

Illinois Reading Council



Empowering  
Lives  
Through  
Literacy

# Communicator

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**"Once you learn to read you will be forever free."**  
~ Frederick Douglass

## IRC BOOK CLUB

Join educators from all over the state in the online [Fall 2024 IRC Book Club](#)! Choose one, two, or all three books!

Read, reflect on, and respond to ***The Playful Classroom: The Power of Play for All Ages*** by Jed Dearybury and Julie P. Jones and/or ***Get Free: Antibias Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers*** by Tricia Ebarvia and/or ***Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals: Inclusive Teaching in the Linguistically Diverse Classroom*** by Danling Fu, Xenia Hadjioannou, and Xiaodi Zhou.

Beginning **October 20**, educators will participate in

online discussions for the next seven weeks. With **The Playful Classroom**, participants will learn how and why they should bring play into the classroom to make learning meaningful, relevant, and fun. With **Get Free**, participants will explore a framework that can help implement transformative and anti-bias literacy instruction where students better understand themselves, others, and the world. With **Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals**, participants will examine the development, evolution, and current realities of educating emergent bilinguals and where the future of emergent bilingual education lies in an inclusive translanguaging pedagogy.

Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club. Register by **October 20, 2024**, to participate in the book club. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$50, which includes IRC membership for one year. PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.



# 2025 IRC CONFERENCE

March 13-14, 2025  
Springfield, Illinois



ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL  
**LIBERATING LITERACY**  
Embrace Love, Joy, & Empowerment

The Illinois Reading Council is accepting [Program Proposals](#) to present at the 2025 IRC Conference. Proposals are due by **September 1, 2024**.

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 2025 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.

- Laurie Halse Anderson
- Darcie Little Badger
- Candace Fleming
- Liz Kleinrock
- Kass Minor
- Adam Peterson
- Darius Phelps
- Shamari Reid

- Dan Santat
- Amy Stewart
- Duncan Tonatiuh
- Julia Torres
- Becky Anderson Wilkins
- Alicia D. Williams
- Kristin Ziemke
- Illinois Reads Authors
- And More to Come!

The Preliminary Program with the Conference Registration and Housing Forms will be available on the IRC Website by October 1st. We hope to see you at the [2025 IRC Conference!](#)

The Illinois Reading Council  
invites you to join us for the 56th Annual Conference



**March 13-14, 2025 Springfield, Illinois**

Laurie Halse Anderson	Barbie Little Budgee	Candace Fleming	Liz Kleimrock
Kass Miller	Adam Piferelli	Darius Phillips	Uweyne Reed
Shantavi Reid	Dan Santat	Amy Stewart	Duncan Tonatiuh
Julia Torres	Becky Anderson Wilkins	Alicia D. Williams	Kristin Ziemke

Interested in presenting? Visit [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) by September 1st!

# IRC Webinar Series

The Illinois Reading Council is excited to share plans for the [2024-2025 IRC Webinar Series](#).

- **September 4, 2024 ~ Classroom Talk and Literacy Learning** with Peter H. Johnston
- **October 2, 2024 ~ AI in the Literacy Classroom: Friend or Foe?** with Priten Shah
- **November 6, 2024 ~ Understanding, Assessing, and Teaching Our Students with Dyslexia** with Jan Hasbrouck
- **December 4, 2024 ~ Why Don't My Best (Word) Readers Comprehend Text? Reading Science to Support Self-Regulated Comprehension** with Kelly B. Cartwright
- **January 8, 2025 ~ Discovering the 2025 Illinois Reads Books** with Becky Anderson
- **February 5, 2025 ~ Applying the Science of Reading in Vocabulary to Build Comprehension and Engagement** with Elfrieda H. Hiebert
- **March 5, 2025 ~ Developing Fluent Readers** with Chase Young
- **April 2, 2025 ~ Empowerment Through Storytelling** with St. Clair Detrick-Jules



**IRC Webinar Series**  
All webinars will begin at 7:00 p.m.

**September 4, 2024 - Peter H. Johnston**  
Classroom Talk and Literacy Learning

**October 2, 2024 - Priten Shah**  
AI in the Literacy Classroom: Friend or Foe?

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Developing Fluent Readers

**April 2, 2025 - St. Clair Detrick-Jules**  
Empowerment Through Storytelling

**May 7, 2025 - Galitza Khonani**  
African Cognitizations of Trauma

**June 4, 2025 - Rachel Lesinski-Roscoe**  
Students Should Own Their Foundational Secondary Students' Ability to Independently Navigate Complex Texts

To register, sign into your IRC Membership Account at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org)

- May 7, 2025 ~ African Conceptualizations of Trauma with Guilaine Kinouani
- June 4, 2025 ~ Students Should OWN It! Fostering Secondary Students' Ability to Independently Navigate Complex Texts with Rachel Lesinski-Roscoe

All webinars are for members only and will begin at 7:00 pm. Members who watch the **live** or **recorded** webinars can earn one professional development clock hour for each webinar.

