



# Illinois Language and Literacy Council

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*Young Author's Conference Coordinator*

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*Young Author's Conference Anchor*

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March 2017

Dear Young Author:

Congratulations! In recognition of your writing efforts, you have been selected to represent your school district at the 43rd Annual Illinois Statewide Young Authors Conference to be held Saturday, May 20, 2017, at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois.

Please bring your original manuscript with you to the conference. The official conference seal will be given to you to be placed on your original manuscript. During the day, you will have an opportunity to share your original manuscript with other young authors.

To assist you and your family in planning for the conference, we have included the following with this document:

- Check-in information for students in Kindergarten through Grade 6
- Check-in information for students in Grades 7 and 8
- Complete conference schedule
- Biographies of the Illinois authors and entertainers who are participating in the conference
- Frequently asked questions about the conference

The following documents can be found at: <http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/yac.html>

- Directions to Illinois State University
- Bloomington-Normal Area Hotel Map
- Young Authors Facilities & Parking Map
- Campus Area Restaurants Map

I hope you will enjoy the activities we have planned for you at the 43rd Annual Illinois Statewide Young Authors Conference.

Sincerely,

Christina Podraza Ed.D.  
Young Author's Conference Coordinator  
Illinois Language & Literacy Council

Please "like" us on Facebook and/or follow us on Twitter for more information on the conference as well as an opportunity to interact with other young authors from around the state!

Please help! This may be the last year of the Young Author's Conference due to a loss of funding from the state. Please consider donating to our Gofundme campaign so that we can continue this wonderful conference for students! [gofundme.com/2467wgjk](http://gofundme.com/2467wgjk)

## CONFERENCE CHECK-IN INFORMATION

### **Students in Kindergarten through Grade 6**

On the day of the conference you should report to the **Ballroom in the Bone Student Center at 9:00 a.m.** for student check-in, where you will receive your room assignment and conference materials. Group Leaders will be in the ballroom as well holding placards displaying each group's room number. Following student check-in, the K-6 Group Leaders will escort their groups to the Opening Ceremony in Braden Auditorium at 9:30 a.m. Families of participants are invited to the Opening Ceremony as well. From there, students will walk with their group leader to the assigned rooms. Parents will remain in Braden Auditorium at this time to enjoy their guest speaker.

### **Students in Grades 7-8**

On the day of the conference you should report to **University High School at 9:00 a.m.** for student check-in, where you will receive your room assignment and conference materials. Following student check-in, there will be an Opening Ceremony for all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants and their families at University High School at 9:30 a.m. From there, you will walk with your group leader to your assigned rooms. Parents will go to Braden Auditorium in the Bone Student Center at this time to enjoy their guest speaker.

Please refer to <http://maps.illinoisstate.edu/> for more information on parking and directions to campus.

# 43rd Annual Illinois Statewide Young Authors Conference

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE May 20, 2017

9:00 a.m.	<b>Student Check-In</b> <i>Kindergarten through Grade 6</i> Ballroom, Bone Student Center (BSC)  <i>Grades 7 and 8</i> University High School, Stroud Auditorium
9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	<b>Opening Ceremony and Welcome</b> <i>Kindergarten through Grade 6</i> Braden Auditorium, Bone Student Center  <i>Grades 7 and 8</i> University High School, Stroud Auditorium
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	<b>Small Group Sessions and Author Visits</b>
12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	<b>Lunch for all Students</b> <i>Kindergarten through Grade 6</i> Large Prairie Room, Bone Student Center  <i>Grades 7 and 8</i> University High School
12:50 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	<b>Special Sessions with Story Tellers and Author Panels</b> K-Grade 2            Capen Auditorium, Edwards Hall Grades 3 and 4     Ballroom, Bone Student Center Grades 5 and 6     Braden Auditorium, Bone Student Center Grades 7 and 8     Stroud Auditorium, University High School
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	<b>Recognition of Young Authors/Closing Ceremonies</b> K-Grade 2            Capen Auditorium, Edwards Hall Grades 3 and 4     Ballroom, Bone Student Center Grades 5 and 6     Braden Auditorium, Bone Student Center Grades 7 and 8     Stroud Auditorium, University High School
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<b>Author Book Signing (Optional Event)</b> Barnes & Noble University Bookstore, Bone Student Center

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### Parent Session

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.     Parent Session with ***Kathy Higgs-Coulthard***  
Braden Auditorium, Bone Student Center

**Please Note: Parents and family members are then on their own for lunch and have free time until the recognition ceremonies begin at 1:30 p.m.**

## GUEST AUTHORS/STORYTELLERS

### 43rd ANNUAL YOUNG AUTHORS' CONFERENCE

MAY 20, 2017

#### Grades K-2

**Kevin Luthardt** is a picture book author/illustrator, painter, and muralist based in the Chicago area. He is the author/illustrator of nine children's picture books; including *Peep!*, *Larabee*, *Flying!*, and *When Edgar Met Cecil*. Kevin is also a muralist, creating more than 80 large scale mural projects in schools and libraries. He continually presents programs and workshops for students of all ages, visiting about 30 schools, libraries, and other venues each year. His paintings have been represented by Mars Gallery in Chicago for the past 19+ years. Find Kevin on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Contact Kevin: [kevinluthardt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kevinluthardt@sbcglobal.net) [www.kevinluthardt.com](http://www.kevinluthardt.com).

