



SCIRA SPEAKS

Newsletter of the South Carolina Council of the International Reading Association • Winter 2017 • Vol. L, No. 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

By Cathy Delaney



Changes and Transitions

During the month of June, your SCIRA state officers met to plan for the year. This year we face changes to our parent/affiliate organization, so we began the process of looking at our by-laws, current support structure for our local councils, and our website. To this date, our new website is up and running, by-laws and policies have been studied and some minor changes will be recommended to the delegate assembly for vote at the conference, and our

training for local council leaders and committee chairs has been revised. All of our council officers and committee leaders are working hard to make this year count for literacy.

Our state level meetings have been held at Congaree Elementary School. We appreciate the support of Mr. Becker and Brandi Cade from the school. Finding a meeting location which is centrally located is a challenge, and we want to recognize their support of SCIRA.

A transition committee is currently studying the proposed changes and options provided by the International Literacy Association. The three options were presented to the Executive Board in October, for closer review by the Executive Board in January. The decision we make as a state council will impact our state and local councils. The International Reading Association will no longer be in existence, to be replaced by the International Literacy Association. Each state council will reincorporate or choose to become a standalone entity.

As our transition team works to bring information to our state team and local councils, we urge members to stay connected with your local council. It is important to hear each member's voice during this transition. All information will be provided to local council officers at state level meetings and through our website.

This newsletter is an avenue to provide literacy information relevant to you as teachers and administrators. It is also a way to showcase the work and opportunities for training provided by SCIRA. Thank you for supporting the work of SCIRA. We look forward to seeing you in Hilton Head for "TEAM UP and WIN with LITERACY!"

Cathy Delaney, SCIRA President 2016-2017

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Greetings from the State Coordinator

By Patricia W. Smith



Wow! We are off to an exciting year filled with strong leadership at the state and local levels. The SCIRA Executive Board Members are excited about supporting each local council as you pursue your vision to promote literacy in your school districts and counties. The enthusiasm is tremendous as leaders team each month to support literacy in South Carolina.

As local council presidents seek to achieve Honor Council status with the International Literacy Association (ILA), it is of utmost importance that they plan with the idea of providing service to their members. Each year, the current president examines the criteria established by ILA, establishes goals, plans meetings, and serves the community, in some way, as it relates to literacy. Your membership and participation will make it easier for your council to be considered “in good standing” with ILA.

This year’s application for the Honor Council Award is determined by your immediate past president and your council’s achievements. The application was due to ILA by December 15, 2016. The current president has worked hard to ensure your council continues to remain “in good standing.” Accept my personal challenge to each of you to support your local council as your Board of Directors seeks the distinguished recognition of Honor Council.

“Teachers as Readers” Grant

“The more you read, the more things you will know.

The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

- Dr. Seuss, “I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!”

The “Teachers as Readers” project will take you and your students to fantastic places! In this project, educators and administrators have an opportunity to read a variety of current literature (children, young adult, or adolescent as well as one professional selection) and collaborate in a professional learning community. The “Teacher as Readers” book group consists of classroom teachers, school and district administrators, college professors, and school board members who select the four titles to read together. The grade level readings are as follows: K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. These learning communities meet together to discuss what they read and share strategies for using the literature in their classrooms.

The maximum grant amount is \$300.00. Grant winners will receive notification in February 2017, with applications having been due by December 1, 2016.

Remember, the more you learn, the more places you’ll go!

Creating Safe Spaces for Difficult Conversations

By Drs. Katie Stover & Lindsay Yearta,
Research and Intellectual Freedom Committee

As educators, we have many job requirements that extend beyond teaching standards and assessing student progress. It is essential that we create inclusive communities where students feel safe and valued. While topics like racial tension may be uncomfortable, it is necessary to confront these difficult topics. For if we remain silent, we send messages that these issues do not matter and indirectly suggest inferiority of children of color. Due to the recent, tragic death of Keith Lamont Scott, bias and injustice became all too real for the community of Charlotte, North Carolina.

