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***"We shouldn't teach great books,
we should teach a love of reading."***

~ B. F. Skinner



FREE BOOKS GIVEN AWAY IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS **By Julie Hoffman, IRC President**

Pre-kindergarten students and some kindergarten students in Springfield, Illinois were gifted with a copy of Fisher-Price *Our Beautiful World* by Vera Ahyya and a Fisher-Price Little People toy set. These wonderful gifts were part of a promotion with We Need Diverse Books (WNDB), a nonprofit organization that promotes writers, illustrators, and publishers and "aims to create a world where every reader can find themselves in the pages of a book." They provide books to classrooms, and celebrate authors nationwide. We were so happy to be a participant in this giveaway!





IRC AWARDS AND GRANTS AT THE 2024 IRC CONFERENCE

By the Illinois Reading Council

Barack Obama Library Award *Michael Kennedy* *St. Catherine-St. Lucy School* *Oak Park, Illinois*

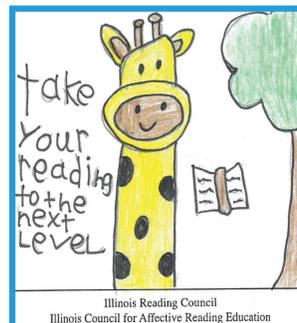
This award is a classroom library, valued at \$1000, which was created in 2006 through a generous gift to the IRC from (then) Senator Obama. This collection comprises carefully selected literature that is “culturally relevant” for African-American readers and targets students in the middle-school (5th-8th) grade range. Nominations for the next award are due November 1st.

Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award *Kevin Frederick* *Dr. Howard Elementary School* *Champaign, Illinois*

This award recognizes an outstanding teacher who makes contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities. Nominations for the next award are due November 1st.

Static Sticker Decal Contest *Jameson Lundy* *Moye Elementary School* *O'Fallon, Illinois*

Students in grade 4, 5, or 6 are encouraged to create an original design promoting reading. The winning design is printed on static stick decals and the winner is invited to the annual IRC Conference to receive their award. Entries must be postmarked no later than January 15.



Illinois Reading Council
Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education

IRC Service Award *Kevin Daugherty* *Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom* *Bonnie Matheis* *Illinois State Library and Illinois Center for the Book*

The IRC Service Award is awarded to the most deserving individuals for their service to the Illinois Reading Council. The award is given at the annual IRC Conference. Nominations for the next award are due November 1st.

Prairie State Award for Excellence in Children's Writing *Sarah Aronson*

This award recognizes an Illinois Children's or YA author whose body of work demonstrates excellence, engenders a love of literature, and embraces an important part of the mission of the Illinois Reading Council—to promote lifelong literacy. Nominations for the next award are due June 15th.

The Illinois Reading Council is also accepting grant applications for the following programs:

International Grant: The International Committee of the Illinois Reading Council has created a grant to promote literacy projects internationally. Studies indicate that poverty levels and literacy rates are inversely proportional. By supporting our international community in the areas of literacy, it in turn improves our universal society. The IRC wants to support these efforts. The [Grant Application and Guidelines](#) are available online. The maximum amount per grant is \$500. The application deadline is May 1. Grants will be awarded for the next fiscal year from July to June. Awards will be announced by July 15.

Literacy Support Grant: The Illinois Reading Council will award financial grants to local and special interest councils and individual council members for the purpose of promoting literacy development in the school and community, and/or providing professional development opportunities related to the improvement of reading and writing instruction. If fulfilling one of the above stated purposes requires a joint effort with another school, district, or other agency, letters stating their intended involvement are required from these agencies. The [Guidelines and Application Forms](#) are available online. There is no specific amount per grant. The amount awarded for each grant may be less than the amount requested. Application deadline is May 1. Grants will be awarded for the next fiscal year from July to June. Awards will be announced by July 15.



The International Literacy Association has also announced their Chapter Awards. We are excited to share that **Prairie Area Reading Council** (Year 14) has been awarded the ILA Honor Award that recognizes local, student, and special interest chapters that organize and conduct well-rounded programs serving the chapter members, the community, the state/provincial chapter, and the International Literacy Association. The Illinois Reading Council is extremely proud of Prairie Area Reading Council as well as the incredible literacy work done by all of our local and special interest councils. Keep up the good work!

[Click here to find out more about IRC Awards and Grant that are available now!](#)



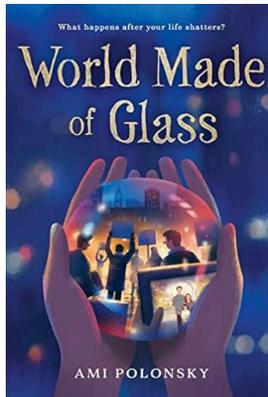
I am reading [Homeland: My Father Dreams of Palestine](#) by Hannah Moushabeck and illustrated by Reem Madooh.
~ Julie Hoffman, IRC President

This beautiful picture book celebrates peace, joy, culture, and the power of sharing stories. We can all benefit from this story of three Palestinian girls who listen to their dad's stories of his homeland.



Illinois Reads Pick of the Month is World Made of Glass by Ami Polonsky.

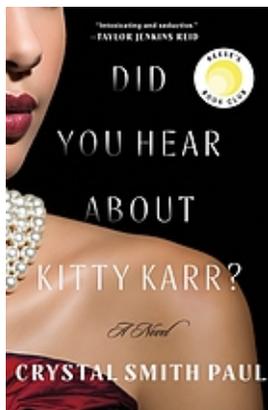
~ 2024 Illinois Reads Book List, Grades 6 to 8



A girl channels her grief and pain into love and activism in this heartbreaking, heart-mending novel of family, friendship, and community. Iris tries to act normal at school, going through the motions and joking around with her friends. But nothing is normal, and sometimes it feels like she'll never laugh again. How can she, when her dad is dying of a virus that's off-limits to talk about? When she knows that soon all she'll have left of her kind, loving dad are memories, photos, and a binder full of the poems they used to exchange? In a sea of rage and grief, Iris resolves to speak out against the rampant fear, misinformation, and prejudice surrounding AIDS—and find the pieces of Dad that she never knew before. Along the way, Iris might just find new sides to herself.

I am reading Did You Hear About Kitty Karr?: A Novel by Crystal Smith Paul.

~ Carrie Sheridan, IRC Executive Director



When Kitty Karr Tate, a White icon of the silver screen, dies and unexpectedly leaves her multimillion-dollar estate to the St. John sisters, three young and wealthy Black women, it starts a buzz throughout the press and Hollywood. Elise St. John, a current Hollywood star, would rather focus on Kitty's estate than deal with her own brewing scandals in the press. However, as she reads through Kitty's journals, Elise uncovers unexpected secrets from Kitty's past that will rock the lives of her family. This book is a page-turner as it tells the story of Kitty's ascent to glamorous stardom from the segregated South. It is all about family ties, race, gender, debts owed, and debatable crimes, and past choices made to break free of them.

IRC ELECTION BALLOT
By the Illinois Reading Council

Please join the Illinois Reading Council in welcoming the new state officers to the IRC Board of Directors starting July 1st. Congratulations to:



Deb Augsburger,
Vice President of IRC,
 who will serve as President-Elect in 2025-2026 and President in 2026-2027.



Melissa Wheeler,
Secretary of IRC,
 who will serve a two-year term until July 2026.



Donna Herman,
IRC Membership Director,
 who will serve a two-year term until July 2026.

Special thanks also to the officers who are leaving the board on July 1st. We can't thank them enough for their service. It is greatly appreciated!

In 2025-2026, IRC will be electing the next Vice President, Treasurer, and ILA State Coordinator. If you have been active in a local council, special interest council, or the IRC Board of Directors, you may qualify for one of these state offices. If you are interested in any of these positions, please complete an application form by October 1, 2024. For more information, please email the [IRC Office](#).

UPCOMING PD EVENTS

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **April 2, 2024: MID-State Reading Council** will host How to Love Teaching Again Book Club at 4:30 pm at Gill Street Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **April 2, 2024: East Central-EIU Reading Council** will host a Member Connect Meet Up at 5:30 pm at Casa Del Mar, 1410 4th Street, Charleston, Illinois.
- **April 3, 2024: IRC Webinar on Reach For the Books: Reenergize Reading Routines** with **Maria Walther and Katie Walther** from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **April 17, 2024: MID-State Reading Council** will host Teacher Trivia Night at 7:00 pm at Gill Street Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **April 18, 2024: Sauk Valley Reading Council** will host Literature & Laughter Yoga: Breath In-Laugh Out with Pat Braun from 4:00 to 5:30 pm at the Dixon Park District Facility, 1312 Washington Ave, Dixon, Illinois.
- **April 18, 2024: Southern Illinois Reading Council** will host the Spring Celebration Short Story Contest from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Carbondale Civic Center, 200 S. Illinois Ave, Carbondale, Illinois.

- **April 25, 2024: Will County Reading Council** will host the Technology Innovation and Teacher Resource Swap from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm at Lewis University, Lewis University, 1 University Parkway, Romeoville, Illinois.
- **April 25, 2024: Starved Rock Reading Council** will host the Young Authors Celebration from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at Grand Bear Resort, 2643 IL-178, North Utica, Illinois.
- **April 25, 2024: Western Illinois Reading Council** will host Book Journaling from 5:30 to 7:00 pm at Reserve Artisan Ales, 185 S Kellog Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

#WhatIAmReading: Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences. Creative pictures of you and your book in your favorite reading spot are encouraged.

IRC Highlight Reels: Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

Other Literacy Topics:

- Tips For Writing Grants
- Technology and Other Literacy Links
- Games That Teach Literacy Skills
- Books for Struggling Readers
- And any other literacy topics that interests you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

QUICK LINKS

[Visit the IRC Website](#)

[Full IRC Events Calendar](#)

[Latest on the IRC Conference](#)

[Available IRC Awards and Grants](#)

[Bring IRC PD to your School District](#)

[Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program](#)

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:



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