

Fall Newsletter



Greetings from Your President

Dear FVRC Members,

Welcome to a new school year. Ready or not . . . the pitter pat of scampering feet and the squeals of excitement will be billowing throughout our school hallways. Like me, many of you are spending your August days preparing your classrooms and thinking about the year ahead. We have important and demanding work ahead of us!

We have chosen to work within the theme of Teacher Empowerment, which can mean different things to different people. Our council strongly believes that Teacher Empowerment is the pathway to empowering the lives of our students and their families. With increasing school deficits, educators are facing increasing scrutiny on all fronts. As educators in the trenches each day, we understand the many misconceptions and misnomers held by politicians and people outside our field. It is more important than ever to protect and nurture our profession by dedicating ourselves to increasing our skills and knowledge. Teacher Empowerment also provides a pathway to educating politicians and society.

As you begin your important work this year, I ask you to think about what teacher empowerment means to you. We hope you can attend the empowering events we have planned for you this school year.

Spread the word and invite your fellow colleagues to attend an event this year. We must empower each other.

I look forward to seeing you. Take care of yourself this year, and I wish all of you a spectacular 2011-2012 school year.

Best regards,

Andrea Schaal

Empowerment through Volunteerism

The Fox Valley Reading Council is helping the Aurora Branch of World Relief bring literacy to needy refugee families. Many of these children have never seen a book let alone held one in their hands. Many of the adults have never held a pencil. One way you can help is to bring a board book(s) or a book suitable for babies through preschool age to our events for our Books for Babies initiative. We hope to be able to extend this program to refugee families.

World Relief also needs volunteers for three tutoring programs:

- **Elementary Reading Club:** Meets at McCleery Elementary School from 2:20-4:00 every Thursday. Contact Casey Barrette for more information @ 630-906-9546 x33.
- **Middle School Club:** Meets at Illinois Math and Science Academy from 4:30-5:45 every Tuesday. If either you or someone you know is interested in volunteering please contact Casey Barrette @ 630-906-9546 x33.
- **High School Club:** Meets at West Aurora High School from 3:00-4:30 every Wednesday. Contact Stephanie Dawkins for more information 630-906-9546 x32.

WORLD RELIEF



In addition to the tutoring programs, World Relief also offers ESL programs for adult refugees:

- Classroom Tutors: Tutors work in a classroom setting working with adults learning to read.
- One-on-One Tutoring: Tutors work with individual adult learners.

If you are interested in helping out with adult refugees, please contact Heather Davis at hdavis@wr.org or Liz Clinton at 630-906-9546 x21. Please spread the word to family and friends who might be interested in sharing the gift of literacy.

SEPTEMBER EVENT

Teacher as Researcher Grant

Who: All K-12 Educators

What: Dr. Sunday Cummins will facilitate educators in writing an action research grant about literacy and instruction. This will be a working session- come with an idea.

When: Saturday, September 17 2011

9:00am.- 12:00 pm.

Where: National-Louis University, Lisle Campus

Why: Recipients of the grant can earn up to \$4000 to fund their project.

*For detailed information, see attached flyer or R.S.V.P. to

andrea.schaal@att.net



For more information visit us:

Website: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/localcouncils/foxvalley.html

Email: foxvalley@illinoisreadingcouncil.org



Like us on Facebook to learn about upcoming events!

Follow us on:

<http://www.foxvalleyreadingcouncil.blogspot.com/>

OCTOBER EVENT

Finding a Voice- Leadership Skills to Build Support for Our Work with Steven Zemelman

Who: K-12 Educators

What: Steven Zemelman, accomplished author and School Reform expert will deliver a highly interactive and inspirational presentation. The session will explore concepts and skills necessary for teachers to communicate and collaborate within our schools and communities.

Where: Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove Campus (APC Building/Event Room)

When: Thursday, October 13 2011

6:30 PM- 8:30 PM

Steven Zemelman is a school reform expert who directs the Illinois Writing Project, and works to build long-term sustainability of school improvement. He has guided the start-up of a number of innovative schools in Chicago and downstate Illinois. His main expertise is in literacy, whole-school development, and teacher leadership.

\$5 fee for FVRC members

\$7 fee for non-members

R.S.V.P by October 6: grlofgren@comcast.net



FVRC Recruitment

FVRC primarily services the Kane County schools and their communities. Currently, our Officers and Committee Representatives are educators from many counties outside of Kane County. Although we love a diverse group of volunteers, we would also love to recruit educators who teach in Kane County.

If you are searching for a Professional Learning Community that is passionate about literacy, please consider joining us in a leadership capacity. Please contact me, and I will fill you in on how you can become involved: andrea.schaal@att.net.

PUTTING BOOKS IN LITTLE HANDS: HELPING FOSTER BIG DREAMS

EMPOWERING THROUGH EARLY LITERACY

This year, the Fox Valley Reading Council is taking on a very important Early Literacy initiative: Books for Babies. Books for Babies is a national literacy program organized by the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends, and Foundations. The Association works with local organizations to help them provide literacy information and materials to parents with newborn babies and young children within local communities. Parents are provided with kits (either in English or Spanish) containing books, early literacy information, baby's first library card, and local library information. What a wonderful way to help families recognize the importance of literacy very early on and work towards creating life-long and passionate readers! FVRC is hoping to fund our initiative through a grant. However, we are still asking for the help of our membership! Please help us EMPOWER community families by bringing new or gently used books for little ones to our events. Through hard work and your donations, we can help get literacy materials into the hands of community families! Please visit this website for more information:

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/altaff/products_services/booksforbabies/index.cfm.



President's Pick

I admit to being a bit selfish with my summer reading. Having just finished my rigorous Reading Specialist program at National-Louis, I was starving for *fun* reading this summer. However, I did get around to reading Peter Johnston's *Choice Words*. This will be one of those books that I will visit and revisit throughout the course of my teaching career. *Choice Words* ties beautifully with our Teacher Empowerment theme in that it's all about using instructional language in the classroom that empowers learning and agency. As teachers, we often know intuitively what to do to propel our students' learning. Think about how empowering it is to be able to notice and name what we intuitively know is good teaching and learning. I noticed in my tutoring this summer that I was more reflective and cognitive in my choice of words, and I am eager to explore Johnston's ideas in my classroom. I urge you to read this book too.



Saturday, September 17th
National Louis University,
Lisle Campus, 850 Warrenville Road
Room 301
9-12pm

Teacher as Researcher Grant

Come find out about IRA's Teacher as Researcher Grant (i.e., funds for your instruction)! This grant supports classroom teachers who undertake action research inquiries about literacy and instruction. Grants are awarded for up to \$4,000. Time and access to a computer lab will be provided for participants to develop questions and begin the application process. Bring some ideas with you. For more information on IRA's Teacher as Researcher Grant [click here](#).

"I need to empower myself so I can empower others."

Dr. Sunday Cummins, Assistant Professor in the Reading Program at National Louis University, will share sample applications that have received awards and tips for writing a strong application. She will also be available to meet with individuals about their plans for the grant application.

*There is no cost for this event. FVRC is collecting board books for needy families with infants and toddlers. Please bring a new or gently used book to donate. A light breakfast will be provided.
R.S.V.P. to: andrea.schaal@att.net by Monday, September 12th*

FVRC Presents: Steve Zemelman

Finding a Voice-

Leadership Skills to Build Support for Our Work



Steve Zemelman is a school reform expert who directs the Illinois Writing Project, and works to build long-term sustainability of school improvement. He has guided the start-up of a number of innovative schools in Chicago and downstate Illinois. His main expertise is in literacy, whole-school development, and teacher leadership. With several partners he has written numerous professional texts, including *13 Steps to Teacher Empowerment: Taking a More Active Role in Your School Community*; *Content Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide*; *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content Area Reading*; *Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*; *Rethinking High School*; *History Comes Home: Family Stories Across the Curriculum*; and *A Community of Writers: Teaching Composition in the Junior and Senior High School*. Formerly he directed the Center for City Schools at National-Louis University.

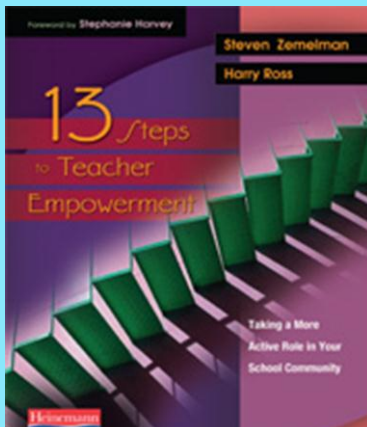
Steve
Zemelman

Thursday, October 13, 2011
6:30-8:30 pm.

**Waubonsee
Community
College**
Sugar Grove
Campus APC
*Building in the
Event Room*
Route 47 at
Waubonsee Drive
Sugar Grove, IL
60554-9454

In challenging times it's crucial for teachers to speak out thoughtfully, to build collaboration within our schools, and to educate people about the demanding nature

of our work in our communities. This session will explore concepts and skills for this effort, and actively help participants get started.



Books will be available for purchase.

\$5 fee for FVRC members

\$7 fee for non-members

RSVP: grlofgren@comcast.net

by October 6th.

FVRC is collecting board books for BOOKS FOR BABIES. Please bring a new or gently used book to donate. Light refreshments will be provided.