

READ ALOUD

WEST VIRGINIA

NEWSLETTER: WINTER 2020-21



COURTESY PHOTO

Jamin, Liam, Taylin and Cadia from Greenbrier County check out their Read Aloud books.

Tempt your students with a Virtual Book Tasting

We want to give your class books

By Amanda Schwartz

Read Aloud West Virginia is offering a new way for teachers to put books in their students' hands: a Virtual Book Tasting.

We're calling it a "book tasting" because like a cake tasting, you get little samples of a bunch of options. Then students can make informed choices of books they get to keep.

Students also get opportunities to have meaningful conversations about what they read. They can recommend books to friends or warn them off. They can practice the

habits of lifelong readers and learners – to read by choice and to discuss with friends.

"The research base on student-selected reading is robust and conclusive," literacy experts Richard Allington and Rachel Gabriel wrote in the 2012 article "Every Child, Every Day." "Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read."

Researchers also agree that giving students time to discuss books with peers is

(continues on page 2)

Granting book wishes

When a child asks for a book that's not on our shelves, we ask our supporters on social media for a little help. Here are recent book wishes that have been granted because of a generous donor:

■ **A Dog's Journey** by W. Bruce Cameron
Requested by an 11-year-old from Raleigh County

Donated by Sheri Ryder

■ **Zodiac Killer: The Mystery Behind America's Most Feared Serial Killer** by Frances J. Armstrong
Requested by a Kanawha County 15-year-old

Donated by Mallory Carpenter

■ **Eleanor & Park** by Rainbow Rowell
Requested by a 15-year-old from Raleigh County: "I love this book... It had me crying!! Thank you so much!!!!"

Donated by Christy Schwartz

■ **The Adventure of Captain Underpants** by Dav Pilkey
Requested by two 7-year-olds, one from Marion County and one from Lewis County

Donated by JoAnn Batman and Connie Phillips Hoover

■ **Dork Diaries: Tales of a Not So Friendly Frenemy** by Rachel Renée Russell

Requested by Jackson County 5th grader
Donated by Peggy Bailey

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You can succeed at the game of life when you learn how to read **PAGE 4-5**

Want to get back in the (virtual) classroom? **PAGE 6**

10 to Try and Kid Reviews **PAGES 6-7**

'Rich book talk,' now more than ever

Children need us now more than ever. By us, I mean Read Aloud West Virginia, formally, of course – our classroom readers, our book distributions. But children also need us in general, their community.

Every week we hear from teachers. In addition to everything they struggle with this year, they ask how they can fit it all in. How can we get children to engage with books outside of the school day?

This is where the community comes in.

Read Aloud works on this a lot. Our community volunteers take time each week not only to show up and be present to read to children, but also to read ahead and practice and stay on the lookout for books their classes will enjoy. Our chapters come together to plan events and book distributions that give children, their families, and their schools opportunities to find and share books to love.

Every child needs this – people around them who believe, and show that they believe, that books are important. They need people who set the example in busy, distracted times for the brain and soul

nourishing activity of reading.

Learning to read is often thought of as a set of skills, write Pam Allyn and Ernest Morrell in **Every Child a Super Reader** (Scholastic, 2016).

"And while it's certainly true that children must learn to orchestrate a complex set of strategic actions that enable comprehension and decoding, it's equally true that learning to read is a social-cultural event," they write. "In other words, learning to read is more than simple skill building. Children also become readers when they are immersed in a community of readers, surrounded by rich book talk and animated demonstrations of reading, and provided with the social-emotional support that enables them to become members of the 'literacy club'."

When they say, "super readers," they don't mean just a test score. They talk about academic achievement, but also personal fulfillment, social well-being and civic engagement. Super readers enter a text with a purpose. They grow confident. They take risks, and they learn to discuss and expound on what they read.

As you see throughout this newsletter,

Read Aloud is helping to fill needs exacerbated by shortened and interrupted school schedules. We are offering our classrooms virtual "Book Tastings," where students can have rich book talk, and then choose more books to keep. We have been building Read Aloud Families, to help children to build their home libraries and to nurture family habits that will grow super readers.