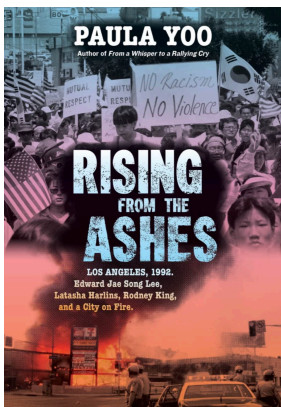
Mark your calendars and register to take part in this convenient, **FREE** IRC membership benefit.

# #WhatIAmReading



I am reading [Rising from the Ashes : Los Angeles, 1992 : Edward Jae Song Lee, Latasha Harlins, Rodney King, and a City on Fire](#) by Paula Yoo.

~ Diana Wilkie, IRC Treasurer



I learned so much from reading this riveting YA nonfiction about an event that erupted in our country 30 years ago. Tensions were high in Los Angeles County in April, 1992, after members of the Black and Koreatown communities failed to receive justice for those who had been wrongfully attacked. Riots broke out and gained momentum with a lack of police presence. Economic hardship and poverty spurred it on. Prosecutor Terri White in the Rodney King case is just one of the many heroes I recognized in this story. People from varying cultures helping each other in life and death situations. Both wanted justice. Good and bad can be found in all human relationships. Systemic challenges continue today. American history of redlining, food deserts, unequal penalties for crimes in different communities, lopsided juries are just some of what leads to racial tensions today. Author Yoo used loads of interviews, direct quotes, news reports and photographs to tell the

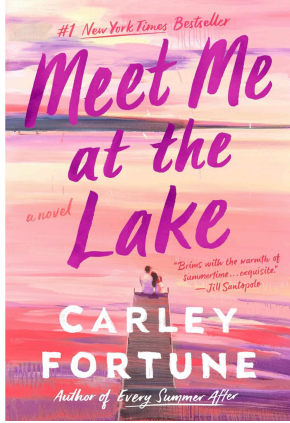
story. She movingly threaded the stories together to help me understand what was happening in our country. Gave great historical context.

I am reading [Meet Me at the Lake](#) by Carley Fortune.

~ Carrie Sheridan, IRC Executive Director

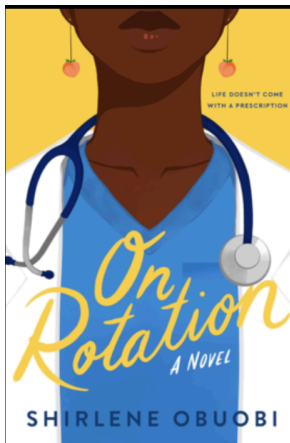
Every summer needs more than one book and day at the beach! In this book, two strangers meet and connect deeply during a daylong adventure in Toronto. Fern Brookbank and Will Baxter share all of their





secrets, dreams, and wishes for the future. They make a pact to meet one year later. However, one keeps the pact and the other breaks it. Now ten years later, Fern has wasted far too much time thinking about Will and her life doesn't look at all how she once imagined it would. Instead of living in the city, Fern's back home, running her mother's lakeside resort – something she vowed never to do. To Fern's surprise, help comes again in the form of Will, who arrives nine years too late, with a suitcase in tow and an offer to help on his lips. However, Will is hiding something, and Fern's not sure she wants to know what it is. But ten years ago, Will Baxter rescued Fern. Can she do the same for him? I highly recommend reading this book to find out!

