



Spotlight

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President's Message

Hi NFRC Members,



December 2023 Spotlight



Welcome Winter! The cold weather has settled in and, whether we like it or not, will probably be here for a while. I like this time of year because the cold weather is a great reason to stay inside and read a good book. December tends to be a busy month, but January, with the start of a new year and new beginnings, is the perfect time for us, as educators, to ensure our children have access to diverse literature in their classrooms. Educators must be committed to giving our students access to a variety of texts, not just a variety of narrative and expository texts, but texts that give a voice to individuals from other cultures and backgrounds. The children in our classrooms have varied language and literacy experiences and the books in our classrooms should represent that.

NFRC's winter event, *New Year, New Shelf: Refresh, Revive, and Rejuvenate Your Bookshelf*, will help teachers build and diversify their classroom libraries. Held at the independent children's bookstore, *Alice, Ever After* (located across from the Buffalo Zoo), educators are invited to learn more about new and noteworthy children's books. On Tuesday, January 16th, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., come to hear a booktalk presentation, browse the store, and possibly win two gift cards. Books will be available to pre-order at a discounted rate, light refreshments will be served and 2 hours of CTLE credits will be awarded! What a great opportunity to socialize with fellow educators and learn about new literature. The event is free for NFRC members and only \$10 for non-members.

I hope you can join us and discover some wonderful new literature!

Warm Regards,

Ashlee Campbell

2023-2024 President Niagara Frontier Reading Council



Ashlee Campbell

NEW YEAR, NEW SHELF

REFRESH, REVIVE, REJUVENATE YOUR BOOKSHELF

Educators! Join the NFRC for an informative and social evening intended just for you! Get acquainted with **new and noteworthy children's books** at an event taking place at a vibrant, local, independent children's bookstore.

Following an enlightening booktalk presentation (including a handout), you will have a chance to browse the store, purchase books at a discount, nibble on tasty goodies, socialize, and win prizes.

Space is limited. Register by January 9.

<https://www.nysreading.org/event-5503509>

Psst! Take a peek at the books: <https://tinyurl.com/umr6buu9> Registrants will be sent a special discount code to pre-order featured titles! All books also will be available for purchase at the event. Included in the list is *The Gift of Story* by John Chu, which the NFRC Professional Book Discussion Group will be reading in February (another CTLE event free to members)! Snag it at a discount!



NFRC members: Free
Non-members: \$10. Consider becoming a member.



Tuesday-January 16,
2024
5:30-7:30 PM



2 Hours CTLE Credit
Awarded

Presented by:
Niagara Frontier Reading
Council and Alice, Ever After Bookstore



295 Parkside Ave, Buffalo, NY
Across from the Buffalo Zoo.
Parking is located in the back of
the store and on-street.



READER STRESS SURVEY

NFRC will be offering a webinar in the upcoming months that will introduce you to the Reader Stress Survey (RSS) and invite you to learn more about the survey, ask questions, or make comments. In advance of this, we would like to invite the members of NFRC to consider exploring and using the instrument.

The survey is intended to help teachers understand what specific tasks of reading might cause students to become stressed or anxious when they read. This information will allow the teacher to be prepared to support and provide strategies to assist the child with future reading tasks. Specific task information can be used to focus instruction to create competence and confidence in a particular skill or area. It may also shed light on avoidance behaviors or reactions to requests. This knowledge can assist the teacher in creating interventions for reading or for stress and anxiety. By understanding the general attitude or the specifics of reader stress, it can help teachers be able to “name it to tame it”. This will assist teachers in creating a supportive environment and teach students ways to calm and focus themselves during the reading experience.

If you would like to explore this assessment in advance of the webinar you are invited to do so by following the directions below.

Begin by clicking on the link below to start the process. You will begin with the Reader Stress Survey Question Evaluation. Reader Stress Survey (RSS) Question Evaluation https://niagara.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9sfLiwYCOUvBD1A. If you indicate interest in receiving the Directions and Scoring (RSS-T) and the Student Form (RSS-S) they will automatically be sent to you.

If you decide to use the survey, we encourage you to complete the Reader Stress Survey Student Data to share your results. https://niagara.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cIwJqhQDjDFcH0a

Please feel free to share this invitation with other colleagues and educational professionals. Stay tuned for webinar details.

For answers to questions, contact Dr. Donna Phillips at dkphllps@niagara.edu 716-481-6990.

2024 -2025 NFRC Position Opening

Do you enjoy website development? Do you have an eye for website detail and design?

Starting July 1, 2024, the NFRC board member position of website designer will be open. The NFRC website designer maintains the NFRC website, keeping it up to date with council events and information. The NFRC website designer should be an active NFRC member who can attend most meetings and be able to actively work on the NFRC and NYSRA website to set up and advertise events and council information. Some basic website design experience is preferred, but the current NFRC website designer will mentor the new website designer during the spring of 2024.

If you are interested in the position or if you would like more information, please contact Ashlee Campbell (443-744-0354).

Habitat for Humanity

NFRC continues to partner with Habitat for Humanity to provide books and bookcases to families receiving a Habitat for Humanity house. This is a wonderful partnership that allows NFRC to give new books and a new bookcase to each family as they move into their new home. Everyone at NFRC loves books and we want all children to have access to books, not only at school and the library, but at their home.

