

Spotlight

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ILA Honor Council - #35575
October 2020

President's Message by Heidi Clarke

"Those are words. They tell us about ideas, dreams, and feelings. They take you places far from here. They show you how to be fair and just, and sometimes show you what happens when you're not. Books are a treasure. All you need is the key."

This is a quote from my favorite picture book, *Aunt Chip and the Great Triple Creek Dam Affair* by Patricia Polacco. Of course, the key of which the character, Aunt Chip, is speaking is reading. She is talking to her young nephew, Eli. Surprising and amazing things happen when Eli learns to read, and there are consequences that transform the whole town of Triple Creek. I will never forget meeting Patricia Polacco at the 2011 New York State Reading Association Conference. She signed my copy of that book and it is indeed a treasure to me! The ideas the story presents and her message to readers are truly of great value.

If you are reading this newsletter, I'm sure that you also believe that books are a treasure, and if asked, would eagerly share your favorite book. As a teacher or parent you have most likely helped a child unlock that treasure. I see the NFRC as a group of individuals connected by their dedication to sharing their love for books and reading. Our outreach programs provide books for children in third world countries and right here in Western New York. We continue to add Little Free Libraries to neighborhoods, and present books and a bookshelf to families at Habitat for Humanity home dedications. We support each other and learn from each other through our Professional Book Discussion Group. The NFRC Board also

hopes to host family literacy events that promote the love of reading in children, and also educate and support parents in helping their children grow as readers.

I hope that you will take an active part in the NFRC this year. I invite you to join our virtual Professional Book Discussion Group as we share our ideas on *We Got This* by Cornelius Minor. When you join the NFRC, you are also a member of the New York State Reading Association. This Fall, there are many virtual professional development opportunities being offered by NYSRA. Unfortunately, we are unable to gather for a NYSRA conference this year, like the one I attended in 2011, but I looking forward to meeting authors and educators online in the NYSRA webinars and virtual meetings. I know these meetings will provide a connection with likeminded individuals, and light that spark that can transform your teaching.



NFRC Professional Book Discussion Group Launches Year 8

The first meeting for Year 8 of the NFRC Professional Book Discussion Group, open to all members, will take place via Zoom on **October 24 from 9am-11am**.

We will discuss *WE GOT THIS* by Cornelius Minor in anticipation of his NYSRA presentation.

Register in advance for the NFRC book discussion **by noon on October 22**:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSffcth_2aqKdyPQX5hgNyZRpmbJ9BKYwQV4ifjBhVbzg2x6Lw/viewform?usp=sf_link . A link, meeting ID, and passcode will be emailed to all registrants.

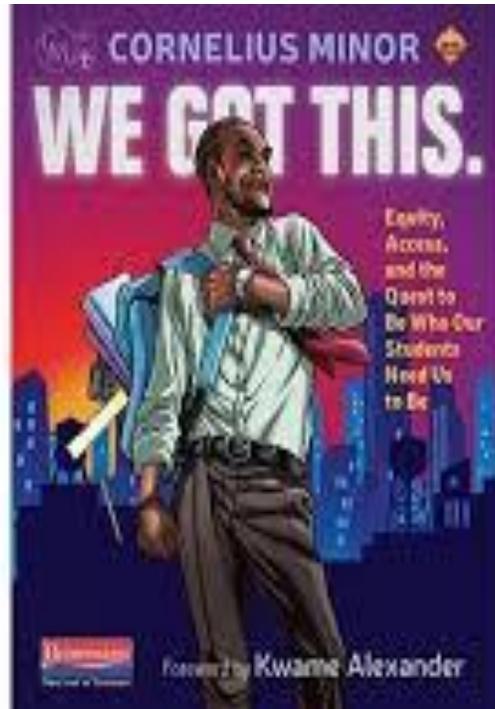
Following up, NFRC members will reconvene on **November 21 from 9am-11am** via Zoom to review and discuss insights gained from Minor's presentation.

