

Illinois Reading Council



Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

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***"Nature and books belong to the eyes
that see them."***

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

2025 IRC CONFERENCE

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



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

Onsite registration is still available for the [2025 IRC Conference](#), *Libertating Literacy: Embrace Love, Joy, & Empowerment*, on March 13-14, 2025 in Springfield, Illinois.

Bring your [completed registration form](#) with you for a speedy check-in at the conference. Please note

The Illinois Reading Council

invites you to join us for the 56th Annual Conference



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

March 13-14, 2025 Springfield, Illinois

that the meal function tickets will no longer be available for purchase. Concessions are available in the BOS Center.

To find out all about the conference and the featured speakers who will be joining us, check out the **2025 Final Program Book & Conference APP** that is available to download from the Apple Store and Google Playstore now.

Featured speakers include: Laurie Halse Anderson, Darcie Little Badger, Cozbi A. Cabrera, Dare Coulter, Candace Fleming, Liz Kleinrock, Kass Minor, Ernest Morrell, Adam Peterson, Darius Phelps, Dwayne Reed, Shamari Reid, Dan Santat, Trisha Speed Shaskan, Stephen Shaskan, Amy Stewart, Duncan Tonatiuh, Julia Torres, Alicia D. Williams, Kristin Ziemke, and the 2025 Illinois Reads Authors!

We hope to see you at the 2025 IRC Conference!



THE BOOK NOOK CONSERVATION WORLD

By **Lorna Shuman, Illinois Department of Natural Resources**

These books on endangered and threatened species were displayed in the Book Nook at the 2024 Education Tent. This list is not complete. Other books on the market are also accurate and a good source of information. This list will give you a good starting point to find reliable and accurate information to read to youth and children. This list does not represent endorsement of any book or author by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Books listed under the various reading ages can be read either at the level above or below depending on the child.

Youngest Readers (2 to 5 years)

- [*About Amphibians*](#) by Catherine Sill
- [*About Birds*](#) by Catherine Sill
- [*A Butterfly is Patient*](#) by Dianna Hutts Aston
- [*Because of an Acorn*](#) by Lola M Schaefer and Adam Schaefer
- [*Over and Under the Pond*](#) by Kate Messner

Young Readers (4 to 8 years)

- [*A Bee's Difficult Search for Food*](#) by Mary Ellen Klukow
- [*A Log's Life*](#) by Wendy Pfeffer
- [*A Turtle's Dangerous Journey*](#) by Mary Ellen Klukow
- [*Big Night for Salamanders*](#) by Sarah Marwil Lamstein
- [*Bird Count*](#) by Susan Edwards Richmond
- [*Can We Save Them*](#) by David Dobson
- [*Migration: Incredible Animal Journeys*](#) by Mike Unwin
- [*Monarch and Milkweed*](#) by Helen Frost and Leonid Gore
- [*Mother Earth's Lullaby: A Song for Endangered Animals*](#) by Terry Pierce
- [*Near One Cattail*](#) by Anthony D. Fredericks
- [*Otters Love to Play*](#) by Jonathan London
- [*Plant a Pocket of Prairie*](#) by Phyllis Root
- [*Puma Dreams*](#) by Tony Johnston
- [*Ruby's Birds*](#) by Mya Thompson
- [*Skydiver: Saving the Fastest Bird in the World*](#) by Celia Godkin
- [*The Bug Girl*](#) by Sophia Spencer
- [*The Eagles are Back*](#) by Jean Craighead George
- [*The Magic and Mystery of Trees*](#) by Claire McElfotrick and Jen Green
- [*The Prairie that Nature Built*](#) by Marybeth Lorbiecki
- [*Track that Scat*](#) by Lisa Morlock
- [*What's the Difference? An Endangered Animal Subtraction Story*](#) by Suzanne Slade
- [*Where Once There Was a Wood*](#) by Denise Fleming
- [*Why and Where are Animals Endangered?*](#) By Bobbie Kalman

Middle Readers (9 to 12 years)

- [*A Case of the Vanishing Little Brown Bats: A Scientific Mystery*](#) by Sandra Markle
- [*A Place for Turtles*](#) by Melissa Stewart
- [*Bugs in Danger: Our Vanishing Bees, Butterflies and Beetles*](#) by Mark Kurlansky
- [*What Goes On Inside a Beaver Pond?*](#) By Becky Cushing Gop

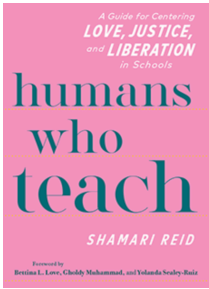
Older Readers (11 to 15 years)

- [*A Wild Promise*](#) by Allen Crawford
- [*Saving Endangered Animals*](#) by Jilly Hunt
- [*The Endangered Species Problem*](#) by Daniel R. Faust

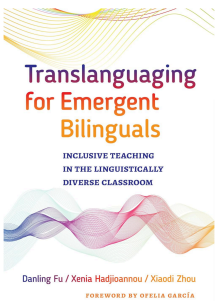
IRC BOOK CLUB

three book clubs!

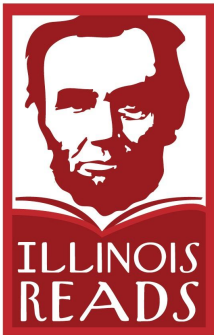
Beginning **March 23**, participants will be reading, reflecting on, and responding in the ***Humans Who Teach*** book club, the ***Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals*** book club, and/or the ***Illinois Reads*** book club during the seven-weeks of online discussions.



For the ***Humans Who Teach: A Guide for Centering Love, Justice, and Liberation in Schools*** book club, the book was written by Shamari Reid. This book club will be exploring the complicated humanity of those who teach and how within their humanity lies the transformative possibilities for cultivating lives and classrooms characterized by love.



For the ***Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals: Inclusive Teaching in the Linguistically Diverse Classroom*** book club, the book was written by Danling Fu, Xenia Hadjioannou, and Xiaodi Zhou. The book club participants will be examining the development, evolution, and current realities of educating emergent bilinguals and where the future of emergent bilingual education lies in an inclusive translanguaging pedagogy.



For the ***Illinois Reads*** book club, participants will be selecting books from one of the age bands of the 2025 Illinois Reads list to prepare lesson plans and activities. For Birth to 2nd Grade, participants will select a new book each week for a total of six books; for 3rd to 5th Grade, participants will select three books; for 6th to 8th Grade, participants will select two books; and for 9th to 12th Grade or the Adult age band, participants will select one book.

Register by **March 15, 2025**, 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.

Register today!

LITERACY SUPPORT GRANTS
By the Illinois Reading Council

The Illinois Reading Council is accepting [Literacy Support Grant](#) applications for the **2025-2026** school year. Applications are due by **May 1, 2025**.

The application and rubric for scoring, along with more information, can be found on the [IRC Website](#) under Awards and Grants.

Some things to remember when you are submitting your application:

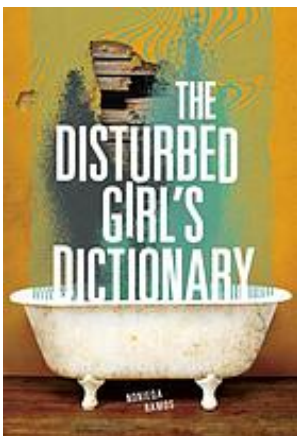
- You must be a current member of IRC and able to sign into your membership account to apply for a grant.
- It is helpful to read the rubric before/while you complete your application. All grants are scored according to the rubric; a well-written grant will accrue more points, which increases chances of receiving funding.
- If you are submitting a new grant application for a project that was previously funded, please be sure your information is updated. (For example, there is no longer a requirement to submit an article for the IRC newsletter or to present at the conference.)
- You must submit the report following the completion of the project.

Download the [application](#) and apply by May 1st!



I am reading *[The Disturbed Girl's Dictionary](#)* by Nonieqa Ramos.

