ANNIE BARROWS

Annie Barrows published the first book in her New York Times bestselling series, Ivy and Bean, in 2006 and it was an ALA Notable Book for 2007. It was followed by nine others. Her 2008 award-winning children’s novel The Magic Half was described by School Library Journal as “a delightful tale brimming with mystery magic and adventure.” The latest novel in the series, Magic in the Mix was published in fall 2014. Barrows was able to complete revisions on a book for her late aunt, Mary Ann Shaffer, Guernsey, the tale of the Channel Island of Guernsey during World War II. Barrows saw this work “as a unique occasion to help someone I loved.” The novel has over three million copies in print in both hardcover and paperback. Barrows travels all over the United States discussing the novel. Guernsey was on more than fifteen “best of the year” lists and has now been published in thirty-seven countries.

MATT DE LA PEÑA

Matt de la Peña is the New York Times Bestselling, Newbery Medal winning author of six young adult novels, including Mexican WhiteBoy, We Were Here and The Living and two picture books, A Nation’s Hope and Last Stop on Market Street. In 2016, he was awarded the NCTE Intellectual Freedom Award. Matt received his MFA in creative writing from San Diego State University and his BA from the University of the Pacific, where he attended school on a full athletic scholarship for basketball. Matt currently lives in Brooklyn, NY with his family. He teaches creative writing and visits high schools and colleges throughout the country.

DAN GUTMAN

Like a lot of boys, Dan Gutman hated to read, but loved sports. That’s one big reason why he writes a lot about sports and aims his books at reluctant readers like himself. In 1994, Dan cooked up a middle grade novel about a boy who finds the most valuable baseball card in the world and discovers he has the power to travel through time using the baseball card like a time machine. The result was Honus & Me. The book was rejected by ten publishers over two years before HarperCollins published it in 1997. Honus & Me was nominated for eleven state book awards and was loved by children everywhere. It was also made into a play and a TV movie titled “The Winning Season.” It also established Dan as an emerging name in children’s fiction. This award-winning title was followed by a series of sports books including Jackie & Me, Babe & Me, and Mickey & Me, just to name a few. His My Weird School series and The Genius Files series are also wildly popular. When he’s not writing books, Dan visits around 40 schools a year and is a loving husband and father to his wife Nina and their children Sam and Emma.
**LYNDA BLACKMON LOWERY**

At age 15, Lynda Blackmon Lowery was the youngest person to march all the way from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. Lowery, who still lives in Selma today, has written a book for young readers about her experience: *Turning 15 On The Road To Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March*, an illustrated memoir. “I would like for young people to know that each day of your life is a journey into history,” Lowery tells NPR’s Arun Rath. “You have the ability to change something each day of your life. Believe it or not, people, it can’t happen without you.” Lynda Blackmon Lowery now works as a case manager at a mental health center.

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**MEGAN MCDONALD**

Megan McDonald is the creator of the popular and award-winning *Judy Moody* and *Stink* series. She is also the author of the *Sisters Club Trilogy*, two books about *Ant and Honey Bee* and many other books for children. After writing her second story about Judy Moody, *Judy Moody Gets Famous!*, she confessed, “Okay, I admit it. I am Judy Moody. Same-same! In my family of sisters, we’re famous for exaggeration. Judy Moody is me...exaggerated!” Megan lives with her husband and pets in Sebastopol, California. The newest book in the Judy Moody and Friends series, *Judy Moody and Friends: Judy Moody, Tooth Fairy*; will be out just in time for the 2017 IRC Conference!

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**ALICE B. MCGINTY**

Alice B. McGinty is the award-winning author of over forty books for children, including *Rabbi Benjamin’s Buttons* and the *About the Author* series of author biographies. She is the Co-Regional Advisor of the Illinois Chapter of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). She is a writer, reader, writing coach and instructor, book reviewer, author, and mom. If you peeked in her pockets, you might find scraps of paper and a pen, a pebble or two, and a guitar pick. Alice has led music sessions for religious school and taught pre-kindergarten classes in her synagogue for many years. An enthusiastic dancer, hiker, and runner, Alice lives in Urbana, Illinois.