3rd Graders Discuss Protests

On September 23, 2016, Ms. McGuire, a third grade teacher in Charlotte, North Carolina began class, as she did every day, with a fact of the day. However, this day she intentionally selected the fact that the *Birmingham Children's Crusade was a peaceful protest*. The class examined photographs from the Civil Rights protests in the 1960s where protesters were sprayed by fire hoses and faced the imminent danger of vicious looking police dogs. They discussed police use of tear gas, shootings, and mace.

She then asked students to write about the protests occurring in uptown Charlotte after the shooting of Keith Lamont Scott. Students were asked to reflect on how they felt, how they would react, and why. They then used their writing as a springboard for discussion. Ms. McGuire began the discussion with an analogy of siblings. She asked her students to consider what it feels like when their brother or sister bugs them even though they ask them nicely to stop. When she asked students what they would do next, they responded that they typically yell, fight, break things, and get really angry. "Exactly!" Ms. McGuire explained that the protesters that are angry tried to talk to the police, the mayor, and the government and they feel they aren't being heard. "So just like when you get mad and yell at your brothers and sisters, the protesters feel the same way."

To help unravel misconceptions, Ms. McGuire listened to her students and responded thoughtfully. For instance, when one child compared protesters to robbers, she explained that not all protesters are bad or violent. In fact, there were many peaceful protesters including preachers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and regular people just like them. Some were praying, giving hugs, and chanting so they can be heard to get their point across.

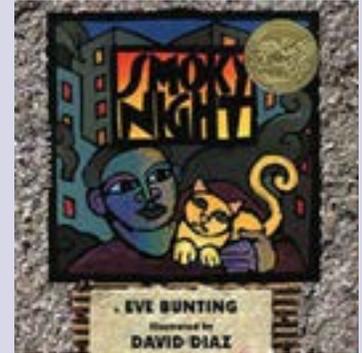
Although her third graders did not know names of the numerous black men who have been killed by police, they were well aware of the situations. Ms. McGuire explained that the protesters are upset that people who look like her and them keep dying. The class discussed the importance of education in breaking society's stereotypes of blacks, especially for black males and putting an end to the injustice.

Continued on page 4

Cultivating Conversations

Ms. McGuire's students respectfully listened to others and shared their own thoughts about a difficult topic. Establishing a classroom community where conversations such as the ones that take place in Ms. McGuire's room is possible. Not surprisingly, creating that sense of community begins on the very first day of class. Once the classroom community is established, engaging in difficult conversations becomes easier as the sense of community helps in creating a forum where students feel comfortable enough to share their ideas and to listen to viewpoints that may be different from their own.

Children's literature can provide context, perspective, and a springboard for discussion. For example, the book *Smoky Night* (1994) by Eve Bunting tells the story of rioting and bridging differences through a young boy's perspective. Additionally, students can engage in written reflection and can then participate in subsequent conversations as Ms. McGuire's did. Giving students the chance to make connections with literature as well as providing time for them to discover their thoughts with pens in their hands can lead to rich, engaging discussions.



Conclusion

As we think about how to best serve our students, preparing them to be participatory members of society is never far from our minds. However, we must first remember that in order for students to participate, they must feel part of the community and part of the conversation. Fortunately, cultivating conversations can begin in the classroom. As educators, we have the power and the responsibility to create safe spaces for difficult conversations.

More to Explore

Interested in the importance of cultivating conversations about difficult topics as well as how best to get started? Check out these resources below and share others you use with Katie (@Kstover24) and Lindsay (@Lyearta) on Twitter.

<http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/tt54-fall-2016/feature/dont-say-nothing>

<http://www.tolerance.org/racism-and-police-violence>

<http://www.westories.org/blog/2016/9/22/talking-to-kids-about-protesting-5-things-i-want-my-kids-to-know>

Journal Publication

By Sarah Hunt-Barron and Jacquelynn A. Malloy, Co-editors

We are on schedule to publish our Winter 2016/2017 issue of **Reading Matters**. We have received manuscripts from educators and researchers in South Carolina as well as from Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia. At present, we have accepted 12 manuscripts and are working to copyedit these for publication.

We encourage all members to consider the innovative and inspiring teaching that is occurring in their classrooms and to consider submitting to the journal in the next cycle. Please look for the Call for Manuscripts in February and our "Writing for Reading Matters" session at the conference.

SCIRA Audit and Budget Committee News and Updates

The SCIRA Audit and Budget Committee submitted all financial information to SCIRA's accounting firm, The Brittingham Group, LLP in Columbia in July. The firm was to submit SCIRA's tax return to the IRS by November 15 and provide the SCIRA President and the SC Secretary of State's office a copy of this return. In addition, the firm will complete an annual audit of all financial information and submit an audit report to the SCIRA President which will be presented to the SCIRA Board of Directors. All information is available for review upon request.

This committee was also charged with reviewing all SCIRA financial information from last year and using this information to develop the SCIRA Budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. As a nonprofit organization, a major portion of our resources must be spent on "service to members," so the committee paid particular attention to those line items. All Local Council/SCIRA members are eligible to apply for SCIRA awards and grants within the guidelines for which those applying meet required qualifications: Elementary and Adolescent Literature Grants, Scholarships, and Teachers as Readers Grants. Members are eligible to nominate candidates within their Local Councils for the Distinguished Literacy Teacher, the Distinguished Literacy Administrator, and the SCIRA Literacy Award. Each Local Council is eligible to apply for the Local Council Service Grant and the Local Council Renewal Grant. Any South Carolina school is eligible to apply for the Exemplary Reading Award to be recognized at SCIRA and at the International Literacy Association Convention. All of these were funded for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

2017 SCIRA Conference

The 42nd Annual Conference will take place on February 23-25, 2017, at the Marriott Resort and Spa in Hilton Head, South Carolina. There are two ways to register: Online or mailing the completed registration form.

Online Registration at www.scira.org/2017-scira-conference-registration/
(Printable Registration Form also available at that web address)

Location

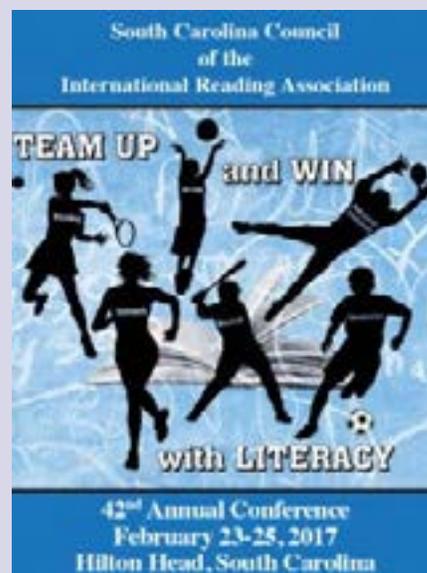
Hilton Head Marriott Resort and Spa
One Hotel Boulevard, Hilton Head, SC 29928

Reserve a Room

Marriott Resort and Spa
Group Code: SCISCIAGroup Name: SCIRA 2017 Annual Conference
Last Day to Book: February 1, 2017, 888-511-5086
www.Marriott.com/hhhgr/Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa
\$134 USD per Night - Book your group rate for SCIRA Conference 2017

Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort

<https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/hilton-head/meetings/south-carolina-international-reading-association>
1-800-843-6664
Group Code: 022017SCINTLREA.
\$139 per night, plus \$12.00 resort fee



Submitted by Laura Turok-Ellis, Membership Director

When flooding hit South Carolina last October, many people around the state were affected and many are still struggling to recover, but the land dried out for the most part, until Hurricane Matthew hit, and there were no schools affected severely enough to close for more than a day or two. When flooding hit Louisiana this past August, a lot of memories came rushing back to members of the Berkeley Reading Council who immediately thought about the loss of books in schools, in libraries, and in homes. At the annual Building Representative dinner held every August, members of the executive board decided that something could be done, even if only on a small scale.

Saturday, September 10, The Reading Warehouse opened its doors to members of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Reading Councils and the attending members collected nearly 300 books to be donated to the school children in Port Allen and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



Ruined wet books piled up outside the library entrance to Tanglewood Elementary School in Central, Louisiana. More than 10,000 volumes had to be discarded because of water damage. This was the entire library catalog!