~ Elvira Pichardo, Assistant Professor, Lewis University



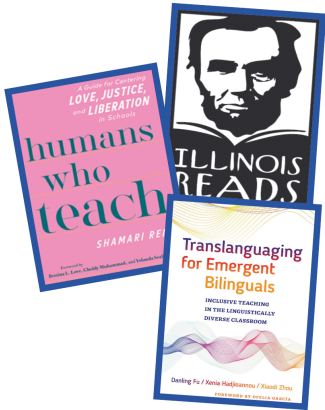
I just finished reading ***The Disturbed Girl's Dictionary***, in which Nonieqa Ramos explores how a young girl, Macy, labeled as disturbed by her school district and facing significant familial instability due to her father's incarceration, her mother's inability to find stable employment, and constant cheating on her dad as well as her own mental health struggles, and her brother's removal from the family home, copes with navigating high school and friendships. The book is written like a dictionary and a diary, with entries listed by letter where the concept is defined and redefined by Macy. Macy exerts agency by explaining how she sees the world, the issues she faces, the disinvestment in her community and school, her mental health, and her identities since being labeled disturbed and being placed in special education classes. She chooses how to write, protesting standardization, labels, and norms. We can read how Macy's internal and external instability leads her to make choices without considering

consequences. Her internal monologue and her external chaos are presented in a non-

sequential manner as she walks through her decisions in school and in life. Why does she treat her younger brother like a dog? Why is she tormenting her teachers and making choices she knows lead to others seeing her as *disturbed*? Why did she choose to make that decision concerning her mother's relationship with her father? This book explores issues like domestic violence, poverty and food instability, child abuse, foster care and DCSF, schools and the education system when you are labeled disturbed and receive special education services, ADHD and mental health, friendship, and family bonds. This book is not for the faint of heart but explores real-world issues with humor, love, loyalty.

IRC is reading the books from the [Spring 2025 IRC Book Clubs](#).

~ Stephanie Benson, IRC Book Club Chair



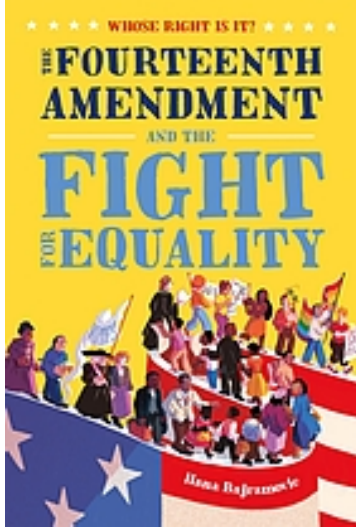
[IRC Book Club!](#) Choose one, two, or all three books! Beginning March 23, participants will be reading, reflecting on, and responding to the following books during the seven-weeks of online discussions. Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive 15 PD clock hours for each book club.

- [Humans Who Teach: A Guide for Centering Love, Justice, and Liberation in Schools](#)
- [Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals: Inclusive Teaching in the Linguistically Diverse Classroom](#)
- [Illinois Reads](#)

Family Literacy Bookshelf By Barb Ashton

The sound of birds chirping accompanies the March winds, and thoughts of spring are becoming a reality. During March we observe Women's History Month, celebrate St. Patrick's Day, Ag in the Classroom, March Madness, and spring training baseball of our favorite team.

There's a wonderful book entitled, [Whose Right Is It? The Fourteenth Amendment and the Fight for Equality](#) by Hana Bajramovic that helps readers to understand how this amendment is one of the most important amendments to the Constitution. The author divides the book into three parts "The Constitution," "The Supreme Court," and "The People." Each section has several chapters that explain/show how various events, people, etc., used this amendment to win or lose cases that eventually wound up in the Supreme Court. The author also explains how the Supreme Court justices played an important part in interpreting what the amendment implied over the years. Text boxes are included throughout the book that explain

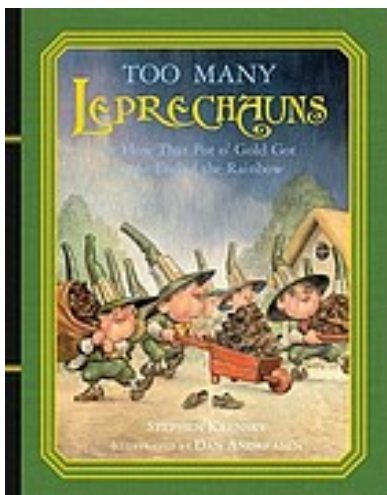


additional information in regard to “the judicial system and legal procedures.” This informative book is also enhanced by historical photographs and informative graphics that give the reader a better understanding of this important amendment and the fight for equality. The back of the book contains a bibliography for further reading and additional resources to learn more about constitutional law. *The Fourteenth Amendment and the Fight for Equality* makes a good addition to all libraries and Jr. High and High School social studies classes.



