

READ ALOUD

WEST VIRGINIA

BrickStreet supports Read Aloud with \$150,000 contribution

By Sara Busse

Calling Read Aloud West Virginia “a great asset to the community,” BrickStreet Mutual Insurance President and CEO Greg Burton recently announced a gift of \$150,000 to the statewide reading organization. The gift, made through BrickStreet Foundation, will be distributed over three years. The first installment of \$50,000 was made in September.

“Read Aloud West Virginia has been a great asset to the community, helping to develop a state full of readers,” Burton

said. “It has always been our priority to show responsibility and commitment to support organizations that help to facilitate growth and education for the future of our state. The decision to contribute to Read Aloud West Virginia was simple, as its mission and focus aligns with BrickStreet’s philosophy, investing in the future of the state of West Virginia.”

“Community Arts and Education” as well as “Youth” are two of four areas in which the Brickstreet Foundation focuses

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Former WVU and Marshall head coaches, Don Nehlen and Bob Pruett, read with Boone County Read Aloud Coordinator Jennifer Griffith at the county’s annual Grid-O-Rama school year kick-off event.

Boone, Tucker counties join growing ranks of Read Aloud family

By Lesley McCullough McCallister

Read Aloud West Virginia is now active in two more counties thanks to the additions of new Read Aloud programs in Boone County and Tucker County.

Under the direction of Read Aloud Boone County Coordinator Jennifer Griffith, a former teacher for 14 years who now works in the private sector for Alpha Natural Resources, the Boone County program is off to a great start.

Griffith began her coordinating efforts in June. After receiving the support of Boone County Superintendent of Schools John Hudson, Griffith and Read Aloud

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Read All About Us!

Winter 2014

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West Virginians' gifts aid our most precious resource—our kids

This issue celebrates the spirit of generosity in a variety of forms. I think it is fitting that our lead story announces a generous donation from BrickStreet Foundation and their on-going support of our mission. We are very grateful for this vote of confidence in Read Aloud.

The support we have received from foundations, corporations and individuals in the midst of a very tough recession has been more than gratifying. It has been empowering to our organization and has provided the funds to expand our programs in both depth and breadth. You can read about our latest expansion into two new counties on page one.

The growth we have experienced since our re-establishment in 2008 would not have been possible without the generosity of the people of West Virginia. Time and money given to Read Aloud have enabled us to offer programs around the state which will put books in the hands and on the minds of our most important state resource, our children. I am profoundly grateful to all of you who have been so generous. Thanks to you, we are making changes in the state's literacy climate.

Our focus on book ownership is also most appropriate in an issue

celebrating generosity. As we head into the gift giving season scratching our heads for THE perfect gift, we can take inspiration from Sara Busse's article on page four. Sara describes the magic which can occur when we connect a child with a book. I imagine many of you have

stories of books that served as conduits of love and learning. I plan to share one of mine on our website and ask that you consider sharing yours with us.

Let us also consider buying one less gadget and one more

book for the important children in our lives. Stymied about what to buy? This issue offers you a list of websites to visit for book recommendations. I often say there is not a single shoe size for third graders; they vary. Likewise, there is not a single perfect book for a given age group—but these sites can help you make good choices. The key is to follow the child's lead and interest. Whether your child is interested in princesses, pirates, facts or fiction, there is a book "out there" that can connect your child to the power of words and story. It can serve as the spring board for launching a lifetime love of reading and learning—what a wonderfully generous gift that is!

Mary Kay Bond



(Continued from page 1)

its grants. Those initiatives most closely connected with the company's goals and identity, according to the foundation's website.

"It says, 'We're in,'" said Mary Kay Bond, executive director of Read Aloud West Virginia. "It's a sign to the citizens of our state that BrickStreet is concerned about the overall well-being of West Virginia. It's helping us to address a very important issue which has a strong bearing on West Virginia's growth and development. Later in life, young readers are more likely to be employed and more engaged in the community."

"Literacy is foundational to both economic development and quality of life issues," Bond continued. "BrickStreet has been a long-time supporter of Read Aloud. Their employees read in a number of classrooms and they have sponsored our Read-A-Palooza event. This most recent gift is incredibly generous and signifies an important commitment to an on-going partnership."

