

# READ ALOUD

WEST VIRGINIA

## Snuggle and Read expands across WV

By Lesley McCullough McCallister

Last summer at Read Aloud West Virginia's annual conference, county board members and coordinators networked and shared best practices regarding ways to introduce children to the love of reading. A direct result of those collaborative conversations: Snuggle and Read events are expanding throughout the state. In these sessions, young children, along with their parents, are encouraged to snuggle up under a cozy blanket and enjoy a new book together.

The simple idea to encourage the love of reading with great books and comfy blankets has spread like wildfire in recent months as Snuggle and Read events were held in Cabell, Jackson, Mercer, Nicholas, Pocahontas and Tucker counties this spring.

Jackson County alone has held eight such events, one at each of the seven elementary schools in the county and the public library, reaching more than 200 students since March.

*(continued on page 2)*



### Books, blankets and bonds

*Cabell County teacher T.C. Clemons reads to a student during the Snuggle and Read event at Highlawn Elementary in Huntington on Feb. 12, 2016. Snuggle and Read events like this one have been held in six West Virginia counties this spring.*

*Photo courtesy of Sholten Singer/  
The Herald-Dispatch*

## Summer 2016

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## Charitable IRA rollover a win-win for donors and charities

Are you age 70 and a half or older? Do you have an IRA (or more than one)? If you answer both questions yes, and are planning to make a charitable gift this year, then you should consider making a qualified charitable distribution, or QCD, from one or more of your IRA accounts. Your favorite charity will benefit, and you will save federal income taxes.

The tax laws regarding QCDs were made permanent at the end of 2015, and permit an individual to contribute up to \$100,000 per year to a qualified charity by means of a *direct transfer* of funds from an IRA to the charity.

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## Summer is here; Read Aloud's work continues

Summer is upon us and children are out of school but the work of Read Aloud continues. Staff and chapter volunteers are busy preparing for the upcoming year.

An important part of this preparation is our third annual conference. This event provides the one time each year when chapter leaders from around the state have an opportunity to meet, discuss best practices and challenges and become informed about literacy research and initiatives. We work hard to make each conference productive. I was heartened recently when a past attendee commented that she loved the event and appreciated that "not one moment was wasted."

Previous conferences have borne much fruit, as noted in this issue. The expansion of our Snuggle and Read programs and the initiation of Imagination Library in Fayette County resulted directly from presentations and discussions in previous conferences.

We also use these events to evaluate and improve our programs. Year-end evaluations from teachers around the state are currently arriving in our office. As I read these evaluations, I am struck by the significant impact our volunteers are having on students in our 29 participating counties.

One last but important note, although school is not in session, the need for sharing books with children does not diminish. The critical importance of participating in library programs and sharing books with children over the summer is discussed in this issue and Terri McDougal's reviews of specific titles may help you find a new favorite. We hope you will also share your suggestions via e-mail or social media.

As always, I write this with deep gratitude to our volunteers and donors who make our work possible and are helping us change reading attitudes and skills. I wish you a wonderful summer and opportunities to make many reading memories!

~ **Mary Kay Bond, RAWV Executive Director**

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### Snuggle and Read

*(from page 1)*

"Statistics show that less than twenty percent of parents are reading to their children," said Cheryl Miller, retired Ripley Elementary kindergarten teacher and Snuggle and Read coordinator for Read Aloud of Jackson County. "This is alarming, so we were looking for new ways to promote and encourage literacy within the family."

Miller noted parents often ask teachers, "What can I do to help my child?" Truly, one of the simplest things parents can do is read to them. Snuggle and Read events empower parents by modeling techniques that make reading together a fun experience for both parent and child.

Miller added, "We knew we were on to something because at the end of each event, someone always asked when the next Snuggle and Read event would be held."

At a Snuggle and Read event that coincided with Valentine's Day in Cabell County, volunteers from Community of Grace United Methodist Church and Girls Scouts Troop #1174 read to the students at Highlawn Elementary in Huntington and distributed 300 books and blankets for students to take home and share with their families.

At the end of February, Tucker Valley Elementary Middle School hosted a Snuggle and Read Family Night, where the parents and children made no-sew blankets to be used during their snuggly family reading time and picked out a book to take home.

Read Aloud West Virginia offers the Snuggle and Read program with the generous support of private and public partners in the local county chapters. Toyota Motor Manufacturing of West Virginia, Constellium, Pocahontas County Schools, and the state Title One program, are among the groups who have contributed funds, books and/or materials to make these events possible.

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

# The community that reads together, succeeds together

By Nikki Moses

If you asked, "What are *YOU* Reading?" in Randolph County last winter, you most likely heard a resounding re-tort: ***To Kill a Mockingbird***. The GFWC Elkins Woman's Club, the Rotary Club, students from Elkins Mountain School and others came together to read Harper Lee's classic in February.

The effort was led by Randolph County's Read Aloud President, Mary Boyd, and supported by the Women's Club, which gave \$100. They challenged the Rotary to read, hosted an essay contest with a \$50 prize and invited the community to a screening of the movie version of the book at the Old Brick Playhouse in Elkins.

The essay prize was captured by a tenth grader at Elkins Mountain School. Teacher Heidi Jeffries "took this project and ran with it," Boyd said. "She read the book with 60 students, and they really connected with it."

One was the young man who walked away with the essay prize. "He was over the moon," Boyd said.

People were asked to write about what, if any, prejudices exist against African Americans. The essay contest winner responded that although prejudice is less prevalent and less evident than it used to be, it still exists, and not for African Americans alone.

"The prejudice portrayed in the book is something I know firsthand. I am not an African American, although I've been discriminated against due to size, attractiveness and ethnic background. I am treated differently because I'm in placement and I also don't have a family and am made fun of because of it. I tolerate this on a daily basis, and know it won't stop but will continue.

One time I was at school when another kid found out that I was in a placement facility as a ward of the state and didn't have a family. They announced that no one should make acquaintance with me or hang out with someone like me. I heard another student make a comment about me, 'He doesn't have a family and he's a juvenile, he's bound to be trouble; and if you hang around someone like that you're bound to be in trouble too.' All of my friends or the people that I thought were my friends instantly quarantined me. It was a big blow and this hurt. In these circumstances it didn't end justly."

Boyd said preliminary plans are underway for another reading event in the fall. She is a Randolph County pediatrician who has also participated in The Reach Out and Read program, where patients ages six months to five years receive a book each time they visit her for a checkup, for more than 20 years.

*Nikki Moses is the former editor of the Read Aloud newsletter and a board member. She is an active volunteer in the Charleston community.*



Mary Boyd and Heidi Jeffries visit with the winner of the *To Kill a Mockingbird* essay contest.

## Charitable IRA Rollover

*(from page 1)*

(You cannot take a distribution from your IRA and then make the donation.) By doing so, you will avoid federal income tax on the transferred funds, as well as potential limitations on your charitable deduction. If you are required to take minimum distributions from your IRA, a QCD can satisfy this obligation.

In order to make a QCD, you must carefully comply with the rules; consultation with your personal tax advisor, your IRA custodian, and the intended charity will help ensure compliance.

We're launching a new website this summer! Visit us at [www.readaloudwestvirginia.org](http://www.readaloudwestvirginia.org) for updates, stories, books and more!

# Collaboration for Imagination

By Sara Busse

Country music legend Dolly Parton has a dream: to put books in the hands of young children across America. Thanks to Marion Tanner, that dream is becoming reality in Fayette County.

On May 7th, the Fayette County Read Aloud chapter hosted an event to launch Parton's program, Imagination Library, to the families of the area. According to Tanner, it was a day to remember.

"Seeing all of those young families bringing in their babies with ribbons in their hair and all dressed up to get books—I haven't seen anything like that in a long time!" Tanner exclaimed.

Tanner and Linda Cole are chapter co-presidents of Read Aloud in Fayette County. They are expanding the organization to put readers in all county elementary schools. The introduction of Dolly's program will supplement their efforts by providing access to books for the area's youngest residents.

"We have so many kids who come to kindergarten that have never held a book," the compassionate retired teacher said. "This encourages them to start libraries of their own."

Cole and Tanner attended Read Aloud's summer conference in 2015 and heard Nancy Hanna speak. Hanna works with the Greenbrier County Campaign for Grade Level Reading and talked about resources they were utilizing in the county. Imagination Library was one.

Parton's initiative provides a book a month to children, ages birth to five, who are registered with the program and living in an area with a sponsor, like Read Aloud in Fayette County. The local group procures money to pay for mailing the books to the children.

"It's \$2.10 per student each month," Tanner explained. "At the Read Aloud conference, [Hanna] talked about Early Literacy Grants—and one of the things they could be used for was to purchase Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for their school system. I asked the Title One people in our county what they spent that money for, and found out we could apply." Tanner received a grant through the state and through the Fayette County Board of Education.

Tanner and Cole are members of Delta Kappa Gamma, an international group of women educators, instrumental in organizing the Fayette County Read Aloud program. Many of the Fayette chapter's members were on hand for the launch of Imagination Library on May 7th in the Oak Hill High School cafeteria.

"It was really rewarding for so many of us from Delta Kappa Gamma. We have all been teachers in the area, and nearly every young parent there was someone we had in school. Now they were bringing in their babies to get books," Tanner said. The members of Delta Kappa Gamma did face painting and hosted a story corner with Clifford the dog. Many other community organizations participated in or donated to the event.

"Kroger donated water, Marquee Cinemas in Beckley gave us popcorn," Tanner said. Other participants included the Fayetteville Women's Club with a "Jack and the Beanstalk" theme, complete with "magic beans" for the children to plant; the Mount Hope Lions Club with a fishing game as well as eyesight testing; The National Park Service with "Furs and Skulls" (from animals you could find in the New River Gorge such as skunks, otter, fox, etc.); and the West Virginia Treasurer's office promoting Smart 529 college accounts.



*Kathy Coleman (center), Delta Kappa Gamma member, read Jack and the Beanstalk to Brooklyn (L) and Maxx Davis. The Fayetteville Women's Club, of which Coleman is also a member, provided materials for children to plant their own magic beans.*

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## Read-A-Palooza fundraiser most successful to date

Generous sponsors and donors joined forces with a dedicated committee of volunteers to make Read-A-Palooza 2016 an absolute success. The sixth annual event, held March 7th at Paterno's at the Park, drew a larger crowd and raised more funds than any prior year.

According to Lynn Kessler, Communications and Development Director for Read Aloud, the organization was especially pleased with the outcome at a time when many non-profits have struggled to maintain previous levels of support for their fundraising efforts.

"This event always leaves us invigorated by the steadfast support of old friends as well as the excitement of making new ones," said Kessler. "That held true this year in every way. We had amazing support from sponsors and donors, an enthusiastic committee and a wonderful crowd of guests!"



Read-A-Palooza guests Jennifer Jackfert (L) and Peter, Jake and Melissa Ruddle

The happy hour-style event featured appetizers, drinks and conversation in a casual atmosphere. Guests bid on silent auction items including handmade jewelry, various West Virginia travel packages, art, meals and more.

Read-A-Palooza 2016 was presented by Platinum Sponsors Moses Auto Group, BrickStreet Foundation, The Elliot Family Foundation and Johnstone and Gabhart, LLP.

## Imagination

(from page 4)

Tanner credits Robin Taylor, Program Director of Imagination Library, of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, with making the Fayette program possible. The department gave the Fayette group a \$500 grant to kick off the program.

"We used that money to buy books—we gave books to the brothers and sisters who came in so every child could get a book at the event," Tanner said. "We registered 160 kids at the event." After the event, the Fayette Read Aloud group went to the Meadow Bridge library and the Montgomery Library and registered children there, as well. The public libraries in the county will have registration forms, and families can also register online.

While the event was a great success, Tanner is realistic and knows there is a lot of work ahead.

"There are 2,600 kids eligible for the program," she explained. "When I was a middle school teacher, there were kids who were so far behind because they couldn't read. But we did something that just might make a difference.

"This is a labor of love—you want them to be successful. It was one of the best days I've had in a long time."