Spring break is just around the corner. An enjoyable graphic novel [Break](#) by Kayla Miller addresses this annual March event. As spring break approaches Olive isn't really looking forward to break, as she would rather spend time with her friends than spending the week with her dad who has moved back to the city after working in New Zealand after her parents' divorce. On the other hand her brother Goober is thrilled to spend time with their dad as he has a list of activities they can do together. However, Olive remembers the hurt she felt after the divorce and her father's inability to maintain contact while he was away working. Olive receives a smartphone from her parents so she can keep in touch with her friends while away. Seeing and learning of her friends spring break activities, Olive feels lonely and resentful. Will Olive and her father reconcile and her spring break end on a happy note after all? You'll have to read *Break* to find out the answer. While this is a story about second chances, the lively and colorful illustrations complement the story and will be

enjoyed by middle grade students.



St. Patrick's Day will soon be here. To get in the spirit of the day, [Too Many Leprechauns or How that Pot o' Gold Got to the End of the Rainbow](#) by Stephen Krensky is a delightful book to read. This story tells how the leprechauns are busy at all hours making fairy shoes to acquire gold. Their continuous tapping keeps the villagers awake at all hours of the day and night. The sleep-deprived villagers are beginning to turn the town of Dingle upside down. When Finn O'Finnegan returns to Dingle to get some of his mom's famous soda bread, he needs to come up with a plan to stop all the noise so his mom can get a good night's sleep. Will Finn be able to convince the leprechauns to leave Dingle when he meets with them? During their conversation the leprechauns show him all the gold they've received for making the shoes. The next day the leprechauns discover the gold has disappeared. Realizing Finn must have taken the gold, the leprechauns meet with Finn

again. They agree to leave Dingle when Finn tells them that the gold is at the bottom of the rainbow. However, when the rainbow disappears the gold's location remains unknown. Thus, the myth/legend of finding gold at the end of a rainbow. *Too Many Leprechauns* is enhanced by the oil-on-paper illustrations, especially the leprechaun characters, and decorative borders on each

of the pages. This book gives a bit of Irish folklore and is a nice addition to your St. Patrick's book collection.

Looking Ahead

March is Music in Our Schools Month

March 2: Read Across America Day – Create & Celebrate A Nation of Diverse Readers

March 14: Pi Day – Albert Einstein Birthday

March 15: Ides of March

March 17: St. Patrick's Day

March 18: National Ag Day – Agriculture: Together We Grow

March 20: Spring Equinox

March 21: National Ag Day – Growing a Climate for Tomorrow Celebrating 50 Years



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

- **March 1, 2025: Western Illinois Reading Council** will host the Choose to Thrive in #205 from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm at Galesburg Junior Senior High School Campus, 1135 W Fremont St, Galesburg, Illinois.
- **March 1, 2025: East Central-EIU Reading Council** will host the Literacy & Learning Conference with Candace Fleming from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm at Eastern Illinois University, Buzzard Hall, 1920 9th Street, Charleston, Illinois.
- **March 4, 2025: MID-State Reading Council** will host the Shifting the Balance Book Club from 4:30 to 5:30 pm at Gill Street Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois. Future book clubs will be held on April 1, 2025.
- **March 5, 2025: IRC Webinar on Developing Fluent Readers** with Chase Young from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **March 13-14, 2025: Illinois Reading Council** will host the **2025 IRC Conference, Liberating Literacy: Embrace Love, Joy, & Empowerment**, in Springfield, Illinois.
- **March 23, 2025: IRC Book Club** begins for *Humans Who Teach* book club, the *Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals* book club, and *Illinois Reads* book club.

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.

#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 or by phone at 309-454-1341.

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

