



Empowering  
Lives  
Through  
Literacy

# Communicator

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and follow us on:



**"The wise man reads both book and life itself."**  
~ Lin Yutang

# 2027

## IRC CONFERENCE

March 11-12, 2027      Springfield, Illinois







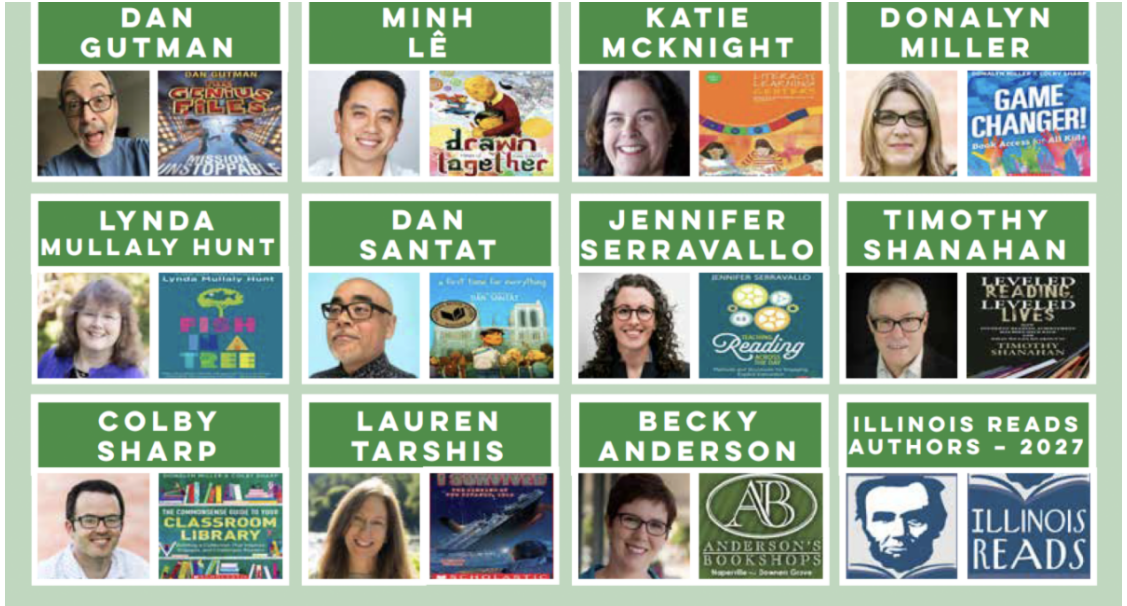
The Illinois Reading Council is excited to share that [early registration is now open](#) for the

**2027 IRC Conference,  
Each One, Reach One  
on March 11-12, 2027  
in Springfield, Illinois.**

The Illinois Reading Council is also accepting [Program Proposals](#) to present at the 2027 IRC Conference. Proposals are due by **September 1, 2026**. 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 2027 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:

<b>JERRY CRAFT</b>	<b>JAKE DAGGETT</b>	<b>JENNY FRENCH</b>	<b>ALAN GRATZ</b>
			



The Preliminary Program and Housing Reservations will open on the IRC Website by October 1st. We hope to see you at the [2027 IRC Conference!](#)



## "COMMUNITY READS" GRANT SUCCESS

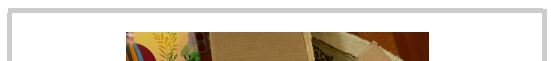
By Lynn Keck, Black Hawk Reading Council

Black Hawk Reading Council’s mission — to foster a love of reading and make reading an enjoyable experience for children and parents — was the driving force behind our “Community Reads” project. Through a generous Literacy Support grant, we put 164 books into the hands of children who otherwise may not be able to build a home library. Additionally, we emphasized the importance of literacy through our partnerships with local police stations and community health clinics (CHCs), which served as distribution sites for the books.

Support from local teachers and clinic and police liaisons led to greater participation in our initiative, and 100 percent of the sites said the project was a worthwhile opportunity. Health Center receptionist Juliana said, “The parents have been happy to spend the wait time reading to their children.”

The CHC location managers requested more books several times to replenish their supply and shared with us that the books made an important impact on the people they serve. Additionally, parents shared that the books helped to keep their children occupied and happy, even when their kids were sick. Most took their chosen book home with them — one of our project goals!

Applying for a literacy grant was a seamless process, and our experience has shown the direct impact the grants allow reading councils to have in their communities.





Rock Island Police Chief Tim McCloud accepts books for their family waiting room from Lynn Keck, a member of Black Hawk Reading Council.



IRC/BHRC book labels inside every book identify the source of the donated books.



Moline Community Health Clinic manager Neysa Teague placed books from Black Hawk Reading Council in their waiting room with Literacy Support Grant recipient Lynn Keck.



Flyer for Book Basket shares to Read it here or Take it home! Please choose 1 book to enjoy. Courtesy of Black Hawk Reading Council and a grant from the Illinois Reading Council.

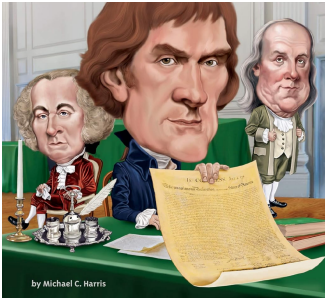
# Family Literacy Bookshelf

## By Barb Ashton

Happy Birthday America! This July we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of our country and the signing of The Declaration of Independence. July is National Parks Month and Major League Baseball's All Star Game is played during July. Grab a hot dog and some ice cream as July is also National Picnic, Hot Dog, and Ice Cream Month.

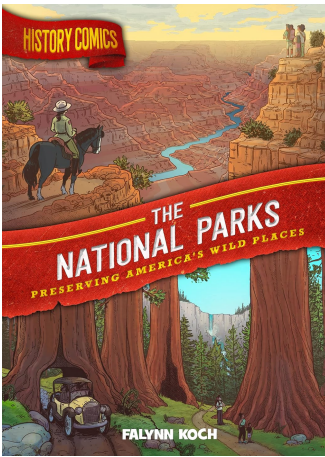


America celebrates its independence from England on July 4th. **What is The Declaration of Independence?** by Michael C. Harris is a nice introduction to how the Revolutionary War and the writing of The Declaration document came about. The reader meets several Founding Fathers. There's Thomas Jefferson who



spent many hours writing drafts of this document. There's John Adams and Sam Adams who also played a major part in the colonies' desire for freedom from England. There's George Washington who led the continental army. There's the Continental Congress which was made up of representatives from each of the colonies, who met in Philadelphia to work on The Declaration of Independence document. These men discussed, edited, and helped Jefferson write what became the official document that would be sent to King George of England. Throughout the book there are black and white illustrations, maps, photographs, and sidebars that contain additional information. The back of the book

contains a detailed timeline and bibliography for further reading. This is an excellent book for students of all learning abilities.



July is National Parks month. [\*\*The National Parks: Preserving America's Wild Places\*\*](#) by Falynn Koch is a graphic novel that takes the reader on a journey with Bigfoot and Eagle as they explain the founding of America's National Parks. The story begins in 1850/51 when America was developing the western states and forcing the Native Americans to give up their land and move to reservations. Yellowstone was already a state park but Congress claimed it for its "unspoiled beauty" and made it a National Park so all people could "benefit and enjoy" its beauty and natural environment. However, people didn't always treat the several newly formed National Parks as was intended. This led eventually to the formation of the Park Rangers. Throughout the book the reader meets activists like John Muir, artists, photographers, and visionaries who promoted visiting the national parks through their pictures, art work, etc., but also worked with Congress and President Teddy Roosevelt and future presidents to get laws passed to protect the parks for future generations to visit and enjoy. The illustrations within the book are colorful, bright, and

entertaining. *The National Parks: Preserving America's Wild Places* is enjoyable, informative, and interesting to read and makes a nice addition to your social studies curriculum. It's also a nice family read if taking a vacation to one of the national parks.



Shark Week occurs every year during the month of July. A great book to read during this week is [\*\*Bite Into Sharks\*\*](#) by C. J. McDonald. This book begins by stating that sharks are the major predator of the ocean. While they are powerful and deadly, they are also an important part of the ocean's food chain to keep it in balance. While sharks may cause fear they are also a fascination with children and adults. Throughout the rest of the book the reader is introduced to twenty different sharks such as bull sharks, tiger sharks, great white and various other sharks that are not as well known. On each two page spread there is a beautiful photograph of the shark along with a brief description. Details are given on how sharks hunt

and use their jaws. The book concludes with ways that sharks are being hunted and mistreated by people, including the fact that "three sharks are killed every second." The author gives suggestions on how to preserve, protect, and respect these powerful animals. *Bite Into Sharks* is an engaging read and provides an introduction to marine biology. Although this book is written for younger children, it can be read by older children. The book also includes 2 replica shark teeth.

## Looking Ahead

**July 4: Independence Day** – Happy 250th Birthday America

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

**July 7: National Strawberry Sundae Day** – Enjoy this treat while reading a book

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

**July 14: Baseball All Star Game** – Read about and cheer for a favorite player

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

**July 26: Shark Week** – Do a Google search to learn more about sharks

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



# UPCOMING PD EVENTS

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

- **August 14, 2026: Dana Marie Miroballi**, Illinois Reads Author of *Inventions to Count On: A Celebration of Black Inventors: A Picture Book*, 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, 2026: Nicole M. Hewitt**, Illinois Reads Author of *The Song of Orphan's Garden*, 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, 2026: Darcy Day Zoells**, Illinois Reads Author of *Smithy and Me*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 16, 2026: Kate Hannigan**, Illinois Reads Author of *Rachel Carson's Wonder-Filled World: How the Scientist, Writer, and Nature Lover Changed the Environmental Movement*, 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, 2026: Jacob Grant**, Illinois Reads Author of *Turtle Slept In*, 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, 2026: Jeffrey Brown** Illinois Reads Author of *Hulk Teach 2: A Tale of Two Teachers*, 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 18, 2026: Chelsea Toretto**, Illinois Reads Author of *Seasons on the Farm*, 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 19, 2026: Jessie Ann Foley**, Illinois Reads Author of *Severe and Unusual Weather*, 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 20, 2026: Juleesa Espinoza and Veronica Castillo**, Illinois Reads Authors of *Emilia's Corte*, 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 21, 2026: Lisa Maggiore**, Illinois Reads Author of *Ava the Monster Slayer: Sleepover Superheroes*, 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 22, 2026: Zach von Zonk**, Illinois Reads Author of *E-I-UFO: Old MacDonald Had a Farm*, 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 22, 2026: Kristin Nilsen**, Illinois Reads Author of *The Scott Fenwick Diaries: A Novel*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 23, 2026: Gene Ha**, Illinois Reads Author of *Mae: The Definitive Edition*, 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 23, 2026: Betsy Bird**, Illinois Reads Author of *POP! Goes the Nursery Rhyme* 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](#).

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	MONDAY, AUGUST 17 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	TUESDAY, AUGUST 18 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	THURSDAY, AUGUST 20 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	FRIDAY, AUGUST 21 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 22 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 22 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 23 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 23 1:00 TO 3:00 PM

SECRETARY OF STATE  
ALEXI GIANNOULIAS

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ILLINOIS AFFILIATE

Illinois Reading Council  
Empowering  
Reading  
Through  
Literacy

Visit  
[illinoisreads.org](http://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:

