

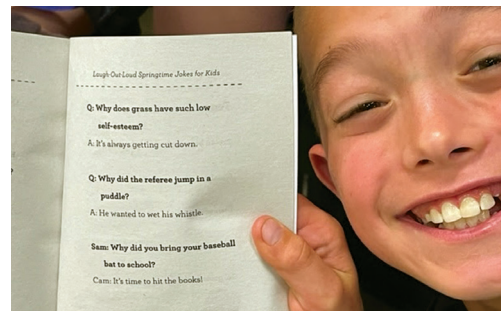
FALL 2023 IN THIS ISSUE



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goes to the
Jackson
County Fair

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READ ALOUD

WEST VIRGINIA

FALL 2023

Story time at the county fair

Jackson County
shows kids their
community
values reading



COURTESY PHOTOS

Children gather around volunteer reader Cheryl Miller at the Jackson County Fair Read Aloud exhibit.

By Joe Severino

Story time with Read Aloud had children glued to their books all week long at the Jackson County Fair this summer.

Camped underneath a shady tree, sprawled out on a rug in front of their camper, or standing in the middle of the sidewalk, kids squeezed in whatever time they could to get lost in a book they enjoyed. Cheryl Miller, a volunteer with Jackson County's Read Aloud chapter, said she was amazed by the passion for reading she saw at the fair.

Jackson County volunteers first set up a read-along booth at the county fair in 2019, and found success. They reached dozens of children by gathering kids around a storyteller, reading to them, and singing songs, Miller said.

Jackson County Read Aloud returned to the fair this summer. Story time was now an official event at the fair, with one hour dedicated each day. Children also browsed through the Jackson County Read Aloud booth throughout the day.

With the help of grant funding, Jackson County Chapter President Janet McCauley said they worked with the Jackson County Board of Education to purchase books and supplies. They set up a barn scene in the Exhibit Hall, where kids picked up different farm animal visors and tote bags.

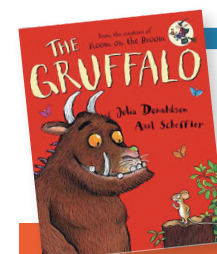
They sifted through eight large bins of books and could take away all they could carry. Every book was gone by the end of the sixth and final day, Miller said.

"The folks who remembered us from

COUNTY FAIR continues on page 4



Kids choose free books from bins at the Read Aloud exhibit at the Jackson County Fair.

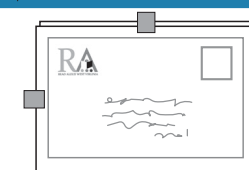


Ten to Try: Volunteer
Reader Favorites

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Share this newsletter

How to help Read
Aloud Grow Page 5



At home, school, or at the fair

Readers make valuable contributions to children's literacy

Twenty-some years ago when Kelly Griffith was teaching first grade, her class studied honeybees for a month.

"Anything and all things honeybee," she said. "I used my standards. We did research together. We tasted honey on biscuits. We studied beeswax and candles and crayons.

"I had a beekeeper come in, and he brought them all little test tubes of honey to taste.

"We dissected honeycombs. We watched videos.

"And we read tons of different texts and different levels of texts about honeybees and flowers."

A month later the Title 1 teacher came in to "DIBEL" the kids, or to administer a common test called Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills.

Then one day both the Title 1 teacher and an administrator walked into Griffith's classroom with the results. "What did you do?" they asked.

Griffith's first graders, who had been grouped in her class because they struggled with reading, "knocked it out of the park."

By happenstance, one of the passages that the kids were tested on was about honeybees.

"That was powerful to me," said Griffith. Now a coordinator for academic support

with the West Virginia Department of Education, she co-leads the department's "Ready. Read. Write." initiative to improve reading skills across the state.

To many older readers the effort will look familiar – teach children to accurately sound out words, explicitly and systematically, using data to differentiate instruction. That is a big part of it, and it is based on decades of research illuminating how the brain learns to read.

At the same time, children must build knowledge and vocabulary with rich and fascinating texts and topics. For this knowledge-building work, everyone gets the support they need to access the same grade-level texts and topics regardless of decoding ability. That way, each child can enjoy and learn from the most interesting books and activities.

Just as Griffith's first graders did all those years ago.

She wants community members and families to understand their role.

"Little things, like activities in the car or during bathtime can actually make an impact in how your child makes connections, and the knowledge they come to school with, which is a huge predictor of being a proficient reader," Griffith said.