CTLE credit will be awarded to all who attend the book discussion meetings. For more information, please visit: <https://www.thenfrc.org/professional-book-discussion-group.html#/>.

Questions? Contact Judy Bradbury at judybradburywrites@gmail.com.

Note: The NYSRA event on November 13th featuring Cornelius Minor is free for members.

Register for that here: <https://www.nysreading.org/page-18083>.



NFRC Little Free Libraries Expand to Include Niagara Falls

Our newest **Little Free Library** was installed at 79th Street School (551 79th St.) in Niagara Falls, NY on September 12th. Thanks to NFRC friend Paul Lyons for building the LFL, and to NFRC board member Pamela Garabedian for securing the site. Thanks, also, to NFRC member Renny Staples, who kindly assisted throughout the process. Rich Tedeschi helped with installation. We are thrilled to have placed a LFL in Niagara Falls! To view photos of our NFRC Little Free Libraries at other locations and read about this local outreach initiative, visit <https://www.thenfrc.org/little-free-libraries.html#/>. Interested in becoming involved? Contact Judy Bradbury at judybradburywrites@gmail.com or Sue Busch at sbusch526@gmail.com.



Getting Through Crazy

My husband and I were going through a McDonalds' drive-through in Salamanca to get fries and a drink after a lovely day observing the fall splendor of the Allegheny forests. On the outdoor patio, there was a boy, about 10 years old, rummaging through the garbage can. I rolled down my window, concerned, and inquired if he needed help. He appeared in distress. His face flushed with embarrassment. Apparently, the boy had dumped his garbage from the tray into the receptacle forgetting he had his mask on the tray. He had started riding his bike home and remembered the mask. The young man was worried his mom would be upset with him. Therefore, the boy drove his bike back to McDonalds. He was elbow-deep in the garbage receptacle to find it. Bees were actively buzzing around him everywhere. After a great deal of hunting and rummaging, the young man found it. I had hoped he didn't plan to put it on!

I could not help but think, "Is this a premonition of things to come?" Then I thought, "You just have to laugh." I find myself often confounded by all the crazy changes before us. The seriousness of today's world is overwhelming. You just have to laugh.....how else do we get through this?

Stay healthy.
Lisa Insalaco



My Bet's on the Teachers

As a retired teacher, I can say I am so glad I don't have to deal with COVID-19 while school is in session. But I know that if I were working and teaching now, I would be immersing myself in the confusion, trying to make sense of it all *for the children*. It's what teachers do. Many of them are agonizing over not only what to do, but how to do it. Much time is spent working online through visual media. It's one thing to present material through Zoom or Skype; it's another thing to develop a relationship with students.

There are individual problems students have, some of which they would have had anyway. But many are magnified now. Where do the children get food when they aren't in school? Many parents have failed their children in their current upbringing, some at fault, others not. Some homes are ill-equipped to take on the demands of virtual learning. Money is an issue, especially during the pandemic, which affects this. And as some parents have to work from home, they must be doubly engaged with the added task of supervising and helping their children. If there is a baby or a toddler in the house, engagement and interruption increases. Further, quiet study areas are not always available in active households.

Beyond problems of absenteeism and lack of parenting, there are the problems with technology. I remember experiencing a sigh of relief as an attendee at a conference when the technology worked! So many times machines would not connect or the network was either weak or inconsistent. Students are experiencing problems with devices and connections. Intermittent service or lack of sound can be impairments. Then there are those moments when connections fail. Anxiety increases for children when they cannot accomplish that which they are assigned. The disconnect increases exponentially with all these factors.

Individual problematic experiences of teachers are numerous. One young teacher nearly quit her job as she tried to connect with students during video classes. Students didn't understand, so she tried to explain with little success. She also realized that she must deal with students who are using foul language in email posts that she cannot delete. With progress reports looming, she is frustrated over how to evaluate students in a process that is so jumbled.

Another instructor bemoaned the fact that her voice kept cutting out while she was teaching, making her sound robotic and unintelligible.

A third had to make a home visit, attended by police. An additional discovery during that visit was the bruising down the back of a toddler, prompting a CPS call.

Nightmares abound, but I place my bets on the teachers who have always made things work. That was the charge. And although I know they didn't sign up for this disaster called 2020, they will fight on to save as many as they can.

Chins up, support each other, and positive thoughts are being sent in your direction.

Jack Agugliaro, editor

Habitat Outreach

Habitat for Humanity Buffalo set an ambitious goal of 20 home dedications in 2020- then came Covid19. NFRC provided books and bookcases for several House dedications in March but then everything stopped. Just this month, Habitat has begun virtual dedications and NFRC is there to welcome the children of each home with quality literature and a place to keep them. We've just been notified of three more in October and November. Because of our lack of fundraising ability, please consider a donation to the Outreach Committee of NFRC so we can keep putting great books into the hands of needy students! --Susan Busch



Niagara Frontier Reading Council

An ILA Honor Council - # 35575

Annual Membership Application (9/1/2020 – 8/31/2021)

Join/Renew Today!

NFRC membership has great privileges: includes membership to the New York State Reading Association (NYSRA), NFRC member events, access to NYSRA's member events, digital publications from NFRC and NYSRA, PD/CTLE credits, Professional Book discussion Group, awards, local/international community outreach, and more!

Register online: www.theNFRC.org or mail completed form below.

Payment can be made via PayPal, check/money order (U.S. funds only) to "NFRC."

Mail to: Carol Bush, 57 Minard St., Lockport, NY 14094

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ E-Mail Address _____

Position _____ Level (Elem., Secondary, Post-Sec.) _____

School/District/University _____

Are you a current member of the International Literacy Association (ILA)?

Yes/Member # _____ No

Are you interested in hearing about leadership opportunities in the NFRC? Yes No

Member Category

Professional - \$35

Student (*must be full-time student and submit current I.D with form) - \$15

Total Amount Due \$ _____



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Full-Time Student Member Verification

Full-Time College Student's Name _____

Degree Program: _____

College/University: _____

*****I acknowledge that the student named above is a full-time college student at the college or university where I teach.**

Instructor Signature: _____

Instructor's Title: _____

Date: _____

Please Note: In addition to this signed letter, the full-time college student must include a copy of his/her current and valid college identification card to be eligible for the student membership rate.

NFRC Officers for 2019-2020:

President – Heidi Clarke
Past President – Kirsten Burke Smith
President Elect – Gina Niemel
Vice President for Programming – Dr. Ashlee Campbell
 Programming Advisor – Patty Oliphant
Treasurer – Susan Busch
Recording Secretary - Jack Agugliaro
Director of Membership - Carol Bush
Corresponding Secretary –Jack Agugliaro

Board Members 2018-2020 Term:

Judy Bradbury
Lindsey Buck
Pamela Garabedian
Patricia Oliphant

Board Members 2019 - 2021

Elizabeth Bystrak
Dr. Tiffany Karalis-Boyd
Michele Montoro
Mary Beth Scumaci
Dr. John Strong

2020-2021 Committee Chairpersons

Council Awards Chair - Lindsey Buck
CTLE Chair/ Mini Grants Chair - Patricia Oliphant
Fall Event Chair/ CTLE Professional Development Chair - Judy Bradbury
Finance / Budget Chair - (VACANT)
History Chair- Pamela Garabedian
Nominating Chair - (VACANT)
Outreach Chair - Susan Busch
Spotlight Editor - Jack Agugliaro
Social Media Network – Heidi Clarke
Web Co-Designer & Editor - Mary Beth Scumaci
Liaison Chair - Jack Agugliaro
Audit Chair – Betsy Marshall
Western Regional Director 2018-21, NYSRA - Cherie Gerych

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.

Upcoming Events

- *October 24, 2020 – 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Professional Book Discussion Group
- *November 13, 2020 – 7:30 p.m. NYSRA Webinar with Cornelius Minor
- *November 21 from 9am-11am NFRC Zoom meeting to discuss Minor's presentation