

Empowering  
Lives  
Through  
Literacy

# Communicator

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*"The more you read,  
the more things you will know."*

~ Dr. Suess

**2026**  
**IRC CONFERENCE**

March 12-13, 2026  
Springfield, Illinois



ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL  
a full literacy palette

The Illinois Reading Council is excited to share that [early registration is now open](#) for the

**2026 IRC Conference,**  
**A Full Literacy Palette**  
**on March 12-13, 2026**

**in Springfield, Illinois.**

The Illinois Reading Council is also accepting [Program Proposals](#) to present at the 2026 IRC Conference. Proposals are due by **September 1, 2025**. Teachers, researchers, librarians, administrators, and others interested in promoting reading and related literacy areas are encouraged to submit program proposals. Please take a moment to review the 2026 Program Proposal format, general information, and criteria for selection that are available online.

IRC is also excited to share that the following featured speakers will be joining us.



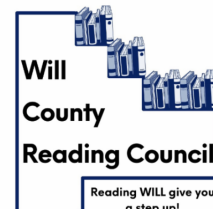
The Preliminary Program and Housing Reservations will open on the IRC Website by October 1st. We hope to see you at the **2026 IRC Conference!**



## UNLOCKING THE ILLINOIS COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY PLAN: ONE COUNCIL'S JOURNEY

**By Donna Herman and Deb Augsburger**

The Will County Reading Council (WCRC) embarked on a new journey last school year, learning and sharing insights and ideas related to the [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#) (ICLP). While the [ICLP](#) is comprehensive and thoughtfully developed, our priority centered on the key components that provide educators with tools and resources to support literacy outcomes for all students from Pre-K through 12th grade. Important to note is that the ICLP is not an initiative or mandate, but a “roadmap” for schools to consider in supporting the literacy development, instruction, and needs of our students.



Inspired by outreach from local school districts and our curiosity, we studied the [ICLP](#) and developed a series of webinars that focused on the ICLP framework of seven important literacy components. New for WCRC was leading and facilitating a webinar series. Overall, the webinar series was successful, providing participants with a basic foundation of the plan, along with ideas and resources to use in the classroom and share with colleagues. During the next few issues of the *Communicator*, WCRC will share with readers what we learned from the plan, each other, and where we go from here.

As all aspects of literacy in the plan are intertwined and build upon one another, the research and information developed in the [ICLP](#) are crucial for educators at all levels to understand. Therefore, we decided to maintain a cumulative list of references, starting with the early literacy resources from our first webinar and adding to the list with each subsequent session, culminating in a comprehensive list of references and resources from all the webinars. We look forward to sharing details, resources, and feedback about the first two components, Oracy and Phonological Awareness, with readers next month in the August *Communicator*.

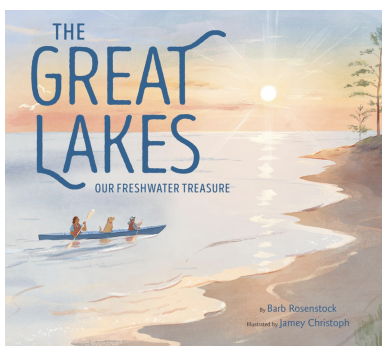


Summer has officially arrived with warm sunny days. This month we celebrate the 4th of July with parades, family gatherings, and fireworks. July is also National Parks Month. The Major League Baseball All Star Game will be played in July. Grab a hot dog and some ice cream as July is National Picnic, Hot Dog, and Ice Cream Month.

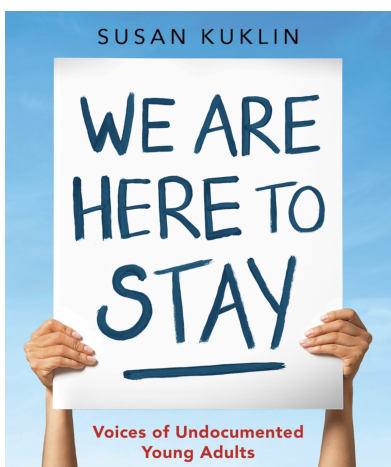
[Those Rebels, John & Tom](#) by Barbara Kerley is the story of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, who were very different in many ways but modeled a very successful collaboration and helped bring us the Declaration of Independence. John Adams was short and stout. Thomas Jefferson was tall and lean. John was argumentative and blunt. Tom was soft-spoken and polite.



But these two very different men did have two things in common: They both cared deeply about the American colonies, and neither cared much for the British tyrant, King George. With their signature wit, impeccable research, and inventive presentation style, award winners Barbara Kerley and illustrator Edwin Fotheringham masterfully blend biography and history to create a brilliant portrait of two American heroes who bravely set aside their differences to join forces in the fight for our country's freedom. You can also view this book on YouTube.



**[The Great Lakes: Our Freshwater Treasure](#)** by Barb Rosenstock is a beautiful picture book with watercolor paintings that enhance the story of how the five freshwater lakes were formed and how we need to conserve and protect this wonderful natural resource. The Great Lakes—Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior—are five blue jewels set a bit off center in a belt across North America's middle. Bordered by eight states and part of Canada, the Lakes hold 21% of the world's fresh water. For more information about the Lakes, visit **[The Center For Great Lakes Literacy](#)** for teacher lessons and resources.



**[We Are Here to Stay: Voices of Undocumented Young Adults](#)** by Susan Kuklin is the true story of nine young adults who came to America seeking a better life and education as part of the DACA program, but are not citizens. With the repeal of this program by President Trump, these young adults live in fear of deportation. This is a timely book as undocumented students could be in our classrooms today. The book offers many areas for discussion and writing prompts. Additional resources can also be found in the back of this book. A teacher's discussion guide is available at **[Candlewick Press](#)**.

## Looking Ahead

**July 4: Independence Day** – Happy Birthday America

**July 9: National Sugar Cookie Day** – Read a book while enjoying a sugar cookie

**July 14: Bastille Day** – Learn about this day and enjoy some French treats

**July 15: Baseball All Star Game** – Read about and cheer for a favorite player

**July 20: Shark Week** – Do a Google search to learn more about sharks

**July 20: National Ice Cream Soda Day** – Have a soda while reading an Illinois Reads Book

**July 26: Aunt and Uncle Day** – Make a card or give them a phone call to show your love

**July 27: Parents Day** – Thank your parents for all the things they do





# UPCOMING PD EVENTS

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

- **August 8, 2025: Jacob Grant**, Illinois Reads Author of *Umani*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 9, 2025: Candace Fleming** and **Eric Rohmann**, Illinois Reads Author of *Penny & Pip*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 9, 2025: Ruth Spiro**, Illinois Reads Author of *Love Grows*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 10, 2025: Mike Petrik**, Illinois Reads Author of *One Cool Duck #1: King of Cool*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 10, 2025: Nadia Ahmed**, Illinois Reads Author of *The Ghost Who Was Afraid of Everything*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 11, 2025: Janet Nolan**, Illinois Reads Author of *Bats Beneath the Bridge*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 12, 2025: Kat Chen**, Illinois Reads Author of *Play Outside With Me*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 13, 2025: Wendy Parris**, Illinois Reads Author of *Stage Fright*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 14, 2025: Jeffrey Brown**, Illinois Reads Author of *Hulk Teach*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 15, 2025: Ray Nadine**, Illinois Reads Author of *I Felt Myself Slipping*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 16, 2025: Ann Zhao**, Illinois Reads Author of *Dear Wendy*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.

- **August 16, 2025:** **Ronni Davis**, Illinois Reads Author of *This Night Is Ours*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 17, 2025:** **Lisa Katzenberger**, Illinois Reads Author of *A Love Letter To My Library*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 17, 2025:** **Fiona Cook**, Illinois Reads Author of *The Wheel Of The Year: An Illustrated Guid To Nature's Rhythms*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](https://illinoisreadingcouncil.org/).

# ILLINOIS STATE FAIR



## AUGUST 7-17, 2025

COME AND MEET THE ILLINOIS READS AUTHORS IN THE TENT OF ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE  
AND THE HONORARY CHAIR OF ILLINOIS READS, ALEXI GIANNOULIAS!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 9 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 9 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 10 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 10 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	MONDAY, AUGUST 11 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	TUESDAY, AUGUST 12 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
<b>UMAMI</b> by Jacob Grant Grades K-2	<b>PENNY &amp; PIP</b> by Candace Fleming and illustrated by Eric Rohmann Ages Birth-4	<b>LOVE GROWS</b> by Ruth Spiro Grades K-2	<b>ONE COOL DUCK #1: KING OF COOL</b> by Mike Petrik Grades 3-5	<b>THE GHOST WHO WAS AFRAID OF EVERYTHING</b> by Nadia Ahmed Grades K-2	<b>BATS BENEATH THE BRIDGE</b> by Janet Nolan Grades K-2	<b>PLAY OUTSIDE WITH ME</b> by Kat Chen Ages Birth-4
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	THURSDAY, AUGUST 14 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	FRIDAY, AUGUST 15 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 16 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 16 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 1:00 TO 3:00 PM
<b>STAGE FRIGHT</b> by Wendy Parris Grades 6-8	<b>HULK TEACH</b> by Jeffrey Brown Grades 3-5	<b>I FELT MYSELF SLIPPING</b> by Ray Nadine Grades 6-8	<b>DEAR WENDY</b> by Ann Zhao Grades 9-12	<b>THIS NIGHT IS OURS</b> by Ronni Davis Grades 9-12	<b>A LOVE LETTER TO MY LIBRARY</b> by Lisa Katzenberger Ages K-2	<b>THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO NATURE'S RHYTHMS</b> by Fiona Cook Grades 3 to A dult



SECRETARY of STATE  
ALEXI GIANNOULIAS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS  
**CENTER FOR THE BOOK**  
ILLINOIS AFFILIATE



Visit  
[illinoisreads.org](https://illinoisreads.org)  
for more info!



# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto: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:**

- Books the Kids Loved This Year
- My New Favorite Professional Books and Resources
- Skills and Strategies
- Current Research in Literacy
- 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](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or by phone at 309-454-1341.

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

