

READ ALOUD

WEST VIRGINIA

WVDE brings good news to Read Aloud's annual conference

Another successful Read Aloud Conference is in the books! Chapter representatives gathered July 24 and 25 at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia to network, share ideas and plan for the year ahead.

Read Aloud West Virginia welcomed not only chapter representatives, but also State Associate Superintendent of Schools Clayton Burch, along with Charlotte Webb, Coordinator of the Department of Education's Office of Early Learning. Burch, who was the featured keynote speaker for the conference, affirmed an ongoing, natural partnership between Read Aloud West Virginia and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE).

Reiterating Read Aloud's core values, Burch noted the important work the organization is doing in the classroom and in support of parents and families. Burch believes we can only "move the needle" on educational improvement if we change our culture to place a high value on education and engage families as well as educators to expect the best from our children. He cited the success of a Read Aloud summer reading project at Crichton Elementary as an example of engaging families and encouraging reading outside the classroom. At Crichton, students were able to choose six books to add to their home libraries and read during the summer. This project served to prevent the phenomenon known as "summer-slide."

As he brought his remarks to a close, Burch surprised his audience with the announcement that the WVDE had chosen to award two grants to Read Aloud West Virginia, totaling \$75,000. These grants are the first Read Aloud has received from the WVDE and are a significant tribute to the work of our volunteers around the state.

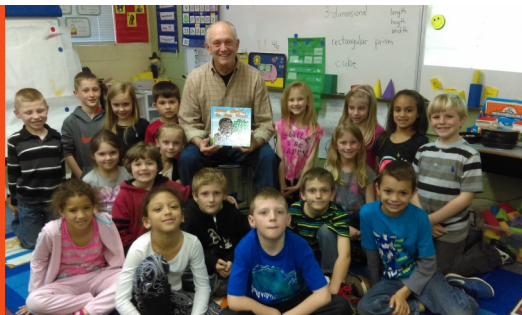
Following a motivating opening, the conference attendees were briefed on

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Beyond Reading: A Grab Bag of Ideas for Volunteer Readers

Berkeley County Chapter Board Member and Volunteer Reader Casey Willson poses with his class after a successful year!

See page 5 for the full story!



Fall 2017

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Find your role with Read Aloud this school year

Even though school is officially out of session during the summer, this issue provides plenty of evidence that the work of Read Aloud continues year round.

Businesses have helped us get books into the hands of children (page 3), chapter leaders met and made plans for the year ahead, and readers have shared their plans and ideas.

We are incredibly grateful to the West Virginia Department of Education for their recognition of the work accomplished by our volunteers and made possible by our donors.

As we launch this new school year, we look forward to continued growth, and most importantly, effectiveness.

There is a role for all of us, whether it is reading in a classroom, preparing books for distribution, supporting Read Aloud through purchases (see Books-A-Million and Kroger articles), or donating.

This newsletter is full of inspiration, but also I would encourage you to visit our website for additional stories and ideas as we all work together to change West Virginia's literacy culture.

Happy New (School) Year!

~ **Mary Kay Bond, Read Aloud West Virginia Executive Director**

From a reader:

"I'm always amazed at how interested the students are when I start reading to them. With all the crazy electronics these days, I would have thought they would get bored or impatient as I read, however, the opposite was true. I really think this is a great program and I enjoyed reading to the students."

Kroger Community Rewards: have you enrolled/renewed?

Did you know you can contribute to Read Aloud while you shop? If you enroll in Kroger Community Rewards, a percentage of your purchases at Kroger will be donated to Read Aloud!

To enroll, visit <https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow>.

Then, create an account, search for Read Aloud West Virginia and within 7-10 business days, you will be enrolled in the program.

This enrollment is completely free and Kroger directly donates a percentage of your purchases to Read Aloud West Virginia.

Purchases are eligible at any West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky or Virginia location.

Kroger Fuel Points are not impacted by your enrollment.

Once enrolled, simply swipe your Kroger Plus card or enter your alternate ID (typically a phone number) at check out and Read Aloud benefits from your shopping!

Please be advised that each year you must re-enroll in the program.

This is a great way to be involved with Read Aloud and give back to your community!



**If you are already enrolled, please check your enrollment expiration date!
You must renew your enrollment each year to contribute to Read Aloud!**

Local banks putting books into kids' hands

A summer program by Jackson County—reprinted with permission from Jackson Newspapers

In the financial world, it's common for banks to be in stiff competition with each other, offering better rates and incentives to gain new customers.