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**KENN NESBITT**

Former Children’s Poet Laureate (2013-2015), Kenn Nesbitt is the author of many books for kids, including *Kiss, Kiss Good Night, My Hippo Has the Hiccups, Revenge of the Lunch Ladies* and many others. His poems have appeared in numerous bestselling anthologies, including every book in the popular *Kids Pick the Funniest Poems* series, and anthologies with nearly two million copies in print. His work has been published in hundreds of school textbooks around the world, as well as national television programs, and numerous children’s magazines. Kenn travels the country, visiting over 60 schools each year, sharing his wacky brand of poetry with kids nationwide, and helping to create a new generation of poetry lovers. His website poetry4kids.com, is the most visited children’s poetry website on the Internet.

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AARON REYNOLDS

Aaron Reynolds is a New York Times Bestselling Author and has written many highly acclaimed books for kids, including Nerdy Birdy, Here Comes Destructosaurus!, Carnivores, and the Caldecott Honor Winning - Creepy Carrots! He has a passion for kids’ books and seeing kids reading them. He regularly makes time to visit schools where his hilarious hands-on presentations keep kids spellbound. Aaron lives in Chicago with his wife, 2 kids, 4 cats, and anywhere between zero and ten goldfish, depending on the day. You can visit him at www.aaron-reynolds.com.

ALAN SITOMER

Alan Sitomer is a California Teacher of the Year award winner, urban literacy specialist, and nationally renowned keynote speaker who specializes in engaging reluctant, underperforming students. In addition to having been an inner-city English teacher and adjunct professor in the Graduate School of Education at Loyola Marymount University, Alan is also the acclaimed author of 20 books with works ranging from teacher methodology texts and resources to hard-hitting YA novels to humorous and warm children’s picture books that bring smiles to the faces of early readers (and their parents). Alan currently lives in Los Angeles where he is pioneering projects that bring cutting edge virtual reality learning modules to our schools.

THE TWO SISTERS

Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, known as “The Two Sisters,” have more than sixty years of teaching experience between them and are the authors of the best-selling books The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades and The CAFE Book: Engaging all Students in Daily Literacy Assessment and Instruction. Both books have over a dozen companion DVD’s including Good-Fit Books. Gail and Joan are also creators of two popular websites, www.thedailycafe.com and www.theccpensieve.com. Both websites are extremely useful for organizing and carrying out the principles of their research-based programs. Joan and Gail are internationally recognized consultants who specialize in assessment-driven instruction, meaningful literacy and math engagement, and creating beautiful environments for effective learning in classrooms. “We want what every teacher wants. Effective teaching methods that can adapt as things change, leading our children to a lifetime of learning. As long as we keep finding new ways to make that happen, we will keep sharing!”

SARA AHMED

Sara Ahmed has taught in urban, suburban, public, independent, and international schools. Sara is coauthor with Harvey “Smokey” Daniels of Upstanders: How to Engage Middle School Hearts and Minds with Inquiry. Sara’s classrooms are designed to help her young adolescent students to consider their own identities and to take action in the world in socially responsible ways. She is a member of the teacher leadership team for Facing History and Ourselves, an international organization devoted to developing critical thinking and empathy for others. Sara is a Heinemann PD Consulting Author and is available to do on-site PD. She also presents at National conferences and alongside Harvey “Smokey” Daniels and others at Heinemann multi-day institutes. Sara will be spending the 2016-2017 school year at NIST School in Bangkok, Thailand, as a K-8 Literacy Coach.
HARVEY “SMOKEY” DANIELS

Harvey “Smokey” Daniels has been a city and suburban classroom teacher and a college professor, and now works as a national consultant on literacy and inquiry education. In language arts, Smokey is known for his pioneering work on student book clubs, as recounted in Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups, and Minilessons for Literature Circles. Among his recent bestselling books on content-area literacy are Upstanders, Subjects Matter, Texts and Lessons for Content Area Writing, and Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action. His next book, due out later this year, is the Curious Classroom: Getting Started with Inquiry. Smokey works with elementary and secondary teachers throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, offering demonstration lessons, workshops and consulting, with focus on student-centered inquiry and peer collaboration. Smokey shows colleagues how to simultaneously build students’ reading strategies, balance their reading “diets”, and strengthen the social skills they need to become genuine lifelong readers and researchers.

WILEY BLEVINS

Wiley Blevins has taught elementary school both in the United States and South America. He completed his undergraduate work in Elementary Education at Bowling Green State University and his graduate work in Education at Harvard University. Currently Editorial Specialist for Early Reading at Scholastic, Inc., Blevins is the author of several books on phonics instruction, including Phonemic Awareness Activities for Early Reading Success, Quick-and-Easy Learning Games: Phonics, and Phonics from A to Z: A Practical Guide.

M. COLLEEN CRUZ

In addition to writing The Unstoppable Writing Teacher, Cruz is the author of several other titles for teachers including Independent Writing and A Quick Guide to Reaching Struggling Writers, as well as the author of the young adult novel Border Crossing, a Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award Finalist. She was a classroom teacher in general education and inclusive settings before joining the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project where she is a Senior Lead Staff Developer. Cruz currently supports schools, teachers and their students nationally and internationally as a literacy consultant. When she is not writing or teaching, Cruz is reading, traveling, or attempting to sleep. She lives with her partner and children in Brooklyn, New York.

RUTH CULHAM

Ruth has written over 40 books and best-selling resources illuminating both writing and the reading-writing connection for countless educators around the globe. Her groundbreaking work with the writing traits and writing from reading is the culmination of 40 years of research, practice and passion. Along with new writing projects such as The Writing Thief and Dream Keepers: Mentor Texts that Celebrate Latino Culture, Ruth conducts professional development for schools and districts. She is a contributor and 2016 Development Editor for the professional journal The Reading Teacher.
PATRICIA EDWARDS

Patricia Edwards is a Professor of Language and Literacy in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. She is also a nationally and internationally recognized expert in parent involvement, home, school, community partnerships, multicultural literacy, early literacy, and family/intergenerational literacy, especially among poor and minority children. She served as a member of the IRA Board of Directors from 1998–2001, and in 2006-2007 as the first African American President of the Literacy Research Association (formerly the National Reading Conference), and as the 2010-2011 President of the International Reading Association (currently the International Literacy Association). She has published articles in highly refereed journals, authored two nationally acclaimed family literacy programs: *Parents as Partners in Reading: A Family Literacy Training Program* and *Talking Your Way to Literacy: A Program to Help Nonreading Parents Prepare Their Children for Reading* as well as seven books. Her books on family/parent involvement include: *A Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to Parents*, *Tapping the Potential of Parents: A Strategic Guide to Boosting Student Achievement Through Family Involvement*, *Children Literacy Development: Making It Happen Through School, Family, and Community Involvement* and *New Ways to Engage Parents: Strategies and Tools for Teachers and Leaders*.

CLARK GOLTZ

Clark Goltz has been a leading authority in elementary education for almost forty years as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent and college instructor. He speaks frequently throughout the state of Iowa, the Midwest and internationally, reminding educators about the importance of their role as teachers. He has received leadership and educational recognition as Teacher of the Year, an Iowa Scholar in Residence, NAESP National Fellow, Administrator of the Year and Chairperson of the Iowa Delegation to the White House Conference on Library and Information Services. Clark has led schools under his charge to achieve state and national awards. As Executive Director of the Iowa Reading Association, Clark has been a committee member for the Iowa Statewide Literacy Leadership Team, which established the Iowa Core Literacy Standards and, most recently served on the committee to develop and establish the Iowa Reading Research Center. Clark currently serves as an educational consultant for school districts in Iowa.

JILL JACKSON

Jill Jackson uses her humor and on-the-ground experiences to support educators as they navigate the central issues in implementing the Common Core, reading programs and interventions. A former classroom teacher and administrator, whether she’s in the classroom demonstrating lessons, strategizing with the superintendent or training veteran literacy coaches, Jill’s advice and assistance is deeply rooted in the reality of school life and focused on unambiguous next steps. The words she lives by are: “Straight Talk. Simple Steps.” Jill has used her experiences in 30+ states and with thousands of teachers, coaches, administrators, program directors and superintendents as inspiration for her down-to-earth how-to books: *Get a Backbone, Principal!*, *Get Some Guts, Coach!*, *How to Teach Students to Critically Think About Text*, and *How to Teach Students to Write Informational Text*. She is the Managing Director and Owner of Jackson Consulting and is deeply dedicated to tacos, manicures and TSA Pre-Check.
MARJORIE MARTINELLI

Marjorie Martinelli is coauthor with Kristine Mraz of *Smarter Charts* and the new *Smarter Charts for Math, Science, and Social Studies*. Their popular blog, *Chartchums*, keeps teachers in touch with ongoing and relevant classroom issues and ways to use charts as a support. *Chartchums* is also on Facebook and Twitter. Marjorie is a staff developer at the Reading and Writing Project where for the past ten years she has led numerous leadership groups and presented at many national and international educational conferences. Prior to joining the Reading and Writing Project, Marjorie was a New York City public school teacher, a teacher-researcher, and an adjunct teacher at Bank Street College of Education. She has an MA in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from New York University and is a contributing author to Lucy Calkins’ *Units of Study for Teaching Writing*. She is also the author of two *Brain Quest* Math decks for first and second grade. Marjorie lives in Greenwich Village with her husband Tom, where they raised two daughters, Katherine and Christina.

KRISTINE MRAZ

Kristine Mraz is coauthor with Marjorie Martinelli of *Smarter Charts* and the new *Smarter Charts for Math, Science and Social Studies*. She also is coauthor – with Alison Porceli and Cheryl Tyler – of the new *Purposeful Play*, the book that helps you make play a powerful part of your teaching. Her previous title, the bestselling *A Mindset for Learning* (coauthored with Christine Hertz), provides practical and powerful strategies for cultivating optimism, flexibility, and empathy alongside traditional academic skills. Kristi teaches Kindergarten in the New York City Public Schools. In addition to writing and teaching, she consults in schools across the country and as far away as Taiwan. In her free time, you might find her with her dog and husband in Brooklyn. You can follow all of her adventures on Twitter @MrazKristine or on her blog, kinderconfidential.wordpress.com.

FRANK SERAFINI

Frank Serafini is a Professor of Literacy Education and Children’s Literature in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. In addition, Frank is an award winning children’s picture book author and illustrator, and has recently been awarded the Mayhill Arbuthnot Award from the International Literacy Association as the 2014 Distinguished Professor of Children’s Literature. Frank was an elementary school teacher and literacy specialist for twelve years in Phoenix, AZ. He received his Masters degree and Ph.D. in Reading Education from Arizona State University. He has received numerous awards for his college teaching. In 2008, Frank began writing and illustrating a series of nonfiction picture books focusing on nature with *Kids Can Press*. The *Look Closely* series contains books about the desert, garden, pond, rainforest, shore and forest. In 2009, *Looking Closely Along the Shore* won the International Literacy Association Teachers’ Choice Award, and Honorable Mention from the Society of School Librarians International. Frank has published seven books with Heinemann including: *The Reading Workshop, Reading Aloud and Beyond, Lessons in Comprehension, Around the Reading Workshop in 180 Days* and *Classroom Reading Assessments*. 

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JENNIFER SERRAVALLO

Jennifer Serravallo is an author, national consultant and frequent speaker at state and national literacy conferences. She was a Senior Staff Developer at Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, and an NYC public school teacher in Title I schools. Jen’s most recent book, *The Reading Strategies Book*, is a master collection of 300 strategies you can use to support K-8 readers. Her other books include *The Literacy Teacher’s Playbooks*, *Teaching Reading in Small Groups, Conferring with Readers*, and the two-time award winning *Independent Reading Assessment* series. Follow her online at www.jenniferserravallo.com, on Twitter @ jserravallo, or listen to her *Teacher Learning Sessions* podcast, now available on iTunes.

CINDY GERWIN

Cindy is passionate about literacy and about building literacy communities full of curious joyful learners. For ten years, Cindy has worked to share her passion in her fifth-grade classroom by engaging learners, students and their families, with authentic literacy experiences. Cindy models lifelong learning through literacy by working hard to achieve the following: an ELL endorsement, a Reading Teacher designation, a National Board Certification, serving as Past President of the Illinois Reading Council, writing numerous articles including a column in the *IRC Journal*, and working towards a Doctorate of Education in Literacy at Judson University. Cindy has traveled both nationally and internationally to share her passion for literacy learning. Her interests include the affective domain of reading, multicultural literacy, and social equity and justice. Cindy builds upon current research and theory to provide practical, realistic applications in today’s classrooms.

ROXANNE OWENS

In addition to her interest in Dr. Seuss, Roxanne Owens researches technology in education, and enjoys mentoring new teachers. She is a past recipient of the DePaul University Excellence in Teaching Award, the Excellence in Public Service Award, and the Spirit of DePaul Award. She is an active member and Past President of the Illinois Reading Council and is a member of the IRC Hall of Fame. Roxanne lives in Chicago with her husband, daughter and dog. She is working on a middle grade novel which she hopes to finish before she leaves her middle age years.

MARGARET POLICASTRO

Margaret Mary Policastro is a professor of language and literacy at Roosevelt University where she directs the language and literacy program and is the founding director of the Summer Reading Clinic for children. Margaret has more than 30 years of experience teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses in language and literacy at Roosevelt. Prior to working in higher education, Margaret served as a reading and art teacher in Indiana. She has worked more than 10 years on grant funded literacy projects in Chicago Public Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago and is currently the principal investigator of the Improving Teaching Quality grant from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). She serves on the editorial board for both the *Reading Teacher* and the *Illinois Reading Council Journal* and has published numerous articles, books, and book chapters. She most recently published *Living Literacy at Home: A Parent’s Guide* and she is the coauthor of *The New Balanced Literacy School: Implementing Common Core and Formative Assessment in the New Balanced Literacy Classroom*. For more information, visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org
BECKY MCTAGUE

Becky McTague is an associate professor of Language and Literacy at Roosevelt University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses. Her duties also include supervising the Reading Clinic and serving as an instructional coach for schools in urban and suburban areas centered on literacy improvement. She has served as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, and Reading Recovery Teacher Leader. She has also been director of locally funded grants centered on balanced reading, as well as school improvement. Her research interests encompass vocabulary, strategies for struggling readers, and support for English Language Learners. Publications include articles in *The Reading Teacher* and the *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, book chapters, and co-authorship of *The New Balanced Literacy School: Implementing Common Core* and *Formative Assessment in the New Balanced Literacy Classroom*.

SHEILA RUH

SHERRY SEJNOST

Sheila Ruh has been a Media Specialist for the past twelve years. Sheila currently works in District 201 at Westmont Junior High. Sheila is also the Media in Education Chair for the Illinois Reading Council, Corresponding Secretary of Prairie Area Reading Council, and an Adjunct Professor at Dominican University. Sherry Sejnost is currently the Media Specialist at Mannheim District 83 in Melrose Park, Illinois. Prior to that, she was a Special Education teacher for twenty-six years in the same district. Sherry is also the President of Prairie Area Reading Council, the Technology Chair for the IRC Conference, and Publicity and Publication Committee Chair for the Illinois Reading Council. Both Sheila and Sherry enjoy working with teachers to embed technology and the Common Core State Standards into the curriculum as well as promoting information literacy with teachers and students.

COLLEEN SEXTON

Colleen Sexton is an Associate Provost and Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs at Governors State University, University Park, Illinois since July 2014. In that role, she provides leadership in curriculum development and program assessment at both the state and national level. Prior to her appointment as Associate Provost she was a Professor of Science Education and the Division Chairperson for Education at Governors State University. She has been co-author for all five editions of *Teaching Science for All Children*. She is also the co-author of two other books, *Science for All Children – Methods for Constructing Understanding* and *Science for All Children – Lessons for Constructing Understanding*.

PATRICIA TYLKA

As a literacy consultant for the DuPage Regional Office of Education, Patricia Tylka provides best practice support for administrators and teachers. As an adjunct at the College of DuPage, Patti support students’ academic literacy and helps English Language Learners hone their personal and academic literacy skills. A high school teacher for 25 years, Patti has experience in staff development as a Project CRISS trainer, a Kagan Cooperative Learning National trainer, an Illinois Writing Project Leader, a brain-based learning specialist, and a PSAT/SAT/ACT coach. She has presented at state, national and international conferences.