*For information on the Imagination Library program, visit [www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com). For information about other Imagination Library programs in West Virginia, contact Robin Taylor, Program Director, of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, at [robin.j.taylor@wv.gov](mailto:robin.j.taylor@wv.gov).*

*Sara Busse is a long-time Charleston resident and community volunteer. Her work at Trinity's Table earned her recognition as a 2016 YWCA Woman of Achievement.*

# Librarian recommended!

Selections from Terry McDougal, Kanawha County Public Library's Head of Children's Services

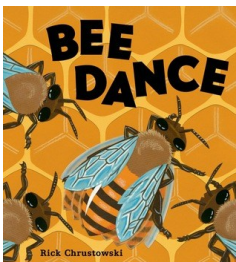
## Pre-kindergarten to first grade

**Henry Wants MORE!** by Linda Ashman, Brooke Boynton Hughes

Whether spending time with Papa, singing songs with Grandma, playing games with Lucy, or racing with Charlie, toddler Henry wears his family out until bedtime, when Mama is the one who wants more.

**My Bike** by Byron Barton

Tom tells about his bicycle and riding by trucks, cars, even elephants, and his work as a circus performer.



**Bee Dance** by Rick Chrustowski

A honeybee searches for nectar, then returns to the hive to tell the other bees. She does a waggle dance, moving in a special pattern to share the location of the food. Vivid and active images bring these amazing bees to life!

**Froggy Goes to the Library** by Jonathan London, Frank Remkiewicz

When Froggy, Mom and Pollywogilina set out for the library, Froggy brings a wheelbarrow to hold all the books he plans to borrow, but he is so excited that he forgets to use his indoor voice.



**One Big Family** by Marc Harshman, Sara Palacios

A family reunion brings summer fun and adventures in this cheerful celebration of family ties and the joys of summer.

## First and second grades

**Max's Math** by Kate Banks, Boris Kulikov

Max and his brothers drive to Shapeville and Count Town searching for problems, and are able to use their skills in arithmetic and sleuthing to prepare for a rocket launch.



**Bike on, Bear!** by Cynthia Liu, Kristyna Litten

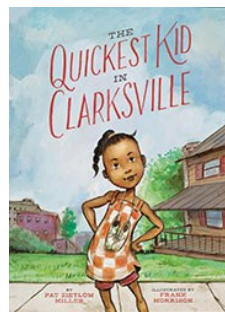
Bear is an extraordinary genius who can do anything except ride a bike. Can he get on two wheels?

**Clark the Shark Afraid of the Dark** by Bruce Hale, Guy Francis

At a sleepover, Clark the Shark braves his fear of the dark with the help of music and friends.

**Dreaming Up: A Celebration of Building** by Christy Hale

A collection of concrete poetry, illustrations and photographs that shows how young children's constructions, created as they play, are reflected in notable works of architecture from around the world.



**The Quickest Kid in Clarksville** by Pat Zietlow Miller, Frank Morrison

Growing up in the segregated town of Clarksville, Tennessee in the 1960s, Alta's family cannot afford to buy her new sneakers—but she still plans to attend the parade celebrating her hero Wilma Rudolph's three Olympic gold medals.

## Mid to upper elementary

**Trombone Shorty** by Troy Andrews, Bryan Collier

A 2016 Caldecott Honor Book and Coretta Scott King award winner. Hailing from the Tremé neighborhood in New Orleans, Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews got his nickname by wielding a trombone twice as long as he was high. Along with illustrator Bryan Collier, Andrews has created a lively picture book autobiography about how he followed his dream of becoming a musician, despite the odds. The book is a celebration of the history of New Orleans and the power of music.

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# Turn summer slide into a springboard for family reading and bonding; key element? YOU!

By Nikki Moses

Summer slide, summer setback, dumber in the summer. Ask any educator, and you will find that a loss of reading skills among students can be as much a part of summer as baseball and ice cream cones; but, it doesn't have to be!

Many children lose more than two months of reading achievement over the summer, according to the Campaign for Grade Level Reading. Some children do not.

Summer can be a time for reading adventures, trying new genres, family read-a-thons, camp outs with flashlights for reading, reading under the old apple tree, trips to the library followed by stops for ice cream... and reading skills can be maintained or increased.

What (or who) is the catalyst? YOU!

Take advantage of the summer break. Skills and drills, necessary to the educational process, can be left at school. Have fun. Be creative. Bond. Pick up a book that you have been meaning to read!

## CREATE A SUMMER SPRINGBOARD

1. **Read to your child daily.**
2. **Let your child see you reading.** Habits are caught more than taught.
3. **Encourage your child to read what he or she wants to read.** Magazines, comics... Find what your child likes and go with it!
4. **Limit screen time.**
5. **Enroll your child in a summer reading program.** What's going on at your library, church, community center, school?
6. **Talk, sing and draw pictures.** These activities introduce words and increase vocabulary.
7. **Listen up!** Radio programs and audio books for those long car rides count!

**ACCESS TO BOOKS + A CARING ADULT = The best cure for summer slide!**

## Recommended

*(from page 6)*

**One Today** by Richard Blanco, Dav Pilkey

A lyrical, patriotic commemoration of America from dawn to dusk and coast to coast.

**Ira's Shakespeare Dream** by Glenda Armand, Floyd Cooper

A biography of Ira Aldridge, an African American actor who is considered one of the greatest Shakespearean actors of the nineteenth century.

## Fourth to sixth grades

**Treasure of Way Down Deep** by Ruth White

In 1954, when mine closings bring an economic crisis to Way Down Deep, West Virginia, Ruby Jolene Hurley

makes a thirteenth-birthday wish to find the treasure rumored to have been buried by one of the town's founders.

**Crenshaw** by Katherine Applegate

Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent, and not much for food, either. His parents, his little sister, and their dog may have to live in their minivan. Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, outspoken and imaginary. He's been gone for four years, but has come back into Jackson's life to help him.

Find more reviews and recommendations  
on our website at  
[www.readaloudwestvirginia.org](http://www.readaloudwestvirginia.org)



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### Weimer Elementary Scores a “Hat Trick” with Morning Muffins, Donuts

By Melody Simpson

Becky Ryder, Read Aloud school coordinator and Title I reading teacher at Weimer Elementary School in Saint Albans, had three problems to solve: how to get her students more interested in reading, how to get books into their hands and homes, and how to get parents involved, both at the school and in their children’s success? Fortunately, she and the school came up with an innovative approach to address all three.

In January 2016, Weimer hosted a “Muffins with Moms” event one morning between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m., to catch moms (as well as grandmothers and other caregivers) as they were dropping off children at school. (Notices were sent home to alert them in advance.) On another morning in February, the school hosted “Donuts with Dads.” Both events were wildly successful, with 40 to 50 adults attending each one (counting the children, over 100 attended each event). The parents were welcomed and given snacks and drinks, and their children were permitted to choose a free book from a varied selection provided by Read Aloud. Parents then read the books to (or with) their children before the regular school day began.

“The first event was held in the school’s library, but we had so many attending it spilled over into my classroom,” Ryder commented. They moved the “Dads” event into the cafeteria to avoid this “wonderful” overcrowding problem. Ryder believes the timing of the events was key to their success. “When we’ve had family nights or PTO events in the evening, attendance has tended to be very low,” Ryder said. They were thrilled to have so many of the parents attending each event.

Ryder is passionate about making all Weimer students lifelong readers, but she recognizes that many of them face significant hurdles, not the least of which is simply the absence of books to read at home. She hopes to have some sort of book event once a month next year, if finances permit, during which students will be able to choose a book to take home. In addition, since many Weimer students do not live in traditional or stable housing, she plans to provide book bags to hold the students’ personal libraries. A Little Free Library was installed on the school grounds in May and Ryder also intends to request visits from the Kanawha County Public Library’s Bookmobile.

Ryder was extremely grateful to Read Aloud for the books: she commented the group even was able to provide her with books that were likely to appeal to men for the “Dads” event. She hopes she can replicate the success of “Muffins with Moms” and “Donuts with Dads” next school year.

*Melody Simpson is an attorney at Bowles Rice LLP, a volunteer reader and member of the Read Aloud board and newsletter committee.*

### Contact Us

P.O. Box 1784  
Charleston, WV 25326  
(304) 345-5212  
[www.readaloudwestvirginia.com](http://www.readaloudwestvirginia.com)  
[readaloud@frontier.com](mailto:readaloud@frontier.com)