**Lori Degman** is the award-winning author of two rhyming picture books, *I Zany Zoo* (Simon & Schuster, 2010), which won the Cheerios New Author Contest and *Cock-a-Doodle Oops!* (Creston Books, 2014), which was a 2015 International Literacy Association Honor Book. Her first picture book in prose, *Norbert's Big Dream* (Sleeping Bear Press) will be published August 1, 2016. She is a teacher of Deaf & Hard of Hearing students and lives in a northern suburb of Chicago.

#### Grades 3-4

**Marianne Malone** is an artist, a former art teacher, and co-founder of Campus Middle School for Girls in Urbana Illinois, where she has lived for over 30 years. A native of Chicago, she grew up loving the Art Institute's Thorne Rooms, which provide the setting for her Middle Grade fiction series. The first installment, *The Sixty-Eight Rooms*, was named a Chicago Public Library Best of the Best, a Parents Choice Recommended Winner, a Children's Book of the Month Club Main Selection, a Junior Library Guild Selection, and was an E.B. White Read Aloud finalist. Book two, *Stealing Magic*, and three, *The Pirate's Coin*, have now been joined by the final book in the series, *The Secret of the Key*, all from Random House. She and her husband, Jonathan Fineberg, have three grown children and share an empty nest that looks out on the Illinois Prairie.

**Suzanne Slade** is the award-winning author of over 100 children's books including *The Inventor's Secret* (2017 IL READS selection, 2017 NSTA Best STEM Book, NSTA Outstanding Science Trade Book, CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book,) *The House That George Built*, *Friends for Freedom*, *The Soda Bottle School*, and *The Music in George's Head: George Gershwin Creates Rhapsody in Blue* (Booklist Top 10 Arts Book for Youth, JLG Selection, Parents'

Choice Gold Award, Starred reviews - Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, SLJ, & Booklist.) Her newest book *Out of School and Into Nature: The Anna Comstock Story* (Kirkus starred review) released March, 2017.

**Allan Woodrow** always wanted to be an author, but his teachers told him to write about what he knew. Unfortunately, he didn't know very much, and he didn't know very much for quite a long time. Eventually, Allan decided to start writing anyway. Now a popular speaker at schools and regularly appearing on author panels, Allan is the author of nine books for children, with more on the way—under his own name and other, semi-secret names. His titles include the novels *The Pet War*, *Class Dismissed* and its upcoming sequel, *Unschooling* (August, 2017). Allan lives in the Chicago area with his family and maybe a ghost in the attic, although it could just mean the roof needs repair. For more information about Allan, please visit [allanwoodrow.com](http://allanwoodrow.com)

### **Grades 5-6**

**Liesl Shurtliff** is the New York Times bestselling author of *Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin* and other “fairly true” tales. Her books have been on more than twenty state award lists and have received many awards including an IRA Children’s and Young Adult Book Award. When she's not writing, Liesl enjoys spending time with family and friends, eating delicious food and sharing true life stories. A native of Salt Lake City, Utah, she currently lives with her husband and three kids in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago.

**Michael Spradlin** is the New York Times Best selling author of several books for children including *Into the Killing Seas*, *The Enemy Above* and the *Youngest Templar* trilogy. His novel *Spy Goddess: Live and Let Shop* was a Mystery Writers of America Edgar nominee for Best Young Adult Mystery. His picture book *OFF LIKE THE WIND! The First Ride of the Pony Express* was the winner of the Wrangler Award from the Western Heritage Museum. His newest novel *Prisoner of War*, will be published by Scholastic in June. He lives in Lapeer, Michigan. With his wife and two occasionally cooperative dogs.

**Chris Rylander** is the author of the Codename Conspiracy series and the Fourth Stall saga. A fan of chocolate, chips, and chocolate chips, he lives in Chicago. You can visit him online at [www.chrisrylander.com](http://www.chrisrylander.com).

## **Grades 7-8**

**Mike Grosso** is an author, musician, and fourth-grade teacher who always keeps a guitar in his classroom. His father gave him his first lesson, and his mom taught him how to keep a steady rhythm. Mike continues to write and record music at his home in Oak Park, Illinois, where he lives with his wife, son, and a drum set he plays much too loud. *I AM DRUMS* is his first novel.