On January 13, thanks to Scholastic, our chapters will come together for a virtual conference featuring Pam Allyn. Here, our volunteers will share some rich book talk of their own and carry knowledge and inspiration out to their communities.

Children, their families, and teachers respond to these efforts. They send pictures and thank-you's. They tell us children are eager when their packages arrive. Children ask for the next book in a series and recommend books to their friends, cousins, and to us. With our steady example, they are growing into a community of readers.

Dawn Miller
*is the Executive Director of
Read Aloud West Virginia*

VIRTUAL BOOK TASTING

(continued from page 1)

essential. According to the same Allington and Gabriel article, reading outcomes were better "when kids simply talked with a peer about what they read than when they spent the same amount of class time highlighting important information after reading."

Our book tastings emphasize choice and create opportunities for students to chime in with opinions and questions. They even include a conversation starter "The Worst Book Ever," in which a volunteer presents a popular book they don't recommend, and participants are prompted to respond with their own opinions. This activity is intentionally designed to demonstrate to students that readers don't love every book they crack open, and that it's OK to quit a book they don't enjoy and try something else. It is designed to welcome students who

have not already discovered pleasure in reading, as well as avid readers.

After the book tasting, students will have an opportunity to choose a book from those discussed. We'll pack the selected titles, tag them for each student, and arrange to deliver them to the school for distribution.

All schools enrolled with Read Aloud qualify for free book tastings and other book distributions, and because of pandemic pressures on school staff, all schools enrolled in the 2019-20 school year have been automatically re-enrolled with us for 2020-21, unless schools have notified us otherwise.

**Amanda Schwartz is the
Communications and Development
Director of Read Aloud West Virginia.**

**Visit readaloudwv.org/bookdistribution
to fill out an application to request
books for your students.
We look forward to hearing from you!**

GRANTING BOOK WISHES

(continued from page 1)

■ **Paw Patrol: Chase is on the Case**

Requested by a Hampshire County 3-year-old
Donated by Julie Ashworth

**"Thank you so much for
delivering actual books
the kids requested!!"**

– a Hampshire County mom of four

■ **Harry Potter and The Cursed Child** by
J. K. Rowling, Jack Thorne, and John Tiffany
Requested by a Lewis County teen

Donated by Ciera Pennington

■ **Mattimeo: A Tale from Redwall**
by Brian Jacques
Requested by a 9-year-old from Wayne
County

Donated by Mallory Carpenter

■ **Midnight Sun** by Stephanie Meyer
Requested by a Marion County teen
Donated by Miranda Smalley

6-year-old
Sophia
from Wood
County
relaxes with
a good book.



COURTESY PHOTO

Finding the fun in reading: it's worth it

By Beverly Richards

As the President of the Marion County Chapter of Read Aloud West Virginia, you might assume I was always a great reader. I even have my Master's Degree in Reading; therefore, it sounds a little crazy when I say that I didn't believe reading was "fun" until I became an adult.

Reading as a child was never easy for me, no matter how hard I tried. I would practice regularly, but it just never seemed easy or enjoyable. I had many smart friends who were great readers and excelled in school. They were always in the "Blue Birds" reading group, reserved for the best readers. I always made good grades, but reading didn't come easily to me the way it did for my friends. I strived to be a "Blue Bird" and achieved my goal for a short time, until being demoted again. I wondered what was wrong with me.

I remember my dad and grandmother reading stories to me when I was growing up, and I loved it! My grandmother was a teacher, and she read with many voices and a lot of inflection. But when I tried to read to myself, I read very slowly and had to reread things over and over to understand and make sense of the story.

Even so, I really wanted to be a teacher just like my grandmother. I worked hard to get the grades I needed to get a degree in elementary education. I realized that reading should be easier than it was, so I decided to also get a certificate to teach children with learning disabilities. I reasoned that if I studied this field, I would learn strategies that would not only help me better educate the children in my care

but would also help me to improve my own reading experiences. I learned a lot, and I did see an improvement in my own reading comprehension, but it was still difficult.