In Jackson County, three banks are joining together as a team on a project that will make a positive impact on the lives of children, ages 10 and under.

Starting June 19, United Bank, City National Bank and BB&T offered the second annual "Banking on Books" campaign.

In cooperation with Jackson County Read Aloud, each bank purchased 250 books to give to drive-through customers who have children under the age of 10 in the car with them. One book was given to each vehicle. The books were available at United Bank in Ripley, City National Bank in Ripley, and BB&T in Ripley and Ravenswood.

Both Kerry Casto, Market President for United Bank and Nick Miller, BB&T Vice-President, were enthusiastic about this opportunity to encourage and support reading.

"I serve on the Jackson County Read Aloud Board," Casto said. "There's no greater reward than to see a child excited about getting a book. With "Banking on Books," our window tellers can see the kids' faces light up when they're handed a book. It's a lot better than candy."

Miller agrees with the importance of this campaign. "Our banks definitely support reading and life-long learning," he said. "We were concerned last year that doing this might be a burden to our tellers. But it was just the opposite. They loved it."

Jackson County Read Aloud worked closely with the book selection. There was a variety of books,

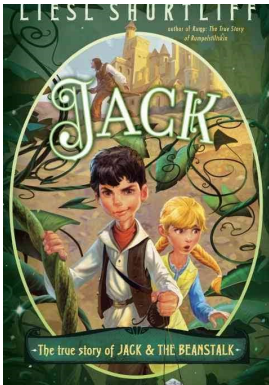
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Book review

***Jack: The True Story of Jack and the Beanstalk* by Liesl Shurtliff**

Reviewed by Matt Harmon



Grades 2+ • 350 pages

I read this to a group of 2nd-5th graders for the Read Aloud organization. It was a fun adventure tale, but couched within it are great lessons for kids regarding worth, value, and the nature of money.

In the story, the giant King, King Barf, covets gold above all else; he equates his massive gold stock with a rich kingdom. Yet, his people are suffering a famine due to crop failure. When the people complain to King Barf that they are poor and hungry, he dismisses their concerns because the kingdom has so much gold, so it must be rich.

This illuminates a fundamental principle of money—it exists to facilitate exchange, but it is not valuable in and of itself. What good is gold (or paper currency) if it cannot buy food? This is a lesson the world should have learned during the Great Depression, particularly France. Under the gold standard era, France increased its share of world gold reserves by 20 percent, in essence taking money out of the world financial system and leading to a massive deflation spiral. But I digress.

Jack and his sister Annabella save the day, with some help from the pixies, by turning the king's golden eggs back into seeds that sprout plants. They took gold, which only has value in exchange, and turned it into crops which have value in use. My hat is off to Ms. Shurtliff for so elegantly illuminating key economic principles to children. Bravo!

Matt Harmon is a volunteer reader at Charleston Montessori School in Kanawha County.

Read Aloud volunteer reader survey results

By Lesley McCullough McCallister

At the conclusion of each school year, Read Aloud West Virginia distributes a volunteer reader survey soliciting feedback regarding their Read Aloud placement and experience. This year, Read Aloud created an electronic version which allowed volunteers to complete their survey quickly and easily online, in addition to the few paper copies that were still provided to those volunteers who do not have an email address.

While the national average response rate for email surveys is about 25 percent, Read Aloud was delighted to receive feedback from 57 percent of volunteer readers.

“We are extremely grateful to hear directly from our volunteers about the good things they experienced, as well as areas of the program that can be improved,” said Read Aloud Executive Director Mary Kay Bond. “These valuable responses help us gauge strengths and weaknesses of our program either at the state, chapter or school level.”

The collected Read Aloud feedback is shared with chapter leadership in each county, and in turn helps them prepare for the upcoming school year. In some cases, chapter boards will reach out directly to readers who were involved but failed to respond to the survey.

Some of the most important information collected in the volunteer reader survey concerns each individual reader’s plans for the upcoming school year and if they wish to return to their previous placement.

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Beyond reading: a grab bag of ideas for classroom enrichment

By Bethany Kinder

The annual Read Aloud Conference brings chapter representatives together from all across West Virginia and gives them opportunities to share challenges, success stories and reader experiences from their counties. Here are a few ideas shared at this year's conference from readers around the state. Perhaps one will inspire you!

A Cherished Note

Lesley McCullough McCallister of Kanawha County found that reading to a combined class of 23 second graders at Mary C. Snow Elementary was a rewarding experience for her and one that had a dramatic impact on her students, one in particular. Lesley's children attend a different school but she already reads to them and wanted to reach out to another school in the community. By the end of the school year, she witnessed students who were once unsettled become attentive listeners. Lesley felt that it was a "privilege to come into the classroom each week" and wanted to thank the students for letting her share reading with them. She gave each student a stuffed "Pete the Cat," the featured character in their favorite books—some of which she read to the students more than once based on their requests. She also included a thank you note to each student expressing her gratitude for a great year and also encouraging the students to continue reading throughout the summer. (She noted Pete the Cat loved to read.) The children were delighted with their gifts but the note struck a particular chord with one child.

A young boy in Lesley's class approached her with the note he had received. "I will cherish this always," he said. "This is my most prized possession." Lesley noted that students may have never received individual notes of appreciation. This simple personal touch reaches students beyond the interaction volunteers have while reading and leaves a lasting impression on the students. Lesley said it well, "sometimes you don't realize you are reaching them, but you are."

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Reader surveys

(from page 4)

Once a school principal submits their Read Aloud enrollment form and identifies the school coordinator, Read Aloud sends the placement data to the school coordinator so that returning readers can be placed early in the new school year.

Based on this year's survey results, 63 percent of volunteer readers plan to return to their previous placement and continue to read to the same grade and classroom during the upcoming school year. While 28 percent requested to continue reading but change their current placement, Bond explained this is usually due to the desire to follow a particular child or grandchild to the next grade level.

The electronic survey also provided volunteer readers a quick and easy way to update their contact information, which is then shared with the local chapter leadership. The last open-ended questions on the survey asked for general comments and book suggestions. Read Aloud was delighted to receive numerous book suggestions by grade level and plans to add the compiled list to the suggested titles already listed on the Read Aloud website. This is a valuable resource for both parents and new readers who are looking for suggestions that have worked for other readers in the past.

Visit readaloudwestvirginia.org/book-lists-and-reviews/ for reader recommended book titles.

Read Aloud is grateful for the dedication of its volunteer readers and chapter leadership and is gearing up for another successful school year as they try to help raise a new generation of readers in West Virginia.

Lesley McCullough McCallister is a Read Aloud supporter, volunteer reader, newsletter contributor and a freelance journalist.

Conference

(from page 1)

the Read Aloud “Year in Review” and chapters were given the opportunity to share their success stories as well as challenges they faced in the previous year. An entirely new Resource Kit was distributed to each representative in attendance and new marketing materials such as brochures and banners were on display for chapters’ use. Staff members of the state Read Aloud office also shared reports from their departments.

Following the sessions, representatives networked with other attendees to develop connections and share resources from their respective locations. Attendees consisted of both veterans and newcomers to the conference, but the passion they share for Read Aloud West Virginia united them and yielded a productive retreat for all.



Conference attendees pose for a group shot after two productive days at the Read Aloud Conference.

Banking on books

(from page 3)

geared mainly to elementary level, including board books and chapter books.

According to Linda Dickirson, Jackson Read Aloud board member, the inspiration for the book give away came from the Read Aloud West Virginia Conference.

“We learned about Lewisburg’s Literacy Day and their bank giveaway,” she said. “When we brought the idea back with us, our board and these three banks enthusiastically embraced it. And it’s really taken off. We hope it expands to the other banks in the area as well. There’s no doubt they all support reading and education.”

Help us raise more readers in West Virginia!

DONATE TODAY!

Online • www.readaloudwestvirginia.org

By mail • PO Box 1784, Charleston, WV 25326

By phone • (304) 345-5212

Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP)
tax credits are available.

West Virginia
**Book
Festival**

wvbookfestival.org

October 27 & 28, 2017
Charleston Civic Center

Goosebumps Author,
R.L. Stine and Hank Zipzer
Author, Henry Winkler,
to Headline
WV Book Festival!

Other authors include:

Joe Hill
Nicola Yoon
Azar Nafisi
Anna Egan Smucker
Candace Nelson
Carter Taylor Seaton
Marc Harshman
Patricia Harman
Sharyn McCrumb

Returning readers: what to expect as the school year begins

We're happy to report that as early as July we began hearing from volunteers who are eager to get back to their classrooms and schools. Here's what the state Read Aloud office, school principals and school coordinators are doing behind the scenes to make sure that happens as soon as possible!

Enrollment packets for the new school year were sent to principals in early August with a request that schools enroll in the program no later than September 1st. Each principal is asked to designate a Read Aloud school coordinator for their school when they submit the enrollment form to Read Aloud.

Once Read Aloud receives the enrollment form, we compile a packet of information and forms for the school coordinator. This packet contains the results of the reader surveys we received from you over the summer and is used by the coordinator to contact readers who want to return to their school for the new year. This is why reader surveys are an important part of the Read Aloud process! (It is also why we are grateful for the high response rate!)

Schools in the counties served by Read Aloud had varying start dates this year from August 10 to August 24, 2017. The goal is to have all returning readers back in their classrooms no later than October 1st. If you don't hear from your school coordinator, or if you have questions, please contact your school or the state Read Aloud office at (304) 345-5212.

Enrichment ideas

(from page 5)

Personalized Bookmarks

Casey Willson of Berkeley County made that same connection by creating personalized bookmarks which he distributed to each student in the class he read to at the end of the school year. Casey and Ms. Edwards, the classroom teacher, were featured in group photos on the bookmarks along with an encouraging message to the students to keep reading through summer. The bookmarks are useful and serve as a reminder of their experience with the reader.

Readers Find Creative Ways to Continue Connection When Out of Town

Sometimes readers are unable to make their scheduled classroom time. Bob Fleenor (Berkeley County) and Betsy Howard (Fayette County) used technology to avoid missing a visit with their respective classes. Working in advance with the teachers in those classes, they arranged to use Skype or FaceTime to read to the kids. Other readers have sent postcards to their classes to let them know they miss them. Each strategy reinforces the importance of the read aloud experience to the reader as well as the students.

Bringing the Book to Life

Mary Boyd is a busy woman! She is a pediatrician, President of the Randolph County Read Aloud Chapter and a regular Read Aloud volunteer. Most of her classroom visits and readings do not include props, but last year she treated the class to one visit with a more dramatic flair. Mary brought a special guest, one of her medical students, Will, to her regular class of kindergarten students. Will dressed as a shark and Mary dressed as a fisherman as they read ***The Rainbow Fish*** and a book about sea turtles. The students were given a real-life commercial for reading and had a lot of fun seeing the books come to life.

Though it is not required of volunteer readers to go the extra mile with personal touches like books, notes, Skyping and props, these simple but creative ideas are great ways to impact students not just through summer, but for a lifetime.



Mary Boyd (right) of Randolph County, with her medical student (left), successfully brought the book to life!



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How do you want to hear from Read Aloud West Virginia?

Do you prefer to read all about us in print or on screen? An electronic version of our newsletter is now available! Please use the contact information at bottom right to let us know your preference.

“The perfect partnership” – Books-A-Million statewide book fair to be held September 30

Mark your calendars for September 30th! The statewide Books-A-Million book fair benefiting Read Aloud West Virginia will return in ten West Virginia locations.

Customers visiting BAM stores on Saturday, September 30th, can donate 10 percent of their total purchase to benefit reading programs across the state. Individual stores will also host story times, and Read Aloud volunteers will visit with customers throughout the day.

Due to the hard work of Read Aloud volunteers, last year’s event was a huge success and provided the opportunity to have the event again this year!

“Based on last year’s book fair, Books-A-Million stores in West Virginia are honored to be working with Read Aloud West Virginia again,” said BAM District Manager Ed Reidy. “We understand the importance of creating a love for reading in our children. The Read Aloud organization, through their various programs, combined with their reach into almost every West Virginia county, presents the perfect partnership.”

Advertising for the book fair can be seen on social media, the Read Aloud website and flyers in the BAM stores a week before the event. Please help Read Aloud share the news of this great event! It is extremely important to bring as many people into the participating BAM stores as possible.

“Read Aloud volunteers and board members are welcome to share information about the book fair on social media.” Reidy said. “The more customers coming to shop that day, the better it is for the organization.”

So, PLEASE, on September 30, go to your local Books-A-Million and make a purchase! You can pick up birthday or early Christmas gifts while there and help Read Aloud in the process. Read Aloud hopes that through the work of volunteers across the state and attendance by people like you, this year’s fair will be an even greater success!

Support Read Aloud when you visit these Books-A-Million stores on September 30!

**Barboursville • Beckley • Bluefield • Bridgeport
Charleston (Charleston Town Center and Southridge)
Martinsburg • Morgantown • Vienna • Wheeling**

Contact Us

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