**Kathryn Atwood** is the author of several young adult collective biographies: *Women Heroes of World War II*, *Women Heroes of World War II: The Pacific Theater*, and *Women Heroes of World War I*. She also edited the memoirs of SOE agent Pearl Witherington, published as *Code Name Pauline*. Her writing has appeared in *The Historian* and *War, Literature, and the Arts*, and she has been featured on *America: Fact vs. Fiction* and *BBC America*.

## **Storytellers and Parent Speaker**

**Megan Wells**, a national award-winning story and theater artist, combines the worlds of theater, writing and storytelling. After earning her BFA (Illinois Wesleyan) and MFA (Illinois State), Megan began her artistic career in Chicago as a director and actress. Her credits include, *The Miracle Worker*, *A Ruffian on the Stair*, *The Assignment*, *In the Wake of the Welded*, *Seventy Scenes from Halloween* and *Good*, for which she was honored with a Joseph Jefferson award. Playwright/directing credits include *the Riddle Quest*, *Bogmoon*, *Ravens and Writing Desks*, *Oz! Juliet's Potion*, *The Firebird*, *Cenci's Daughter* and *Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper*, which was produced at the Leitich theater in England.

In collaboration with songwriter Amy Lowe, Megan created *Fire in Boomtown*, a story musical about the Chicago Fire which has won the 1999 Ed Press Distinguished Achievement Award, a Parent's Choice Gold and a Best 25 in 25 years, both from Parent's Choice magazine. Amy and Megan also perform *Progress Train* and *Ellis Island*.

Megan has most recently been honored as an Oracle by the National Storytelling Netweoor, inducting her into the Circle of Excellence for storytellers in America. She is featured at festivals and tours her epic story experiences, *Helen's Troy*, *Dracula*, *Arrow of Love*, *Mozart's Sister* and many more. Her full repertoire of performances and her performance calendar is on her website at: [www.meganwells.com](http://www.meganwells.com)

**Kim Sheahan** has been a central Illinois educator since 1991, incorporating oral traditions into her multicultural programs at the University of Illinois' Spurlock Museum. She added freelance storytelling about ten years later and has performed folktales and one-woman shows at storytelling festivals, school assemblies, city-wide celebrations, personal parties, and gatherings of all kinds ever since. Her enthusiasm is both unmistakable and contagious.

***Parent Speaker***

**Kathy Higgs-Coulthard** is the founder and director of Michiana Writers' Center and an instructor at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame. Kathy's teen writing conference and summer writing camps attract students from a tri-state region. Her middle grade book, *Hanging with My Peeps*, was released last spring. As the mother of two aspiring novelists, she is excited to share tips with other parents on how to support and encourage young writers.

## QUESTIONS WE'VE BEEN ASKED

Each year we receive many calls from parents and other adults who plan to accompany students to the Young Authors Conference. This year we're attempting to anticipate your concerns and answer some of the questions you may have about your child's participation.

### **How will my child be supervised at the Conference?**

Each young author is assigned to a small group of 10-15 young authors of the same age. Each group will be supervised by a volunteer leader and assistant group leader. Most of these volunteers are currently elementary teachers; others may be university professors, librarians, etc. All have given generously of their time and energy to make the Conference a success. The volunteer leaders stay with their groups throughout the entire day, including lunch, until the young authors meet their parents at the end of the recognition ceremony.

### **Will my child receive lunch at the Conference?**

Yes. All young authors will be served a pizza lunch with a cookie. The cost of lunch is included in the registration fee, which was paid when students were registered for the Conference.

### **What should my child wear to the Conference?**

We suggest that children wear clothing that will be comfortable as they move through the day's activities. Please keep in mind that the young authors may move from one building to another so a warm jacket and comfortable shoes might be a good idea.

### **May I stay with my child throughout the day?**

We ask you **not** to remain with your child after the young author reports to his or her classroom at the beginning of the day. As explained previously, the young authors will be well supervised.

### **I have other children who are not young authors. May they stay with my child who is a young author?**

No. We cannot accommodate children other than the young authors.

### **What is there for parents and other adults to do while the young authors meet?**

We have planned a session for adults accompanying children to the Conference. (See Conference Schedule for details.) Additionally, parents are welcome to sit at the back of the auditorium during the afternoon sessions (the storytelling sessions for grades K-2 and 3-4 and the author panels for grades 5-6 and 7-8), and, of course, parents are especially welcome during the Recognition Ceremonies.

If you have other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Illinois Literacy Council representative Dr. Christina Podraza at [cpodraza@naperville203.org](mailto:cpodraza@naperville203.org) or Dr. Sue Anderson at [anderbrose@aol.com](mailto:anderbrose@aol.com).  
Illinois State University Conference

Services at 800/877-1478.

**Young Author's Coordinator – Make sure you print out the 5 maps on the ISBE or IRC website and attach them to this packet.**

**Directions to ISU**

**Parking Map**

**Hotel Map**

**Facilities Map**

**Restaurants Map**