School. You can read the details on page 1.

Teachers and volunteers adapted events to their particular needs.

In Jackson County, Chapter President Janet McCauley organized half a dozen classroom book tastings in elementary schools. Teachers in those classrooms chose to lead the events themselves, sampling and reading books with children, and then giving students the opportunity to choose their books.

Just recently, Alban Elementary teacher Allison Stephens and her colleagues invited Kanawha Chapter President Derek Hudson and me to virtually attend their in-person classroom book tastings. Teachers gave children opportunities to preview the books. During the event, the children recommended books to us and to each other. When there was a lull, which was not often, Derek and I were available to build on the conversation

about **Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs** by Mo Willems, or **The Lost Dinosaur Bone** by Mercer Mayer, for example. It was a good time.

Berkeley County reader and chapter member Casey Willson and Kanawha County reader Jackie Thompson both tried a different approach, a "read along." Every student in their classes one week received a copy of the book they read virtually.

Whatever the approach, all of these efforts give children opportunities to practice what they are learning, to find the words to express their thoughts, and to make connections with each other and with caring adults.

Even when they don't admit it, children, even teens, are influenced by the adults who care for them. That means if parents, grandparents, teachers, and other mentors make time to discover good things to read and share their discoveries, young people will be influenced.

We will continue the stepped-up book distributions, because nothing beats summer learning loss like reading books for fun.

Looking ahead to fall, we are hopeful that schools will be able to welcome volunteer readers back to their classrooms. We are eager to be there, and plan to adapt to whatever the next normal is.

*Dawn Miller
Executive Director
Read Aloud West Virginia*



Photo courtesy of Buckhannon-Upshur High School

Sheldon Zirkle, Aiden Radabaugh, Autumn Carpenter, Bradly Helmick, and Owen Caynor, students at Buckhannon-Upshur High School. They each chose a different volume of *The Darkest Minds* and plan to swap their way through the series.



Students at Ripley Elementary peruse options at their book tasting event.

Collaborations, events, and book giveaways

Our chapters have been hard at work! Here are some highlights of things they've accomplished recently or are working on right now:

Read Aloud of Greenbrier County plans to read aloud for Alderson Elementary students during their deliveries of school grown produce to a local farmer's market.

Read Aloud of Fayette County is planning a Snuggle & Read event. They are also developing another partnership with a local drug recovery court to provide books to participants and their children.

Read Aloud of Mercer County held a COVID-conscious Snuggle & Read for 117 children at a local library.

Read Aloud of Wood County has a Summer Book Binge coming up at Jefferson Elementary Center, funded through support from Tri-State Roofing & Sheet Metal. Wood County schools are also planning to let volunteer readers return to the classroom in the fall, so the chapter is preparing for that.

Read Aloud of Kanawha County had classroom book tastings for all grades at Alban Elementary.

Read Aloud of Jackson County has a lot of great news! Second graders in the county received personal copies of the first in The Fantastic Frame series, while all the second-grade classrooms received

the entire set of five books to complete the series. A volunteer recorded the first book in chapters, which were made available to classrooms for them to follow along. This project was funded through a grant from Jackson County Community Foundation.

Additionally, children of families who received Christmas packages from Epworth Church each received a new book through our Jackson chapter. Book tasting events were held at Ripley, Evans, and Kenna Elementary, including twelve classrooms covering first, second, and fourth grades. And finally, Read Aloud of Jackson Co. provided books for Jackson County Early Explorers to include in two sets of theme-based Read! Play! Grow! packets. This program was so well-received that Jackson County Schools is funding similar packets for students through the summer, and Read Aloud of Jackson County board member Cheryl Miller is helping create those packets for the youngest students.