As each member shopped for their own classroom, they were asked to purchase one book for a school child in Louisiana. Graciously, most shoppers spent an average of \$20 extra for books to be sent to Baton Rouge. And, if you ask any educator who has shopped at The Reading Warehouse, twenty dollars buys a lot more than you would get at the average book store!

Berkeley Reading Council Director of Membership, Laura Turok-Ellis, said she was casually chatting with other members of the executive board at their annual get-together thrown in honor of the building representatives and she made the statement that it would be a good thing if everyone who shopped at the Tri-County meeting on September 10 (scheduled to coincide with the International Day of Literacy on September 8) would buy one book to donate, we could send a lot of books to a school affected by the flood.

Laura contacted one of her childhood friends, Karen Kennady Koster, who now lives in Texas, because she knew she had some Louisiana relatives. Karen, in turn, contacted her cousin, Rain Mayeux, who does indeed live in Louisiana – Baton Rouge, near Central. Finally an end point! The books would be going to Tanglewood Elementary School. Books that had been collected for older children or more mature readers were being donated to the Baton Rouge Library System to replenish books lost there.

Berkeley Reading Council has always had a heart for giving to others. They are currently replenishing a fund that was established when a former president, Lorraine Roumillat, succumbed to cancer several years ago. Her family made a donation to the council in her memory on the condition that the money be used for grants to first year teachers to buy books for their classrooms. A former teaching colleague and close friend, Linda Grant, BRC treasurer, said that she felt Mrs. Roumillat would approve of the book donation. It is, after all, about getting books into the hands of children; the children who are our future.



The plastic containers full of books were recently relocated to Tanglewood Elementary School to help replenish the books lost during the floods. Some of the books will also be going to Wildwood School for third through fifth grade students.

AIKEN READING COUNCIL NEWS

COUNCIL NEWS

The Aiken Council is spreading the love of literacy throughout Aiken County! Last spring the Aiken Council partnered with the Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism department to sponsor Story Time in the Gardens by providing books to children and families free of charge. We are continuing this outreach effort this year by sponsoring a fall reading and a spring reading to support literacy in our community.

We began our year with a visit from Dr. Sonia Archie from the South Carolina Department of Education. She gave us some great professional development on implementing Reading and Writing Workshops in our classrooms.



We enjoyed a visit from Holly Springs-Motlow Elementary School this fall to learn all about how to become an Exemplary Literacy School.

We celebrated all of our Distinguished Literacy Teachers and announced the Aiken County Distinguished Teachers of Literacy at the December meeting of the Aiken County School Board. Our year has gotten off to a great start and we look forward to spreading the love of literacy not only within our schools, but in our community as well!

COLUMBIA AREA READING COUNCIL NEWS

COUNCIL NEWS

The Columbia Area Reading Council is teaming up for literacy in a big way! Our council continues to strive toward our mission of providing opportunities for professional growth, leadership development, community service and the establishment of a forum for discussion of best practices in the teaching of literacy. For the continued advancement of our mission, we have planned lots of engaging professional development opportunities for our council this year.

We kicked the year off with our building representatives meetings in all of the regions our council serves. To enlist more members, our council offered the incentive of providing free breakfast to the school that generated the most members. We are proud to say that building representatives were hard at work promoting memberships!

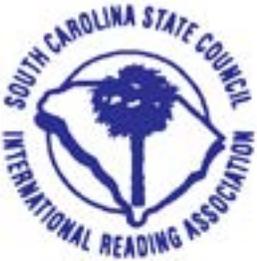
Our first professional development for the year was held at Seven Oaks Elementary school on

October 27th at 6:00pm. Craig King was our featured speaker at our *“Teaming Up to Reach and Teach”* event! Mr. King shared effective strategies of how to reach and teach males through literacy.



We are excited about this event and all of the other engaging professional development we have planned. We look forward to networking with our members as we *team up* for continued literacy success!

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