There had to be more. I decided to get my Master's in Reading from WVU, and this is what turned the corner for me. In my Master's program, I discovered how enjoyable and fun reading could be, especially when reading books I chose! I found myself excited about reading and teaching reading to others. I am so glad that I didn't give up, because I truly love to read now. I like to read for information, pleasure, and for self-help. I also read to my granddaughter all the time and many other children too! I even create read aloud videos for children to enjoy. Quite the turnaround from where I started!

Please know that if reading is hard for you or your child, I'm positive you are NOT the only one going through this. Yes, practice always helps. Creating pictures in your mind of what you are reading is important. Experiences are helpful when you think about how what you already know relates to what you are reading.

But, perhaps the most important thing is choice! Find a book that you or your child is interested in reading and read it! You will be surprised how much enjoyment and growth can come from spending time in a good book. You may struggle and get discouraged when comparing yourself to others like I did, but I hope you won't give up. Reading is magical, and it can take you to places you never realized were there. Take it from someone who's been there — it's worth the effort.

What teachers are saying

Read Aloud surveyed teachers who had a reader in their classroom last school year to find out how it went. Here are some of the responses:

"My students always knew what day [our reader] would be there. On the very last day she read, I had to tell them not to hug, but to just wave and TELL her they loved her...because they always wanted to rush into the room from resource class, and hug her hello..."

Deana Wyrick, Mercer County

"My students grew to love her and the way she read. She was almost like a celebrity."

Carolyn Brooks, Fayette County

"Our reader... is amazing. The kids look forward to her read alouds and become so interested in any topic she introduces. I've had students complete research projects on their own time simply because [she] read a short biography of the person. She also brings in different types of text, which is exciting and novel for the students. I want her to read to my class as long as I'm a teacher!"

Elizabeth Lee, Jefferson County

"My students loved our reader! They thought of her as another member of our classroom family, and looked forward to Read Aloud time each week.

Audrey Persinger, Greenbrier County

"My students look forward to seeing what story our reader has selected for the week. She always takes the time to talk to the children and even asks them for suggestions on future book topics. We love having [her] in our classroom!"

Tara Williams, Jackson County

"We are so grateful for the Read Aloud program. It brings wonderful volunteers into our school, introduces engaging books to our students, and recommends books to add to our school library. Wonderful program for our school!"

Connie Boggs, Marion County

Tiny choices, starting at birth, influence the trajectory of each child's life.
Over the course of childhood, decisions adults make about a child's access to books open or close opportunities for children well into adulthood.



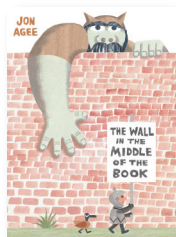
EAD

When you read,
you can succeed
at the game of life.



Raleigh County tested and approved

In this issue, our Raleigh County Chapter took over Ten to Try! Longtime Raleigh volunteers, Ruth Baker, Ann Cline, and Judy Robinson reviewed and recommended the following books.

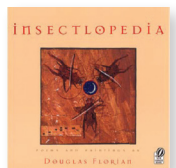


The Wall in the Middle of this Book

By Jon Agee

There is a wall in the middle of this book that is supposed to protect one side of the book from the other side. Supposed to. This story elicits enthusiastic discussions.

Grades K-4



Insectlopedia

By Douglas Florian

Delightful art and poems about insects for all grades. Bring it along as an addition to your read aloud selection.



The Quickest Kid in Clarksville

By Pat Zietlow Miller

As they wait for Wilma Rudolph's hometown parade to celebrate her three olympic gold medals, two girls challenge each other to a race. Conflict turns to cooperation.

Grades 1-3

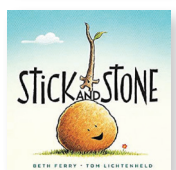


The Eye of the Whale: A Rescue Story

By Jennifer O'Connell

A true story about saving a humpback. Dramatic pictures.

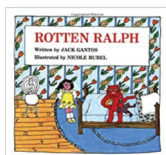
Grades 2-4



Stick and Stone

By Beth Ferry

Friendship matters. An enchantingly simple story for PreK and up.

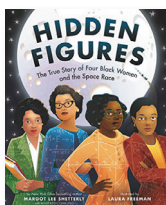


Rotten Ralph

By Jack Gantos

A Read Aloud hit that appeals to children's fascination with tales of misbehavior.

Grades 2-4

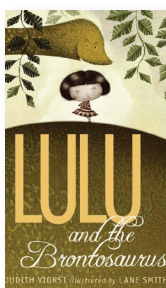


Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race

By Margot Lee Shetterly

An ode to Mathematicians, including one from West Virginia. Why did the extraordinary contribution of these women remain hidden for so long?

Grades 4-5



Lulu and the Brontosaurus (The Lulu series)

By Judith Viorst

We read this in first grade, and they loved it and laughed. We are not all perfect, and we can change.

Grades 1-3.

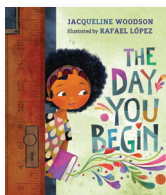


A Hundred Billion Trillion Stars

By Seth Fishman

Math in gigantic form! How many trees in the world? How many ants? Can you imagine so many...of anything? A visual illustration of estimation.

Grades 3-5



The Day you Begin

By Jacqueline Woodson

This book celebrates the bravery it takes to go forth even when you feel like an outsider.

Grades 2-4.

Returning readers, back to class?

Readings are virtual for now — in real time, but online. Need help? Come figure it out with us at one of these technical orientations online. Email us, and we'll send you an invitation.

10 a.m., Friday, Dec. 4, 2020

10 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020

6 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020

10 a.m., Friday, Dec. 11, 2020

10 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020

6 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020

10 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 2, 2021

6 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021

NEW READERS?

We also have virtual orientations for new readers.

Email stateoffice@readaloudwv.org.

CONTACT US

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Follow us on social media!



Parks family gathers donations for Wetzel literacy

By Amanda Schwartz

September 17 was a special day in the Parks family. It was the day Cristi Parks celebrated her mother Kay Parks' birthday before she passed. This September, Cristi felt called to do something to honor her mother's memory, and that is how Read Aloud learned about Kay Parks.

Born and raised in Wetzel County, Kay was a force for literacy and creativity in her community. She loved to read to children at her local elementary school, and, as a gifted musician, she could often be found playing the organ at a local church or teaching a child to play the piano. Kay's passion for serving her community lives on in her daughter, who had the idea to honor her mother by gathering donations from family members to give to a local organization that continued the work that was closest to Kay's heart. The family has deep roots in Wetzel County, but many live out of state.



PHOTO BY CRISTI PARKS
Kay Parks reads aloud to an elementary class in Wetzel County.

Cristi hoped this might become an annual tradition to give back to their hometown around Kay's September birthday.

Read Aloud West Virginia was selected as the organization to support because we work to instill a love of reading in children, just like Kay did. All donations directed to this project will be used in Wetzel County to continue to motivate local kids to read for fun by offering free, high quality books and magazines to children and families, with the long-term goal of connecting with new volunteers and establishing a Wetzel County Read Aloud chapter.

We are truly honored to have been chosen as the recipient of these memorial donations and are deeply touched by this new model of giving. With so many people forced to leave West Virginia in recent years, it's heartening to meet a family dedicated to giving back to the place they come from and making it better for those that remain. This openhearted spirit bolsters our belief that by working together, across industries, counties, and communities, we can create a more literate, prosperous West Virginia.

KID REVIEWS

We find out what kids really think about the books we send them.



New Puppy from the Black Lagoon

By Mike Thaler

"Read the whole book in two days by myself!"

— 8-year-old girl from Ritchie County

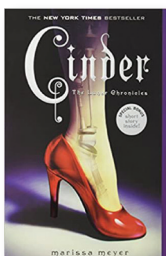


Warriors Series

By Erin Hunter

"I love it! I want to read WAY more!"

— Josephine, 10-year-old-girl from Wood County

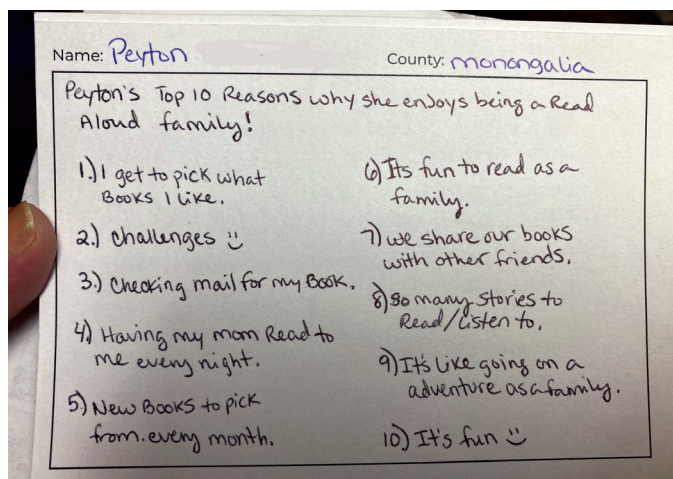


Cinder

By Marissa Meyer

"I'm in love with this book. I checked out the rest of the series from the library, and I'm currently on the last book in this series!! Thank you for sending it."

— Raleigh County
15-year-old girl



9-year-old Peyton from Monongalia County lists her Top 10 reasons she enjoys being a Read Aloud Family.

When we read, I feel...

Read Aloud asked children and families to finish this statement, and the answers speak for themselves:

"When we read, I feel special, relaxed, adventurous."
— 9-year-old Jackson County girl

"I feel like I'm learning new things."
— 8-year-old Harrison County boy

"Excited and happy!"
— Jayden, Mason, and Jaxson of Randolph County

"Happy and the words make me laugh sometimes."
— 5-year-old boy from Marion County

"Like I want to read more!"
— Lewis County 6-year-old boy

"Frustrated when I don't know words."
— 7-year-old Roane County boy

"Like we are in a different place on an adventure."
— Harrison County family of 4

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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Ways you can contribute to Read Aloud West Virginia

■ **Give to our Annual Fund.** Read Aloud West Virginia exists entirely on donations from individuals, businesses and foundations who support the work of motivating children to want to read. Read Aloud supporters make everything else possible – winning grants and awards for book distribution, leveraging gifts into higher-impact projects, and collaborating with schools and other groups. The remittance slip on this page gives all the details to send a check, which is still the most efficient way to give. Donors are also welcome online at readaloudwv.org.

■ **Qualify for NIP tax credits to lower your state tax bill, even if you don't itemize on income taxes.** Donate \$500 or more and receive West Virginia Neighborhood Investment Program tax credits for as much as half the gift amount. Credits reduce state personal income tax or corporate net income tax bills by that amount. They can be used over a five-year period. Donors can receive as much as \$100,000 a year in NIP



COURTESY PHOTO

Perci examines "H is for Halloween." Perci, 2, is a part of Read Aloud Families, which sends books that children choose to their door monthly to keep families reading through the pandemic and beyond. See enthusiastic feedback on pages 3 and 7.

tax credits. Taxpayers may reduce their tax bills by no more than half.

■ **Give stock that qualifies for NIP credits, and also minimize capital gains taxes.**

■ **Direct a Required Minimum Distribution from a tax-deferred account.** At age 72,

the federal government requires owners of tax-deferred retirement accounts to take a minimum distribution (though RMDs were waived this year). Have your financial institution send the disbursement directly to a charity, such as Read Aloud, and the IRS doesn't count it as taxable income. If it is \$500 or more, it may also qualify for state NIP tax credits.

■ **If you are a Kroger customer, set your Kroger Plus card account to benefit Read Aloud West Virginia.** Then, shop as usual, and every quarter, Kroger sends Read Aloud a check for a percentage of your spending. Encourage a friend or relative to sign up, too. This kind of passive income is extremely efficient for an organization.

■ **If you shop at amazon, go to smile.** **amazon.com.** Designate Read Aloud as your chosen charity, and as you shop, Amazon will forward a commission to Read Aloud. You must remember to shop at the smile. **amazon.com** for Read Aloud to benefit.



Appalachian Power is celebrating the 20th anniversary of their Read to Me Day! Since they can't send volunteers into classrooms this year, they created a video read aloud collection of all the great titles they've read aloud in the past. Use the QR code to access the full library.