Read Aloud of Berkeley County is exploring partnership opportunities for book distributions with their local Boys and Girls Club and Norborne Daycare center. They are also planning to work with a sleepaway camp for children of families that have been impacted by drug abuse to provide books to participants. There may be upcoming

(continues on page 4)

A beautiful partnership

Young, autistic illustrator and her former teacher publish a picture book

By Amanda Schwartz



Janet Rowe (middle) and Ameer Neal (right) with Janet's granddaughter and book namesake, Alieria.

One day, Ameer S. Neal gave her teacher at Ashton Elementary, Janet Rowe, a drawing she had made. Ameer is autistic and was very shy and reserved at that time, but she loved to draw and read. She was always the Accelerated Reader of the month and year; Janet thinks she may still hold the school record today.

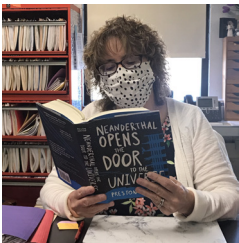
"I was honored she would give me drawings. I became friends with her family," Janet said, describing via email how she taught Ameer's older sister then Ameer herself. "I told her, if I ever wrote a book, I would ask her to be the illustrator."

Janet was an elementary educator for 34 years in Mason County and retired in 2013. After retiring, she began volunteering as a Read Aloud WV classroom reader, reading to her granddaughter's Kindergarten class and a first-grade class at Martha Elementary. During this time, she was inspired to write her own children's book, making good on her promise to Ameer years before.

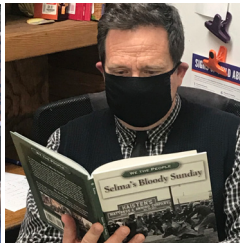
"I approached Ameer and her mother, Kelly, about going on an adventure to become an illustrator for a story I had written," Janet said. "I explained, I knew nothing about being an author and getting a book published, but I was going to research it and find out. Ameer was thrilled and so was her mother."

Two years later, Janet came into some unexpected money and used it to self-publish their book...

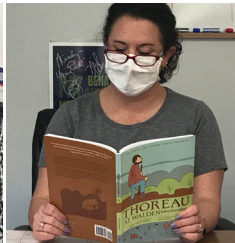
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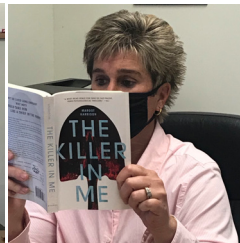
Alisa Compton,
Science teacher



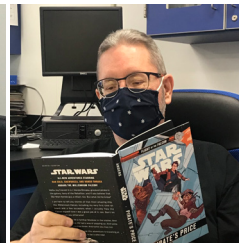
Duane Stoeckle,
Social Studies teacher



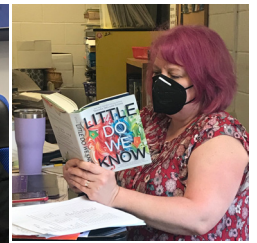
Mindy Dawson,
English teacher



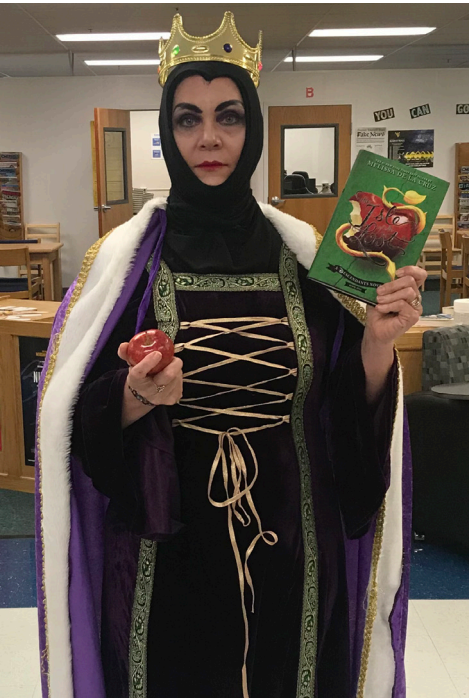
Tracey Fluharty-Godfrey,
Assistant Principal



Mike Lemley,
Science teacher



Ann Clem,
English teacher



Buckhannon-Upshur High School Librarian Angie Westfall dresses for a skit in the library a couple weeks after the book tasting. “The opportunity to promote one of our free books was a must,” she wrote.

(continued from page 1)

were reading everywhere we looked: under trees, on the sidewalk, at lunch, during silent reading in classes, and in the library.”

The event was part of Read Aloud’s increased effort this year to help students get their hands on books that interest them while school and library access have been disrupted.

One student, tipped off that among the choices would be the title she had been wanting most -- **The Descendants** series by Melissa de la Cruz -- was particularly looking forward to the event.

But on the day, she was ill and missed school. She returned the following Monday and got her book.

“She was so excited she didn’t know what to say,” Westfall texted the following week. “She skipped on the way out of the library!”

Students were offered fiction and non-fiction, hardback and paperback, many genres, graphic novels and even a few signed copies. Many of the books were bought through First Book, a non-profit that makes high interest books available to schools and literacy organizations. All were provided by Read Aloud donors.

“Readers are well aware of the cost for books,” Westfall wrote. “Some will purchase paperbacks because of the price, but long for the hardback copy.”

“Because of the many choices, students had a difficult time deciding which one to take home.”

At least one group clubbed together, each selecting one of five volumes of Alexandra Bracken’s **The Darkest Minds** series. Partly set in West Virginia, it is the story of adolescents who survive a plague but who are left with extraordinary mental powers. Adults mistrust and abuse them. The group plans to swap books until they all have a chance to read the four installments plus the additional book of short stories.

“Students are still coming in to get books!” Westfall wrote weeks later. “We are still working to get books in the hands of all our students. Some students have checked out the next book in the series they first selected. Other students have decided to purchase the series, and then also read other books by the same author. In a time of so much technology, our students still enjoy holding a book in their hands! Thank you.”

(continued from page 3)

opportunities for in-person read alouds for Berkeley county-wide summer school.

Read Aloud of Putnam County is rebuilding a local presence with a recent school-wide book tasting event at Poca Middle School, serving almost 300 students with books of their choice.

Read Aloud of Cabell County volunteer and troop leader Linda Beaver has been working with local Girl Scout Troop 1774 from Community of Grace United Methodist Church to stock Cabell Little Free Library boxes with gently used books.

To find contact information for your local chapter, visit readaloudwv.org/participating-counties.

*compiled by Amanda Schwartz
Communications & Development Director*

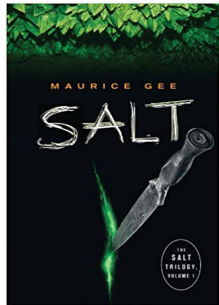
Photo courtesy of Linda Beaver

Girl Scouts of Troop 1774 Madison Boylan, Isabelle Williamson, and Abby Mabley delivered books to Little Free Libraries from Barboursville to Kenova in Cabell County.



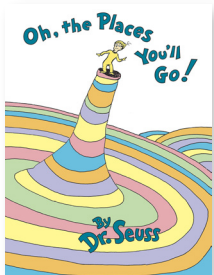
Ten to try: By kids, for kids

We asked our Read Aloud Families participants to send us recommendations for books that they think our readers need to know about, and we were not disappointed! Here are ten of their picks with quotes from each child explaining why they like the title.



Salt
by Maurice Gee | Grades 7th and up
"Like all dystopian books I have read, I can say that this book was good and if anyone asks, I recommend it. The events of this book are real enough that if humans don't watch it, it could happen in the future. The ability to talk telepathically actually could be the result of a mutation or exposure to radioactive material. And deep salt itself could be the product of nuclear energy and some gem fusing underground."

- Joshua | Age 14 | Monongalia County



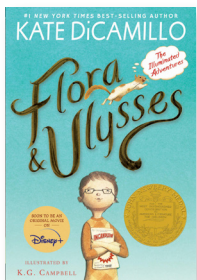
Oh, the Places You'll Go!
by Dr. Seuss | Grades PreK and up.
"This book is really cool. It's by Dr. Seuss. He is my favorite author."

- Rose | Age 7 | Harrison County



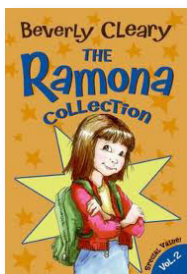
The Wingfeather Saga
by Andrew Peterson | Grades 3rd-6th
"This series is great because it's a lot of adventure and the children are the main characters."

- Jamin | Age 8



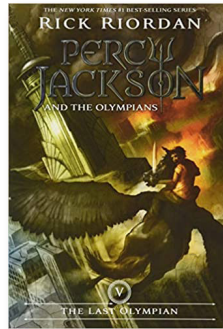
Flora and Ulysses
by Kate DiCamillo | Grades 2nd and up
"I like how it gives the point of view of the squirrel and how there is a lot of funny stuff in it."

- Kylie | Age 13 | Brooke County



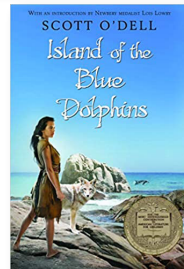
Ramona Quimby Series
by Beverly Cleary | Grades 3rd-8th
"Good for younger kids to read, but entertaining enough for older kids and even adults to read as well. Told from the perspective of Ramona Quimby, read through the series as she makes various silly mistakes and makes a lot of funny choices. It will keep you laughing out loud to the very end!!!!"

- Ginger | Age 12 | Monongalia County



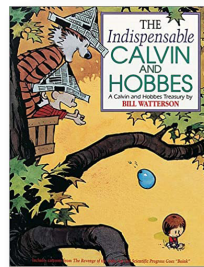
Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Last Olympian
by Rick Riordan | Grades 4th and up
"It is action-packed and very gripping. Right before the war against the monsters, Percy is determined and says, 'It's time to get this war started.' Everything from the chapter titles to the actual words is gripping. I was pulled in on the very first paragraph. Overall, it's a very good book."

- Josephine | Age 10



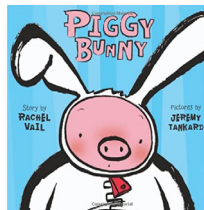
Island Of The Blue Dolphins
by Scott O'Dell | Grades 4th and up.
"It's always a mystery. You never know what is going to happen next."

- Maria | Age 11 | Randolph County



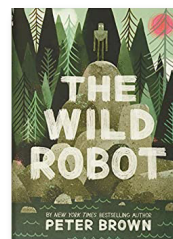
The Indispensable Calvin and Hobbes
by Bill Watterson | Grades 4th and up
"Its funny because in one Calvin's naked and goes down stairs. In another one Calvin has a sled and is going to ride a loopy loop and Hobbes doesn't want to do it and Calvin says he's a sissy."

- Brady | Age 10 | Monongalia County



Piggy Bunny
by Rachel Vail | Grades PreK-2
"Piggy show how you can be anything you want to be."

- Westen | Age 5 | Greenbrier County



The Wild Robot
by Peter Brown | Grades 3rd-6th
"I like that Roz the Robot learns how to live in the wild and becomes friends with animals. She goes on adventures and is very helpful too."

- Peyton | Age 10 | Monongalia County

Honorable Mentions

- Horton Hears a Who!** by Dr. Seuss - anonymous
- The Impossible Quest** by Kate Forsyth - Kaylie, Age 12
- Magic Kitten** by Sue Bentley - Jade, Age 10
- Wacky Wednesday** by Dr Seuss - Jamie & Calvin, Age 6
- Rex vs. Edna: The Very First Chicken** by Douglas Rees - Zayne, Age 7



Photo courtesy of Janet Rowe

Janet reads *Aliera Wants to be a Monkey* to granddaughter (and book namesake) Aliera's class at Martha Elementary in Cabell County.

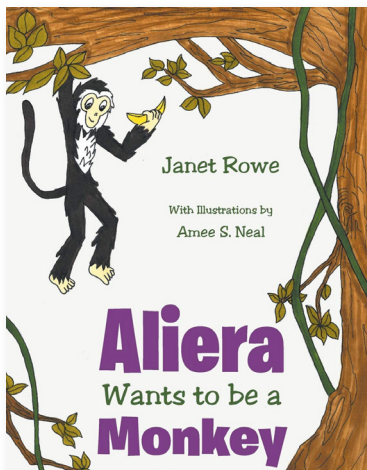
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 – ***Aliera Wants to be a Monkey*** – through Covenant Books, Inc. The process took eight months, and both Janet and Amee were a little disappointed in the end to find out that their book would only be available to purchase online, not in stores.

Even so, they persevered. Amee and Janet began visiting local schools to share their story and promote their book. "I would read the book aloud and Amee would talk about being an illustrator and draw the picture that is on the cover of our book while talking," Janet explained. "She did a great job and got better and better." Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to these visits, but the pair hopes to resume them next year.

In the meantime, they finished their second book! Janet is currently searching for an agent to represent them, with the hope

that this book can be sold in retail stores.

"I would like Amee to be in the spotlight!" she shared. "She does many artistic pieces other than illustrations for me. She wants to use her talents to be an inspiration for others, and I would like to see our book get published so we can be partners all the way through life."

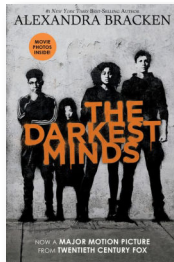


Available Books Alert!

Do you serve middle- and high-school students in Title 1 schools? Read Aloud may have books to share with you and other qualifying programs

We can offer a book for every student in a classroom while supplies last:

The Darkest Minds by Alexandra Bracken, is a teen dystopian adventure partly set in West Virginia. A mysterious illness is killing America's children, and the few who survive develop frightening new mental abilities. Sixteen-year-old protagonist Ruby is sent to a government run "rehabilitation camp" in Thurmond. She escapes and joins forces with other kids like her. Together, the group searches for a safe haven, travelling through the Appalachian Mountains.



Willa of the Wood by Robert Beatty is set in the Great Smoky Mountains in 1900. Willa is an orphan, the best thief in her clan of an ancient forest tribe who is struggling to deal with the destruction of the forest and to survive in a changing world. This is the first of a series related to Beatty's Serafina series, set at the Biltmore near Asheville, N.C. Recommended for upper elementary to adult.



Trials of Apollo 1: The Hidden Oracle and **Trials of Apollo 2: The Dark Prophecy** by Rick Riordan has a fantastic opening. Apollo, the god of beautiful things such as the sun, music, archery, and poetry, is cast out of Olympus by his angry father Zeus. Apollo falls, crashing to Earth and wakes up to discover he is an ordinary 16-year-old mortal with zits. Where to go for help? Camp Half-Blood, perhaps?

To inquire, please write to stateoffice@readaloudwv.org. Please include relevant details, including the number of students.

Is your school signed up to be a Read Aloud school? If not, look for details on page 7.



Moving day

Thank you, Jeffers Corporation!

Twenty-four pallets of books to distribute to West Virginia children were safely transported to our new warehouse space in Kanawha City thanks to the Jeffers Corporation, who donated time, equipment and expertise. Jeffers President Richard Sinclair, Vice President Mark Johnson, and driver Mark Greene (pictured) moved Read Aloud's stock from the West Virginia Regional Technology Park, where Read Aloud has enjoyed the use of warehouse space for several years.