The gift from BrickStreet also helps Read Aloud meet a matching grant from Energy Corp. of America, securing that important source of funding as the organization grows, according to Bond.

"We're not going to tackle literacy improvement by working exclusively in the classroom," Bond said. "We need to engage families, businesses, the medical community. We have to let our children see that we value reading and that we value them."

Nathan Austrian gets paid to read, and he loves it!

Nathan Austrian, an attorney with Lewis Glasser Casey & Rollins, used reading to get out of a job he hated and into a profession he loves. Here is his story. (Attention parents: his father inspired him to read!)

By Nathan Austrian

"Learn to use your mind, because your mind will last longer than your body," said my dad. This was mantra in my house growing up. I was number eight of nine children. Yes, nine children. My parents pushed all of us to be successful, and they believed that those who succeed, read.

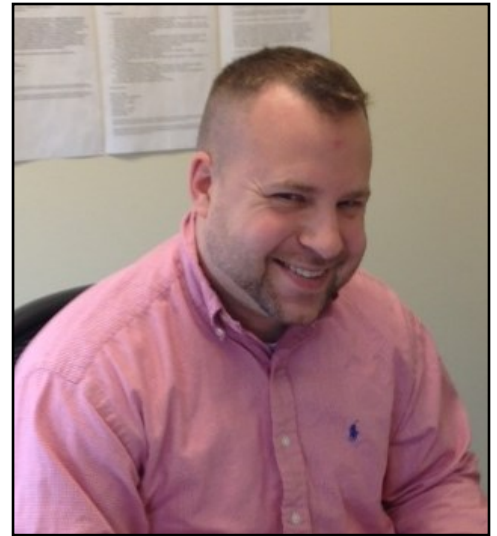
As a boy, I loved to read. I would get lost in fantasy books and imagine I was a knight fighting dragons, or off in an undersea kingdom. As I got older, reading fell out of style for me. In college, I had to read books on complex government issues. Reading for pleas-

ure reached an all-time low.

I got a job working in a factory that made sunglasses, where I was using my body instead of my mind and hating every minute of it. I remembered what my dad had said and enrolled in law school, where professors taught us how to read for a living. Now I read ancient deeds and agreements that stem from the late 1800's all day, every day. I read about people's lands and rights; I read about their families and their origins; I read about their disputes and successes; I read about everything. I am back to my adventures like when I was a boy.

Outside of work I find myself reading and researching for pleasure. Reading is my escape in a world filled with rules, commas, twists, odd plots and definite turns.

Reading has changed my life, and



all for the better. I get paid to read. Everyone hits a low point in their lives, but once they figure out how reading can change their lives from doing what they hate to do what feels like fun, they begin to realize reading is not so bad. They might even like it.



Thank you, Kappa Kappa Gamma

In September, members of the Kanawha County Chapter of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority generously offered their time to add Read Aloud West Virginia stickers to thousands of donated **Highlights** magazines which were delivered to children in schools across the state that are enrolled in Read Aloud. Residents of Edgewood Summit also provide this service for the organization on an ongoing basis. Thank you to all those who help get these magazines into the hands of West Virginia's children! Pictured above are Jarve Currence, Megan Knight, Sallie McClaugherty, Priscilla Haden, Mary Caldwell and Rosalie Earle.



Mark your calendar!

Read-A-Palooza

Paterno's at the Park

March 9, 2015

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Join us for an evening of fun,
friends, music and food!

Books are a gift

By Sara Busse

Looking at the bookshelves in my grown children's bedrooms, I am struck by the number of books they received as gifts when they were young. From *Little Women* to *Gone with the Wind* to *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, my father made certain that my children had their own copies of all of his and my childhood favorites. And Robert Munsch? Thanks to Aunt Laura, we have every title—and we read those over and over and over and over.

Don't get me wrong—we loved visiting the library to check

out the latest titles. But the inscriptions in those books my children received as gifts made the volumes automatic favorites. And those books that were re-read and kept under bed pillows, dragged on vacation and hidden in the treehouse made my youngsters better readers.

And my children are not unusual, according to researchers at the University of Tennessee. In a three-year study, researchers found that students who received books for summer reading at home had significantly higher levels of reading achievement. Just \$50 worth of books given to students over the summer accomplished as much as summer school and formal instruction. Reading Is Fundamental's flagship Books for Ownership program

was designed to give disadvantaged children the opportunity to choose a book to own, providing a taste of the dignity of personal autonomy.

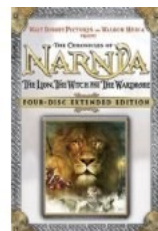
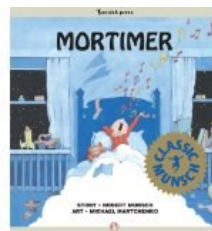
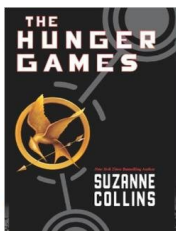
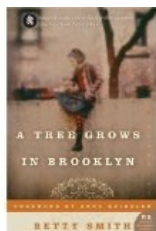
"These opportunities can inspire children to make greater choices—to choose learning, to choose success in school and life, and to choose a brighter future," according to RIF's website.

In "Book ownership and young children's learning," a study done in 2013 by Selamawit Tadesse and Patsy

dents in the after-school enrichment program fall silent, poring over the books. They sit quietly in small groups, either reading alone or sharing illustrations or quotes from their new titles.

Adam Berry said the books he's received from the program are some of his favorites because they were given as gifts. He was thrilled that he didn't have to return the books after one reading.

"It was a nice present because I get to keep it," the 12-year-old said. Madison Middle School student Hunter Stowers, 12, said his favorites among the books he owns



Washington for the Association for Childhood Education International, the authors discuss the positive effects of book ownership.

"Early exposure to a variety of print materials, book ownership and adult-child storybook reading have a significant effect on children's success in literacy skills," the authors conclude. The first step to fostering literacy skills is to "get books in children's hands." The study found that owning a storybook sparked a lot of interest and new learning in the children.

Locally, in Boone County, students at Madison Middle School who are enrolled in the Clay Center's "Explore and Soar" program regularly receive books as incentives. When the books are distributed, the typically noisy stu-

are *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Hunger Games* because they were given to him by his teachers.

"I love reading and I like that they thought of me," Stowers said.

The Hunger Games trilogy also is a favorite for Boone County resident Chelsea Aldridge, 11, for several reasons.

"I received it from my Mammaw, and I love reading, AND I was dying to read these books," she said.

This holiday season—and always—consider a gift that continues to give long after the wrapping paper is tossed, that requires no batteries, and that will help the recipient to become a lifelong reader and learner.



Find book recommendations on our web site and social media outlets, or try these sites for more suggestions!

www.npr.org/books

www.nytimes.com/books

www.guysread.com

www.goodreads.com

www.trealease-on-reading.com

www.bookwhisperer.com

www.readingrockets.org/books

The Read Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease and *The Book Whisperer* by Donalyn Miller also offer plenty of wonderful choices.

The following stores offer a discount to certified Read Aloud West Virginia volunteer readers:

Four Seasons Books

116 W. German St.
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
(304) 876-3486
www.fourseasonsbooks.com

Pinocchio's Books and Toys

322 High St.
Morgantown, WV
(304) 296-2332
www.pinocchiosbooksandtoys.com

Taylor Books

226 Capitol St.
Charleston, WV 25301
(304) 342-1461
www.taylorbooks.com

Brain food: School vending machine offers books

By Mackezie Mays

Bonnie McClung watches a vending machine every morning at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary School, hoping the students make the right choice.

There are no Cheetos in there. No candy bars. There are a few healthy snacks, but mostly, there are books.

"It's always interesting watching them come up with their money and decide, 'OK what am I going to do? Am I going to get a book or am I going to get a snack?'" said McClung, who helps lead the gifted program at the school.

"When they hear that thud of a book dropping down and put their hand in there to get it, it's just a joy to watch."

McClung—who taught for more than 30 years and became a reading specialist after retirement—got the idea for a book-filled vending machine in the 1990s after finding out a friend of a friend worked for a company that produced the machines.

"It just hit me," she said. "Kids love to use vending machines, and they were for everything else but I didn't see any books in them."

Not only does the unique idea perpetuate reading, but it engages students and allows them a sense of pride, she said.

"It's obviously about helping with reading skills and improving test scores, but further than that, I wanted to make lifelong readers and show them that reading is fun," McClung said.

The "brain food" vending machine is about more than just improving test scores, though, McClung said, especially in a high-poverty neighborhood like the West Side.

"Here, there are so many students that are needy and don't have personal libraries. When kids can put a quarter in to buy a brand new book, and they stand there and choose the title, you give them a feeling of ownership. It's something that they have. They've purchased it themselves and they can write their name in it," she said. "That's theirs."

Mary C. Snow Elementary students can buy a "slightly read" book from the machine for 25 cents and new books for 50 cents.

To contribute books to the machine, contact Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary at 304-348-1902.

Article adapted courtesy of The Charleston Gazette.



Students enjoy the novelty of vending machine books.

Jeffries uses graphic novels to hook readers

Heidi Jeffries is an English teacher at Elkins Mountain School where she also hosts a "boys only" book club. Here is her success story about using graphic novels to inspire reluctant readers.

(A graphic novel uses words and sequential art to tell a story, much like comic books do. Unlike comic books, though, graphic novels tell complete stories with more complex plots. They can be fiction or nonfiction, fantasy or anything in between.)

By Heidi Jeffries

I have been reading a lot about how to interest reluctant readers. One suggestion I kept running into was to use graphic novels. I was fairly unfamiliar with reading these, but I remembered a section at the bookstore I worked in as being intriguing with its titles of well-known classics in graphic form. So last year I ordered a class set of one of the novels touted as being the best of that genre: ***Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History*** by Art Spiegelman.

It had received a Pulitzer Prize. It is a stark memoir really, not a novel. It portrays Art's father's and mother's history of survival as Jews during the Holocaust. Their experience in surviving Auschwitz is recorded in the second volume, ***Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began***.

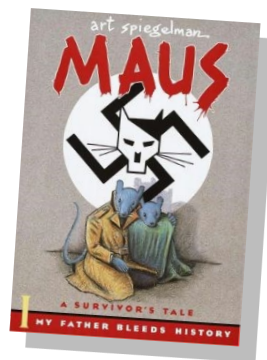
I kept a copy on my class library shelf for about six months. I kept pointing it out as a good read. Several kids read it and concurred. Finally my unit on the Holocaust came around again. In rethinking the unit, I thought I should include ***Maus***. I reluctantly gave up the idea of showing my usual movies, historical films and the book ***Friedrich***. I went instead for a unit that would give the kids an intimate glimpse of someone's life during that time.

I chose to have the students look at visual techniques, characters, setting and themes after each chapter. They also answered chapter questions in small groups and cited evidence from the text. I let them read at their own pace. In one class I found that the kids weren't participating so we began taking turns reading aloud. Then they were hooked! Only two of 60 students expressed a dislike of the genre. More than a dozen moved on to Spiegelman's second volume while the rest completed the first. Students came in to class and asked, immediately, to read.

Maus has been repeatedly read by some of these students. It is full of unique portrayals of events and char-

acters. Students are finding different ideas and clever devices each time they read it. It really allows the students who are visual-spatial to shine.

What I see at this point is that a graphic novel is a great tool to pique interest in further reading. Reluctant readers are attracted to the illustrations and simple dialogue. Students are able to finish these books in a short amount of time so there is a sense of accomplishment in finishing these books that can happen quickly.



Books-A-Million and its customers donate 285 books to Bruceton School library

Books-A-Million at Glenmark Centre in Cheat Lake recently made Bruceton School Library the beneficiary of their in-store book drive. Customers were asked at checkout if they would like to donate a book to Bruceton School. The Bruceton School Library received 285 books worth approximately \$2,200! Thank you to Books-A-Million and their customers for supporting our local schools and students. Bruceton School Library is run by the Bruceton School Library Volunteers, a committee of the Bruceton Academic Boosters.

Boone, Tucker counties join Read Aloud

(Continued from page 1)

West Virginia Executive Director Mary Kay Bond made a presentation to Boone County principals in early August. Griffith said that the program has received positive feedback from county leaders and the community as a whole.

Griffith reports that volunteers will be reading in nine of the 11 Boone County elementary schools. Dedicated coordinators at each school have been crucial to recruiting volunteers for individual classrooms and helping with book drives during Friday night football games at Van, Scott and Sherman high schools.

Griffith has enjoyed sharing the mission of Read Aloud and the importance of instilling a love of reading in young children at various community and business events around Boone County.

"Reading is so important because it's the key that unlocks the door to the future," Griffith said. "It helps you discover your interests and your passions while challenging your thoughts."

Similar successes are occurring in Tucker County under the guidance of Read Aloud Tucker County Coordinator Tracy Harlan, who recently changed from a classroom teacher with 24 years of experience to an elementary Title 1 teacher at Tucker Valley Elementary Middle School.

Harlan first heard about the Read Aloud program at the West Virginia State Reading Conference in November 2013. "As soon as I heard Mary Kay speak about the decline in the number of children who are read to daily and the impact it has had on our state I was hooked," Harlan said.

"I knew we desperately needed Read Aloud in Tucker County."

Harlan also reports that the community has been extremely supportive. In fact, Read Aloud Tucker County currently has more trained volunteers (27) than there are available positions (16) to read, with a few more waiting to be trained.

Harlan said that her favorite thing about working with Read Aloud is "seeing the excitement it brings when a reader first walks in the room." She added that the kids' eager eyes light up and they "just can't wait to hear the story."

In addition, Harlan is encouraged that positive outcomes also will be realized in other tangible ways. "I am hoping within the next five years to see an overall improved reading score across the board," Harlan said.

"Read Aloud's

growth in Boone and Tucker counties is extremely exciting," said Emily Hopta, immediate past-chairwoman of the Read Aloud West Virginia Board of Directors. "We know that when children discover the magic of books and love of reading, it is a life-changing experience. The energy and enthusiasm from the county coordinators and volunteer readers moves us closer to our ultimate goal: raising a state full of readers."

The Read Aloud volunteers in Boone County and Tucker County join those already serving in 22 other counties in instilling a love of reading in the next generation of West Virginians. That number will increase to 25 in January with the launch of Read Aloud in Putnam County, where several schools have

already begun participating.

For more information about starting a new chapter in a West Virginia county not being served currently by Read Aloud, please contact the Read Aloud office at (304) 345-5212 or readaloud@frontier.com.

RAWV has distributed

4,149 books

throughout

West Virginia in 2014!

Now, we challenge you
to give

3 books to
anyone

- or -

\$30 to

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*(Reading) helps
you discover your
interests and your
passions while
challenging your
thoughts.*

— Jennifer Griffith

Annual Fund goal is \$40,000

Read Aloud needs your help
in inspiring kids to become lifelong readers

Read Aloud West Virginia has launched its 2014-15 Annual Fund drive, setting the goal at \$40,000.

The increase in funds is needed to support the continuing growth and activities of the organization. Last year Read Aloud served 21,580 students in 1,079 classrooms across the state, and the numbers continue to grow.

Financial contributors and supporters of Read Aloud have exceeded every Annual Fund goal since the drive was reinstated in 2008. That growth reflects supporters' belief in Read Aloud and its programs and their willingness to give on an on-going basis.

Frank McCullough, chairman of development for the board of directors, explained that annual fund dollars not only are unrestricted, but they serve as a barometer of community support, as well.

"Foundations and corporate sponsors like to invest in non-profit organizations that are well supported by their communities," he said.

The number of schools enrolled in Read Aloud continues to grow, and the depth and breadth of programs is

growing, too. With that growth comes increased responsibilities and costs, McCullough pointed out. The Annual Fund drive will help meet those needs.

"The students of West Virginia need good literacy skills now more than ever. We are in an information age. To have a strong work force we

must have strong readers," McCullough said. "A gift to Read Aloud is an investment that will directly benefit our communities.

"Please remember: We are not funded by a national organization. We are funded by West Virginians—by people who care specifically about West Virginia."

Please give

Will you help? Supporters recently received letters of appeal. Just use the enclosed envelope in the mailing to conveniently send a gift. Or visit our website and make a secure payment through PayPal. Are you new to Read Aloud? Learn about us at:

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