Since the October 2023 NFRC Spotlight, there have been two more dedications (both in early December). Each family received a bookcase and 3 to 4 books per family member. Happy reading in your brand new home!

Ashlee Campbell serves as the Habitat for Humanity liaison for the 2023-2024 year. Questions or donations, please contact Ashlee Campbell (ashleeb@buffalo.edu).

NFRC Local Awards

Every year the Niagara Frontier Reading Council presents two prestigious local awards, the Service to Reading Award and the Certificate of Appreciation Award.

We would love to hear who you think deserves the awards.

Nominations are due April 1, 2024

The Service to Reading Award

- Will be given to a person, involved in literacy education, who has made a significant contribution promoting literacy in the community.
- **The recipient should be a member of the Niagara Frontier Reading Council.**

*****Please send nominations to
Renee Andrzejewski at
randrzejewski@buffaloschools.org

Certificate of Recognition

- Will be awarded to a person or a group **not affiliated with the Niagara Frontier Reading Council and not a paid, professional educator.**
- The Certificate of Recognition is for service to, or promotion of, the council's goals.

Some Opinions

I just finished perusing the latest issue of Educational Leadership (December 2023/January 2024), which focused on literacy across the disciplines. Being the reader I am, a number of thoughts crossed my mind. Here they are:

*Consider what words mean in different subjects. An example is the word “and”—its meaning and use are different in English and mathematics.

*Writing. Most of us write to communicate and seemingly in short bursts. We are warned not to send extended written pieces because many will dismiss our ideas before reading them. Politicians, judges and media opinion writers tend to go on at length, but do most of us? Writers of fiction and nonfiction get paid to tell their stories and positions in their chosen professions. I think it is no wonder that students resist writing and revising. They need to develop the stamina to write for school and college, and then let that stamina atrophy or lie dormant later in life unless it is integral in their chosen profession.

*A plus for writing for me is that it helps to clarify thoughts through reviewing and reflecting on intent.

*Phonics instruction is necessary and it seems a push to improve that instruction gained momentum nationally. One brief study apparently nudges that improvement in reading through that instruction rose in grades 3 – 5, but then faded. My thinking (immediate) was that’s the time content area instruction increases. Specific vocabulary in each content area introduces a level of difficulty previously unmet.

Many years ago, as a reading teacher, I had the pleasure of working with students who needed to pass social studies exams. My approach involved indentifying specific vocabulary the students did not know. My reasoning was that many multiple choice questions could easily contain four, five or more subject-specific words. My students often did not know most of them. So, we produced lists, looked up relevant information and meanings. A majority of these students passed the next exam as a result.

*Without getting in too deeply, so many educational plans seem to refrain from addressing the culture in which we live. Whether active or subconscious, there is a resistance to education which can keep us from desired levels of success.

*So many wonderful ideas to help kids read and increase interest in learning are communicated in multiple ways. I have seen teachers get excited about trying new techniques based on these ideas. And then reality sets in: state requirements, limited time, adding to an already packed curriculum. Teachers need to be super-motivated magicians!

Here’s wishing that students and teachers have a New Year that’s Happy!!

Jack Agugliaro, editor



!!NFRC 2023-2024 Officers & Board Members!!

Officers 2023-2024

President - Ashlee Campbell
Past President - Heidi Clarke
Vice President for Programming – (Currently functioning as a committee)
Secretary - Jack Agugliaro
Treasurer - Dr. John Strong
Director of Membership - Carol Bush
Finance/Budget Chair – (Vacant)
Audit Chair – (Vacant)

Board Members for 2022-2024

1. Judy Bradbury
2. Patty Oliphant
3. Christina King
4. Maria Nader

Board Members 2023 - 2025

1. Renee Andrzejewski
2. Lisa Boyd
3. Mariah Kramer
4. Kirsten Burke Smith

Chairperson Positions

Editor of Spotlight- Jack Agugliaro
Web Designer & Editor- Mary Beth Scumaci
Social Media Chair- Blythe Anderson
Council Awards Chair- Renee Andrzejewski
Professional Development Co-Chair- Judy Bradbury
Outreach Co-Chair - Judy Bradbury to oversee Little Free Libraries project
CTLE Chair/ Mini Grants Chair - Patricia Oliphant
Nominating Chair - Heidi Clarke
Liaison Chair- Jack Agugliaro

Join N|FRC

NIAGARA FRONTIER READING COUNCIL

Become part of a community dedicated to promoting literacy education, encouraging professional development, and providing community service to the WNY area.



NFRC members include

Educators
Administrators
Parents
Education Students
Library Media Specialists
Community Members

Register at
<https://www.thenfrc.org/>

Membership Includes

- Complimentary membership to the New York State Reading Association (NYSRA)
- opportunity to attend other NYSRA events
- Reduced pricing for NFRC events
- Reduced registration for NYSRA's annual conference
- Digital newsletters from NFRC and NYSRA
- PD/CTLE credits
- Professional Book Discussion Group
- Professional Networking

Questions- contact Ashlee
ashleeb@buffalo.edu



About the NFRC:

- We are non-profit educational organization chartered by The International Literacy Association since 1958.
- We are dedicated to the professional development and enhancement of literacy in our community.
- We are involved in professional issues affecting literacy.

NFRC Mission:

Our mission is to promote literacy education, encourage professional development, and provide community service, which fosters literacy within Western New York. We hope to instill a passion for lifelong learning and encourage readers to build a vision of the future.