Letter from Marion County: Congratulations to teacher Mary Perrella on her retirement!

Hello everyone!

We wish to congratulate Mary Perrella, our Read Aloud West Virginia of Marion County Secretary on her retirement from Monongah Elementary! She has definitely, positively touched the lives of many students and teachers! She has been such a hard, dedicated worker for our county chapter! She has been our chapter secretary as well as the Monongah Elementary School Coordinator. She is always willing to do whatever she can to further our chapter goals! Although we will truly miss her secretarial and coordinator skills, we are honored she will still be remaining on our board! We have given a donation to St. Jude Children's Hospital in her honor as well as a book (of course) to help her begin relaxing next week. We wish her MANY, MANY BLESSINGS in this very special next chapter of her life! We are sure many adventures await.

Again, Congratulations, Mary, we are very excited for you!

Blessings always!

Beverly Richards, Read Aloud of Marion County Chapter President



School Sign-up Form

Read Aloud schools receive free book distributions for students, trained volunteer readers, and other resources.

Enrollment Steps

Step 1: Principal submits School Sign-up Form

Step 2: Read Aloud mails Teacher Sign-up Form to the Coordinator

Step 3: Coordinator submits Teacher Sign-up Form to Read Aloud

Please fill out all fields below if your school wishes to participate in Read Aloud during the 2021-22 school year.

School Information

(please print legibly)

School Name: _____

Title I Status: Yes No Phone: _____

Principal's Name: _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address

Street: _____

City: _____ State: WV Zip: _____

Physical Address (if different from above)

Street: _____

City: _____ State: WV Zip: _____

School Coordinator Information

(please print legibly)

The school coordinator should have good organizational skills and be aware of their responsibilities in advance.

Name: _____

Address (if different): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

This person's role at the school is:

a parent volunteer an administrator

a teacher other

How would you prefer Volunteer Classroom Readers read to your students? Virtually In-person Either

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return the completed form to Read Aloud WV | PO Box 1784 | Charleston, WV 25326 or email to mhoyer@readaloudwv.org. Call us at (304)345-5212 if you have any questions.

Keep books in the hands and on the minds of West Virginia children

A gift for Read Aloud West Virginia



Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email address: _____ Telephone: _____

Enclosed please find my gift of _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ \$1,000 _____ Other

NIP CREDITS (as available)
For donations of \$500 or more

Please make check payable to
Read Aloud West Virginia, P.O. Box 1784, Charleston, WV 25326-1784
or visit us at readaloudwv.org to make a secure payment. Thank you.



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Photos courtesy of Luke Creasy, *The Herald Dispatch*

Davis Creek staff and Read Aloud volunteer Linda Beaver (third from the left) pose with the delivery of approximately 1200 books.

O'Neal told the Huntington Herald-Dispatch. "It's a tremendous thing that Read Aloud has done for us, and we greatly appreciate it."

Read Aloud helps restock Davis Creek classroom libraries after Cabell flood

Just as Davis Creek Elementary in Cabell County was preparing to bring students back to school in early March, three feet of floodwater entered the school's basement, damaging six classrooms and ruining many materials, including their classroom libraries. Linda Beaver, a Read Aloud volunteer in Cabell County, called for help. She volunteered to pick up books in Charleston and drive them to the school.

Volunteers packed about 1,200 books for the school, including storybooks from previous Read Aloud book drives and several boxes of high-quality, hard-back science books ideal for classroom libraries.

"Each classroom lost thousands of dollars (of materials) in these classroom libraries, and this is a big head start in allowing them to replace some of those books that they've lost," Principal Patrick



An **AEP** Company

Thanks to Appalachian Power for printing this newsletter!

Appalachian Power is a staunch supporter of West Virginia literacy, both in its annual Read to Me Day and in its ongoing partnership with Read Aloud. Appalachian Power has printed our newsletter for many years, and also donates directly to fund our programs. Thank you, Appalachian Power!

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