

International Projects Committee Up-dates Cindy Gerwin & Carol Owles, Co-Chairs

At Leadership in July the members in attendance at our International Projects Committee Meeting discussed ways we can carry out our charge of supporting International Literacy Projects. We decided to present a list of projects to IRC Councils for their consideration and support. Councils are encouraged to choose one or more projects or aspects of a project that they decide they want to support and to which they can make a contribution in time and effort, materials, or money. Here are a few ideas for your consideration. Feel free to add to these project ideas at any time and let our Committee know of them.

A to Z (America to Zambia) Literacy

We contacted Mal Keenan, who is a teacher, fellow IRC member, and the head of the A to Z (America to Zambia) Literacy Foundation. We asked for ideas on how we might help and support her Foundation's efforts. The following is Mal's response to our IRC members:

Thanks so very much for thinking of A to Z and for reaching out.

We are hosting our annual fundraiser this Saturday and hoping to raise \$4,000.00 to help meet our annual goals.

In thinking about what the International Projects committee could do or local councils wanting to help, I have a few ideas. :)

"Books in Bags"

Groups could create "Books in Bags" which consist of 4-6 copies of the same high quality text (soft cover, fiction or nonfiction) along with three questions (Within the Text, Beyond the Text, and About the Text) on laminated cards and some kind of writing connection to pair with the book for students to complete. This could be for grades 1-6.

"Inspire a Teacher"

Local councils/committees could write letters to School of Hope teachers or Shine Reading Academy teachers to inspire and motivate.

Book Drives

*We are starting to gather books again and love to receive **new** books from Scholastic Book Fairs. Schools can choose A to Z as their charity and we are then able to receive books once the book fair is complete.*

If a group hosts a gently used book drive, we ask that the books are sorted before we gather them.

Here is the book donation guidelines:

<http://www.atozliteracy.org/donate-books>

Fundraising for Shipping, School Lunch and Scholarships:

As always, we would love help in raising funds and securing grant money to support our mission. Currently, the cost of shipping an "A to Z shipment" to Africa is around \$1,200 for six boxes of books.

We are also providing \$400 for the school lunch program at Shine and \$1,000 for four secondary school scholarships (\$250 each).

I recently connected with a professor from University of British Columbia looking for scholarships for a family of 8 girls...3 adopted double orphans. I'm hoping to assist with at least two.

******If a teacher/professor would like to travel to Zambia with A to Z in 2018 and provide professional learning at our partner schools, he/she needs to be active in the organization for at least a year prior to traveling to Zambia.***

If your Council decides to support one of these A to Z Literacy initiatives or one of the Guatemalan project ideas that follows, please let us know. We would like to keep track of your collective efforts so that we can spread the word for ideas and share your experiences with others. Thank you! Send your information to internationalprojects@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

Guatemalan Teacher to Teacher Fund

The Guatemalan Reading Association is hosting their bi-annual Literacy Conference on February 22 -24, 2017, in Antigua, Guatemala. Our Illinois Reading Council will be well-represented at the Conference as our President, Patti Tylka, our Past-President, Cindy Gerwin, our International Projects Co-Chair, Carol Owles, and NIU Professor, Mayra Daniel, will all be attending and presenting workshops at the Conference. Many Guatemalan teachers in the area will be attending and will have affordable registration fees thanks to the Teacher-to-teacher Fund to which several of our Councils have made contributions. Thank you to the following Councils for their support and monetary contributions:

East Central-EIU Illinois Valley 2 Rivers ITA MID-State

In all, \$400 has been raised so far--\$100 of which was sent to the GRA earlier this past year so they would have seed money to plan their conference and make the registration fees affordable for teachers. The remaining check for \$300 + will be hand-delivered by Patti & Cindy to the Consejo de Lectora de Guatemala at the Conference. If your local or special interest Council would still like to help with this project, you can send a check for \$25, \$50, \$100, or any amount you choose to donate. **(Please make your check payable to Illinois Reading Council—with Guatemalan Teacher Fund in the memo.)**

The conference registration fee has been greatly reduced for teachers from \$50 to approx. \$20 since so many Reading Councils (including ours) throughout the US have made early donations to the project and conference. We at IRC set a goal of sending 15 to 20 teachers to the conference by paying their registration fees. We have already reached that goal by supporting 20 teachers with your generous contributions, and would like to surpass it with even more donations!

In order to get the check prepared and ready to deliver to the Consejo by Patti and Cindy, **we ask that you send your donation to the IRC office by Friday, Feb.10.** In that way there will be plenty of time to get the check to our President and Past-President.

Guatemalan Workshop Books

In addition to our attending the conference, we will also be taking over \$500 in books to Guatemala for teachers in the Quetzaltenango area of NW Guatemala. One of the teacher leaders from the CEIPA Foundation, Steve Barrett, requested specific Spanish books to use with teachers as he conducts workshops with them. The books will also get in the hands of children/students after the teacher workshops.

Mini Libraries for Guatemalan Teachers & Children from Our Handicraft Sales

We have \$1,531.35 in proceeds from our handicraft sales. This is in addition to the \$500 in books we are taking to the conference this February. We will order Spanish books later this spring and have them shipped to the Consejo de Lectora in Guatemala City. Their Council will distribute the mini-libraries to schools and teachers throughout the central part of Guatemala. The Nassau Reading Council of New York also ships books from their handicrafts sales, at the same time as we do, so more mini-libraries are available to teachers with each annual shipment. (We are very fortunate in that we have benefactors in the US and Guatemala who get the books shipped to the Guatemalan Reading Association free of charge.)

Thank you so much to all who have supported these projects by selling and purchasing handicrafts at our various council meetings and conferences. Your help and generosity do make a difference!

If any Councils or IRC members have ideas of International Projects that they are supporting or other Projects that we may consider, please let our Committee know about them. We can add them to the list of the projects we have listed here and make the information available to our membership.