Reading aloud is an excellent way to give students opportunities to experience more

challenging texts than they might be able to read on their own. Enter your classroom Read Aloud reader. Volunteers show up each week with another book or another chapter to enjoy together, full of rich vocabulary and complex ideas to explore, all while modeling reading for fun.

Or a nightly bedtime book. Or the books parents keep in the car or stroller for unexpected waits. Or any reading habit anywhere. Walks through parks or historical sites. Trying and discussing new foods or interesting documentaries.

"It's not just decoding words," Griffith said. "It's having conversations. Digging in the dirt. Telling them what is in the dirt.

"I want families to hear that message, because I want them to know that they have an important role in their students' literacy. The knowledge they bring to school helps with those literacy skills, even before they start reading on their own.

"I don't know that I knew that even as a young teacher."

Throughout this newsletter, you will find communities where the message has been received. Reading role models are carrying out their important role – at the Jackson County Fair and in Read Aloud classrooms all over the state.

Dawn Miller is the Executive Director of Read Aloud West Virginia

HIGHLIGHTED VOLUNTEER READER SURVEY RESPONSE

Bill McClanahan
Nitro, Kanawha County

Teacher: **Kimber Higginboth**

Grade: **PreK**

School: **Nitro Elementary School**

"For me, being part of the Read Aloud program has been very rewarding. My calendar is built around my reading time at the school. The children bring an energy and enthusiasm that I carry with me after I leave, and the "group hug" brings a joy I cannot explain. I'm so very grateful to the West Virginia Read Aloud program, to Ms. K, to Mrs. Hayes, and Principal Ashleigh Garrett for the wonderful opportunity."

Support Read Aloud and get a special gift for a baby you love

BookBaby onesies are available from Read Aloud's store on bonfire.com
\$24.99

XS (0M), S (6M), M (12M), L (18M)
XL (24M)

Made out of 100% ring spun cotton, this midweight onesie has a super soft feel.



Chapter updates

Putnam County

Sarah Weimer, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Putnam County Library, is now leading her local Read Aloud chapter. Weimer said she is excited to lead a growing grassroots effort in her community, which is currently placing volunteer readers into classrooms where children need them the most.

Raleigh County

The Raleigh County chapter's first fall storytime for children, planned for Sept. 9, during the Beckley Kids' Classic Festival, is in conjunction with Sakura Mankai Cafe.

More new activity:

Several counties are starting or re-activating their Read Aloud chapters. In Gilmer County, Chapter President Cherri West reports that schools are planning to resume Read Aloud this Fall. In Logan County, educator Libby Salyers is working on signing up schools for Read Aloud and recruiting readers. In Lewis County, there is not currently an organized chapter, but Leading Creek Elementary and Robert L. Bland Middle have enrolled with Read Aloud. They are working to find classroom readers and have distributed books to students.

MORE CHAPTER PROJECTS ON PAGE 3



COURTESY PHOTOS

Kanawha County

Read Aloud WV President Michael Kawash, reading *The Gruffalo*, joined state Board of Education member Debra Sullivan and state Superintendent Michelle Blatt, at the Kanawha County Public Library for "Dolly Day." The event celebrated Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.



At Charleston's Piedmont Elementary School, students chose multiple books this spring. To celebrate Black History Month, the Charleston YWCA gave bins of diverse books to each classroom, and organized a book distribution with Read Aloud. Each child chose a book of their own. In the spring, the Rotary Club of Charleston funded a Read Aloud "Pop Up Book Shop." Each student chose three free books, put a bookplate in each one, wrote their names in the front, and then read and chatted about their choices.

Donate to Read Aloud; lower your tax bill

NIP credits offered for gifts of \$500 or more

You qualify for Neighborhood Investment Program tax credits if you:

- Pay income taxes in West Virginia, or
- Pay corporate net income taxes in West Virginia, and
- Donate \$500 or more to Read Aloud West Virginia.

Taxpayers can use this credit even if they don't itemize on federal or state income tax returns. It works like this:

1. Donate \$500 or more to a qualifying organization, such as Read Aloud WV.
2. Read Aloud sends you a voucher for as much as half the gift amount. At tax time, turn in the voucher to reduce your tax bill by

that amount. Taxpayers may use all or part of the credit. They have five years to use all the credit.

A larger gift qualifies for a larger credit. So, a \$1,000 donation gets \$500 in tax credits. A \$5,000 gift qualifies for \$2,500 off, and so on.

The maximum tax credit allowed in any one year is \$100,000. Donors cannot reduce their total state tax bill by more than 50 percent.

NIP credits are administered by the state to encourage donations to local nonprofits.

Every dollar donated to Read Aloud results in more time spent sending volunteer readers into classrooms to motivate children to read for fun, or giving kids happy, choice-filled book distributions.

As little as \$100 can fund books for an entire classroom, while \$1,100 can fund

a month of Books for Babies, providing a new book for all babies born at Women and Children's Hospital, CAMC, for example.

To donate:

1. Mail a check to Read Aloud WV, PO Box 1784, Charleston, WV 25326 (the most cost-effective method — and there's a remittance slip on the back page).

2. Go to readaloudwv.org and click the Donate button to make a secure donation through Square.

3. Transfer stock. Call 304-345-5212 or email stateoffice@readaloudwv.org for details.

4. Direct a retirement account distribution to Read Aloud. If it comes straight from your financial institution, even a disbursement from a tax-deferred plan may not incur taxes, and it will also qualify for the NIP tax credit. Call or email for details.

COUNTY FAIR continued from page 1
the first event were just really happy to have us back,” said Miller.

Since kids were choosing the books themselves, they found more interest in them, and let the inspiration from accomplishment transfer to their next book. The enthusiasm for reading was present throughout the fairgrounds in Cottageville, Miller said.

“A lot of kids and their families camped out there all week, and so they just built story time into their daily routine,” she said.

When she wasn’t at story hour, Miller said she pulled a red wagon around to try and reach everyone. Some of the kids had to work most of the week at their family’s exhibit, so Miller wanted to ensure they were included too.

“Jackson County is a community that values reading and shows it,” said Read Aloud Executive Director Dawn Miller. “More than once since that fair, I have met people who commented that their children attended story time, and they talked about how much they enjoyed it. This made a lasting impression on these families.”

With the success of this year’s event, they want to come back next year. As far as outreach to children and families goes, story time at the county fair couldn’t have been a better method, Cheryl Miller said.



Children chose books for themselves at Jackson County Read Aloud’s event at the county fair in Cottageville in late July.

“One day I was walking around, and I heard a dad say, ‘Sadie, you can read that book, but you have to wait until we get back to the camper,’” she said. “Sadie was just standing in the middle of the sidewalk, trying to read her book.”

A friend told Miller about meeting a young child in a local hair salon a week after the fair, who refused to put a book down until she was finished. Her mother said she’d chosen it from Read Aloud’s booth.



The girl finished her book at the salon. She grew even more excited when another woman told her the book was just the first in a wonderful series.

“I think that children are just naturally drawn to stories, and someone who enjoys reading and telling those stories. They were caught up in the enthusiasm of the stories,” she said. “We just made it so much fun.”

Joe Severino is Read Aloud WV’s Chapter Service Manager

Read Aloud WV is made possible by the generous, ongoing support of :



CONTACT US





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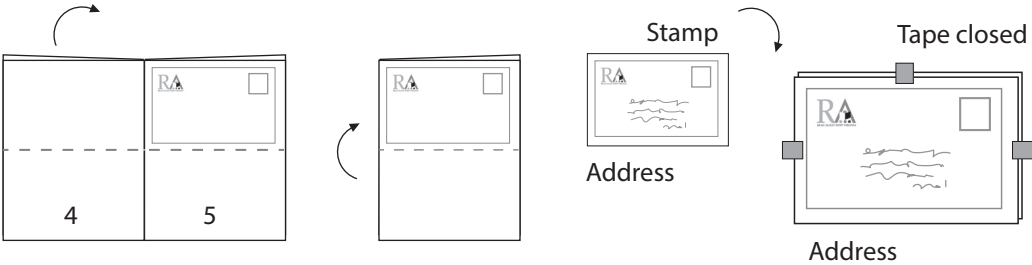
FIRST-CLASS
POSTAGE
STAMP

Help Read Aloud to spread the word

When you are done with this newsletter, share it with someone who cares about motivating children to read for fun

How:

Refold the newsletter with this page on the front. Follow the steps to fold, tape, address, add a first-class stamp, and mail.

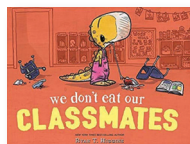


Possible recipients:

- Teachers or principals new to Read Aloud WV.
- Out of state connections who would like to support the cause.
- Potential volunteers in Ohio, Wetzel, Preston, Gilmer, Lewis, Mason, Cabell, Logan, Boone, Raleigh, Pendleton, Summers, and Wayne counties.

Help Read Aloud to grow its supporters and volunteers.

Favorites from volunteer readers



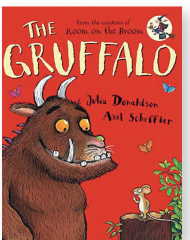
We Don't Eat Our Classmates

By Ryan T. Higgins

Grades PK-K

A young T-Rex learns a lesson in school etiquette and second chances.

Jessica Swank,
SS. Peter & Paul Catholic School,
Fayette County



The Gruffalo

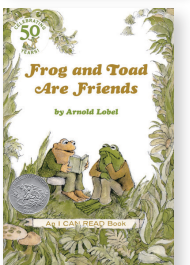
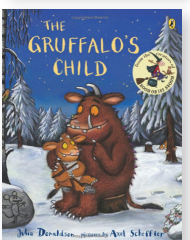
The Gruffalo's Child

By Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

Grades PK-1

Only imagination could create a creature quite like the Gruffalo, who may or may not be real.

Kathi Summers,
White Hall and Watson Elementary Schools,
Marion County;
and
Barbara Jones,
Flinn Elementary School,
Kanawha County



Frog and Toad are Friends

By Arnold Lobel

Grades K-2

The first book of the classic Frog and Toad series follows the gentle friends and their kindness toward each other.

Rebecca Severino,
Third Ward Elementary School,
Randolph County



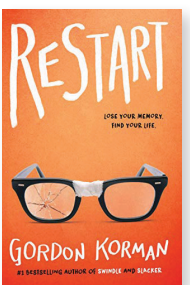
Memoirs of a Hamster

By Devin Scillian and Tim Bowers

Grades PK-2

What would life be like outside your comfort zone? Is the risk worth it for Seymour the hamster? He'll soon find out.

Lauren Jarroll,
Mt. Nebo Elementary School, Nicholas County



Restart

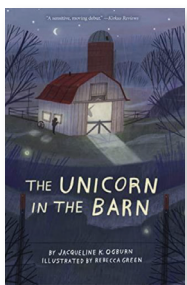
By Gordon Korman

Grades 4-6

What would you do if you had a second chance at a fresh start? Chase, a kid with a messy past, hits his head, and remembers nothing. Learning who he used to be, Chase must decide if he's ready to be someone he wants to be.

Evelyn Carroll, Crichton Elementary School,
Greenbrier County; Helen Herlocker, Paw Paw
Elementary School, Morgan County; and Amy Kesterson, Smoot
Elementary School, Greenbrier County

Elementary School, Morgan County; and Amy Kesterson, Smoot
Elementary School, Greenbrier County



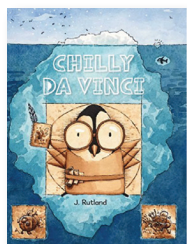
The Unicorn in the Barn

By Jacqueline K. Ogburn and Rebecca Green

Grades 3-5

A mysterious white deer isn't what local rumor says it to be, and a man soon finds himself on a journey of love, loss, and lifelong connections.

Elizabeth Spangler,
White Sulphur Springs and Lewisburg Elementary
Schools, Greenbrier County



Chilly da Vinci

By J. Rutland

Grades 2-3

To get good at something, you first have to fail. Chilly da Vinci, an inventor penguin, must trust himself to save his friends.

Kate Reed,
Beverly Elementary School, Randolph County



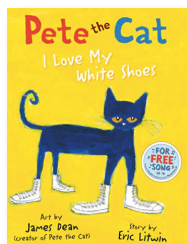
Sulwe

By Lupita Nyong'o

Grades 4-5

This book inspires children to seek their own unique beauty, finding self-esteem from within, and not seeking judgment from others.

Jacqueline Gill,
New River Intermediate School, Fayette County



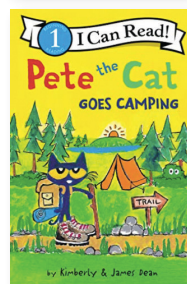
Pete the Cat series

By Eric Litwin and James Dean

Grades PK-2

Pete is one popular cat. Part picture book, part early reader, there are at least 15 books in the series so far.

Margaret Ways, Bunker Hill Elementary School,
Berkeley County; Caroline Seckman, Lubeck
Elementary School, Wood County; Krystal Crider,
Riverside Elementary School and Fairview
Elementary School, Marion County; Sandra Miller,
Inwood Primary School, Berkeley County; Kayla
Patterson, Henry J. Kaiser Elementary School,
Jackson County; Dana Pastro, Gerrardstown
Elementary School, Berkeley County; Ashley
Dolin, Richmond Elementary School, Kanawha
County; Lauren Roush, Shoals Elementary School,
Kanawha County; Pam Ennis, Rupert Elementary
School, Greenbrier County



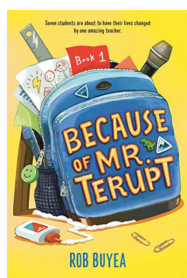
Because of Mr. Terupt

By Rob Buyea

Grades 4-6

A group of classmates in Mr. Terupt's fifth grade class face tough decisions about their futures after their teacher suffers a terrible accident.

Bob Fleenor,
Mill Creek Elementary School and Orchard View
Intermediate School, Berkeley County



SUMMER BOOK BINGE 2023

By the numbers

Each spring, Read Aloud West Virginia partners with funders, chapter volunteers, and a few chosen schools to offer a special distribution -- Summer Book Binge.

4

counties

Marion, Greenbrier,
Jackson, Kanawha

It started in 2016 with Crichton Elementary School in Greenbrier County, and has, at times, been offered in Wood, Berkeley, Fayette, and Raleigh counties.

6

schools

Fairview, Crichton,
Gilmore, Cottageville,
Chesapeake, and Sharon
Dawes elementary
schools

6

books
per student

Summer Book Binge is modeled on a similar project shown to prevent summer learning loss. Researchers Richard L. Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen found that giving children high-interest, freely chosen books at the end of the school year motivated children to read over the summer. Students maintained, or even gained, reading skills. (See their book, *Summer Reading: Closing the*



Rich/Poor Reading
Achievement Gap)

635
students

Choice is key. Read Aloud works with schools to give each child an opportunity to browse a set of sample books so they know exactly what they want to "order" for the summer. The books are theirs to keep.

3,810
personalized
book plates

6

year-end
awards assemblies

635

bags of books

Schools and volunteers incorporate the distribution into their

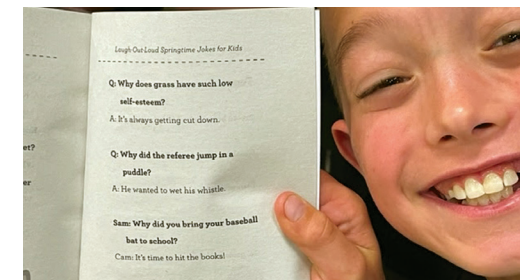
end-of-year assemblies. Summer Book Binge is part of the celebration.

12

weeks of summer

Summer Book Binge makes it easy for children to read for their own pleasure during the summer months.

Each time that Read Aloud has been able to compare reading scores between the beginning of summer and the end, students at Summer Book Binge schools did exactly as the children in the study group – they maintain or even gain reading skills while school is out.



A student at Gilmore Elementary flashes a smile and a book-themed joke in one of his new books he received at Summer Book Binge.

A personal perspective

"One picture is worth a thousand words." This quote accurately expresses the reasons why Read Aloud is important to me. Seeing the wide smile on the face of the above young man, as he found a great joke in the *Laugh Out Loud* book he had just received as part of his Summer Book Binge choices, makes all the time and energy involved in pulling this off worth it.

The satisfaction of engaging with this student was enhanced by two additional encounters.

First, the same evening of the Gilmore Book Binge, I observed a student from that school at a local restaurant with a new book in hand and her blue Summer Book Binge bag!

A few days later, a student waved at me from across the produce aisle at a local store to thank me for the books she received at Cottageville Elementary.

Read Aloud's mission is to motivate boys and girls to want to read. It is my hope that these students, and all the others, will get great pleasure from reading their books, and maybe, just maybe, maintain or increase their reading level.

Janet McCauley, President
Jackson County Read Aloud

Update on Gilmore scores

Jackson County Superintendent of Schools Will Hosaflook applauded his young readers on Aug. 17. While congratulating students and teachers for ranking fifth highest in last year's state reading and math assessment scores, he highlighted Gilmore Elementary's "impressive growth" in reading scores over the last two years, according to *The Jackson Star and Herald*.

Now, 69% of Gilmore Elementary students are reading at a proficient level, up from 41% during the 2020-21 school year.