Illinois Reads Pick of the Month is [On Rotation: A Novel](#) by Shirlene Obuobi.  
~ 2024 Illinois Reads Book List for Adults



Ghanaian-American Angela Appiah has checked off all the boxes for the “Perfect Immigrant Daughter.” Enroll in an elite medical school, snag a suitable lawyer/doctor/engineer boyfriend, and surround self with a gaggle of successful and/or loyal friends. But when it falls apart, she begins to question everything: her career choice, her friendships, even why she's attracted to men who don't love her as much as she loves them. And just when things couldn't get more complicated, enter Ricky Gutierrez—brilliant, thoughtful, sexy, and most importantly, seems to see Angie for who she is instead of what she can represent. Unfortunately, he's also got “wasteman” practically tattooed across his forehead, and Angie's done chasing mirages of men. Or so she thinks. For someone who's always been in control, Angie realizes that there's one thing she can't plan on: matters of her heart.

## IRC Awards Grants

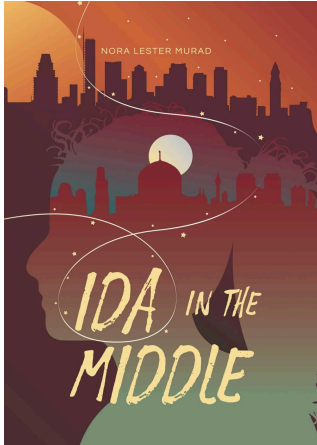
By the Illinois Reading Council

The Illinois Reading Council recently awarded nine Literacy Support Grants and two International Grants for the 2024-2025 school year. A total of \$11,005 dollars will be used for a variety of projects for all ages, from infants to adults, in schools and other settings. More information about the grants that received funding can be found on IRC's website.

# Family Literacy Bookshelf

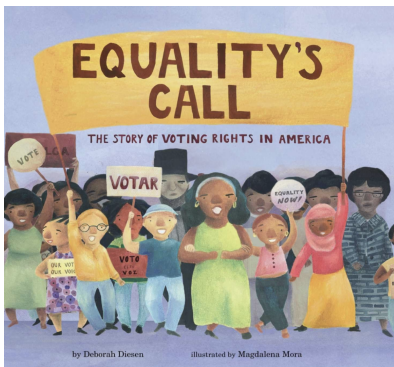
## By Barb Ashton

The store shelves and advertisements remind us that a new school year is about to start. While August has no major holidays to celebrate, it is Family Fun Month and National Picnic Month. So grab your favorite summer beverage, relax, and enjoy the warmth and beauty of summer.



We've all seen on TV and in the newspapers the ongoing struggle in the Middle East between Palestine and Israel, especially after the attack on October 7th. The book *Ida in the Middle* by Nora Lester Murad provides a nice introduction to the ongoing struggles of the Palestinian people. This is the story of 13-year-old Palestinian-American Ida and her two sisters who are daughters of immigrant parents. Ida is bullied and not accepted by her classmates. Ida and her classmates are given a required assignment called "The Passion Project" which has to be presented in front of the entire school. While at home, with the deadline for the final project drawing near, Ida looks for a snack and comes across a jar of olives from her aunt who lives in her family's village near Jerusalem. Ida eats one olive and is suddenly transported to Palestine. While she's there Ida sees the beauty of the village but also experiences the turmoil and violence within Palestine. As a result of this experience, Ida gains

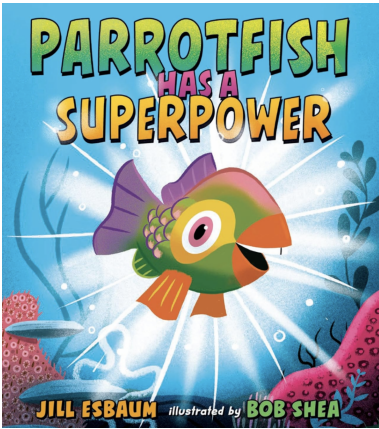
the courage and ability to speak before the all-school assembly, discovers her own identity, resolves her quest for her passions, and how she'll be able to assimilate and find her place in the world. *Ida in the Middle* is a book that shows the Palestinian side of the war and also encourages discussion about human rights, family, and social justice. The author has included a glossary of Arabic terminology to help clarify the meaning of the words throughout the story. Go to [www.idainthemiddle.com](http://www.idainthemiddle.com) for teacher resources about Palestine and activities connected to the book.



This year marks the 60th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which paved the way for the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. To learn about the history of voting rights in America read *Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America* by Deborah Diesen. The story begins with a classroom of students studying about voting rights. As the page turns the students/reader go back in time to the founders and their idea of representation and people voting. Only white men of property or means were allowed to vote and mostly on issues that concerned them. There were also many people who weren't allowed to vote due to their gender, race, or economic status. As the story continues

through rhyming verse and as the pages are turned, a timeline forms. The reader meets historical figures and activists who worked to bring about changes to voter rights. The refrain "But we heard ...Equality's call: A right isn't right Till it's granted to all" is repeated throughout the book and the crowd of diverse people increases as they become part of the march for voter rights. The struggle for voting rights still continues today and ends with the question "How will you answer equality's call?" *Equality's Call* is a great read-aloud and the illustrations by Magdalena Mora enhance the written text. The back of the book contains two pages of the 59 activists from the beginning to present time who spoke up for the right to vote. There are also two pages that list the amendments to the Constitution and other laws that protect and extend voting

rights to all Americans. *Equality's Call* is a timely book as we head into the upcoming election of 2024. There is also a great curriculum guide, teacher's guide and a parents' guide that can be downloaded from the author's website and the Anti Defamation League.



Have you ever heard about a parrotfish and what it can do? The book *Parrotfish Has a Superpower* by Jill Esbaum is a delightful and cute read that blends fact and fiction. This is about a marine animal that lives in warm tropical water, has a unique way of hiding from predators, has 1,000 teeth that resemble a beak, and has even more teeth in his throat. He also likes to eat algae and polyps but can do something no other fish can do. As parrotfish swims about he meets a hammerhead shark and strikes up a conversation, wanting to tell his story. However, there is a problem – Hammerhead Shark keeps interrupting by telling about himself. Annoyed by Hammerhead, Parrotfish points to a sandy beach and tells Hammerhead “Guess who made that beach?” “Me” exclaims Parrotfish. Hammerhead is skeptical. Sensing this, Parrotfish

proceeds to demonstrate his superpower. To discover what Parrotfish's superpower is, you'll need to read the book *Parrotfish Has a Superpower*. The illustrations by Bob Shea are vibrant and colorful. The color coded speech bubbles let the reader know who is speaking, along with expressive emotions of the character that all contribute to enhance the story of Parrotfish. The back of the book provides a True and False quiz about parrotfish with the answers giving additional information about this unusual marine animal.

## Looking Ahead

- July 26-August 11: Summer Olympics in Paris** – Don't miss the Olympic Games this summer
- August 1: Francis Scott Key's Birthday** – Wrote America's National Anthem
- August 4: U.S. Coast Guard Day** – Protects America's waters and coastlines
- August 5: Campfire Day/Night** – Make some S'mores to enjoy with family and friends
- August 9: Book Lovers Day** – Enjoy reading a good book
- August 12: World Elephant Day** – Read about elephants and how we can protect them
- August 14: V-J Day** - World War II ends with Japan's surrender
- August 19: Aviation Day** – Attend an air show or learn how planes are designed and fly
- August 21: National Senior Citizen Day** – Thank a Senior Citizen today
- August 26: National Dog Day** – Give this loveable pet an extra hug



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

- **August 9, 2024: Jacob Grant**, Illinois Reads author of *No Fair!*, 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, 2024: Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann**, Illinois Reads authors of ***Mine!***, 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, 2024: Kate Hannigan**, Illinois Reads author of ***Josephine and Her Dishwashing Machine***, 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, 2024: Darcy Day Zoells**, Illinois Reads author of ***The New Bicycle***, 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 11, 2024: Claudia Guadalupe Martinez**, Illinois Reads author of ***Not a Monster***, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 12, 2024: Mary Winn Heider**, Illinois Reads author of ***The Stupendous Switcheroo: New Powers Every 24 Hours***, 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, 2024: Dwayne Reed**, Illinois Reads author of ***Simon B. Rymin'***, 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, 2024: Adi Alsaïd**, Illinois Reads author of ***The Bravest Warrior in Nefaria***, 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, 2024: Tom Watson**, Illinois Reads author of ***Stick Dog***, 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, 2024: Bob Raczka**, Illinois Reads author of ***You Are A Story***, 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, 2024: Reese Eschmann**, Illinois Reads author of ***Etta Invincible***, 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, 2024: Jean Reidy**, Illinois Reads author of ***A Book About You and All the World Too***, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 18, 2024: John Sullivan**, Illinois Reads author of ***Ethan and the Strays***, 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, 2024: Ruth Spiro**, Illinois Reads author of ***How to Explain Coding to a Grown-Up***, 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](#).



# 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.

**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:**

- Current Research in Literacy
- Building the Reading and Writing Connection
- Trauma Informed Practices
- Skill and Strategies for Struggling Readers
- 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:

