



WINTER 2022, Issue 15, Volume 1



A Note from Executive Director Jan Coates



*When do horseshoe crabs lay their eggs?
How do they know when the tide is high and the moon is full?*

These are questions third graders from Deer Isle Stonington Elementary asked author Kim Ridley after reading, researching, and discovering the creatures in her book, *Extreme Survivors, Animals That Time Forgot*.

IRW, in collaboration with the Island Heritage Trust, created an eight week program for children in grades 3 and 4. After participating in a final Zoom discussion with Kim and the children, Director of School Programs Alison Johnson's excitement was palpable. She was gushing with pride and enthusiasm for the dynamism and thoughtfulness of what she had just experienced, and asked if we could extend the learning with Kim and keep the conversation going. Without hesitation, the answer was a resounding yes!

This is but one example of an exchange between children and a visiting author during an IRW program that expresses the excitement children have for reading and learning. During these challenging Covid-infested times, not only are we fortunate to have deep relationships with our partner

schools, but also with incredible authors and illustrators who care about children and their learning. During their visits, whether in-person or remotely, they thoughtfully explore their stories and creations with children, stretching their imaginations, honing their thinking and communication skills, and igniting their curiosity.

As we enter 2022, we look forward to expanding our web-based programs to reach individuals across Maine and beyond. We'll be honoring children's book illustrator and author Ashley Bryan throughout the year, offer our Pop-up Book Shops and community-wide events, continue our professional learning programs for educators and booklovers, and provide a robust program of authors and illustrator visits to our 26 partner schools. I hope you will follow IRW on Facebook and join us for programs on our website.

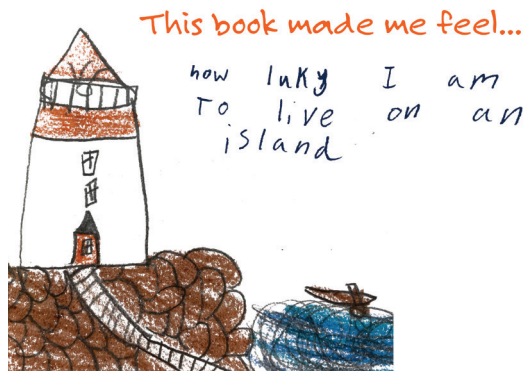
We are deeply grateful for the support of our partners, volunteers, and donors who make these experiences possible, even as circumstances continue to shift and change. Thank you and drop by for a visit at 4 Village Green Way in Southwest Harbor, where the coffee pot is always on!

2021

BY THE
NUM-

..... 1,438 books given
..... 1,290 children served

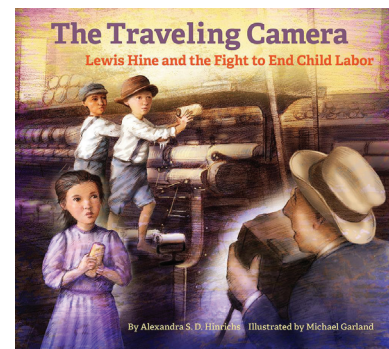
As schools and IRW continue to adapt in the Covid climate, we have been thoughtful with our approach to programming this year. We identified increased curricular support and consistency in classrooms as priorities for learning. As a result, we worked more in-depth with a smaller number of classrooms this year.



In October 2021, Sophie Blackall visited Vinalhaven, North Haven and Isleboro—IRW’s first in-person programming since the onset of the pandemic! It was a joy to share her book *Hello Lighthouse* and make art with children in person. Other schools continued with virtual programming, such as Zoom sessions with science writer Kimberly Ridley around her book *Extreme Survivors*, *Animals That Time Forgot* at Deer Isle Stonington Elementary School. Students were wide-eyed and full of wonderful questions!

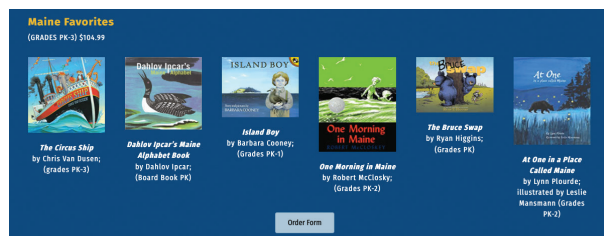
author, a writing workshops, and Q&A session. Lauren Wolk, Gary Schmidt, and Anne Sibley O’Brien were gracious in their flexibility as we navigated school schedules impacted by Covid. The creative writing produced in these workshops demonstrated the kids’ unending ability to invent wild ideas!

Though uncertainty remains a major factor in our planning, we continue to coordinate special programs for spring and beyond knowing how important these creative opportunities are for the children we serve. We’ll explore two important historical figures through Steve Costanza’s, *King of Ragtime*, *The Story of Scott Joplin* and Alexandra Hinrich’s book, *The Traveling Camera*, *Lewis Hine and the Fight to End Child Labor*. Creativity, we know, is an outlet for imaginations to sort through challenges and allow space for positive growth and problem solving and a way to hone critical thinking skills. We think picture books are the perfect place to explore and grow our curiosity. Thanks to all who help make these special programs possible!



IRW Online Winter Book Shop

During summer in-person programming, IRW has traditionally offered the opportunity to purchase themed book bags to benefit our work. With the release of our new, updated website, we’re now able to offer book bags for



sale online!

Each bag includes six titles suitable for a range of ages, detailed in the book bag descriptions. Our current offerings include: A Bagful of Pets, Coming of Age/Realistic Fiction, Historic Fiction, Graphic Novels, Maine Favorites, Rodman Philbrick Adventures, and Whole Book Approach books. Prices online include shipping.

You can order book bags here: <https://islandreadersandwriters.org/irw-bookbags/>

Be sure to subscribe to IRW’s e-news and check our website for future book offerings!

IRW Presents: 2022 Web-based Programs

In 2022, IRW will be expanding our web-based programming to serve book lovers and learners of all ages, far and wide! Look for professional learning programs, book talks with authors & illustrators, the continuation of our virtual Storytime series for children, and a second season of the Forward podcast!

WEB-BASED BOOK DISCUSSIONS

Beginning in January 2022 we’ll be piloting a web-based book club: Young Adult Books for Adult Readers! We’ll begin with Lauren Wolk’s *Wolf Hollow*, and will provide books for the first 15 participants to register! Check back to our website for dates and details in the new year.

THE YEAR OF ASHLEY BRYAN

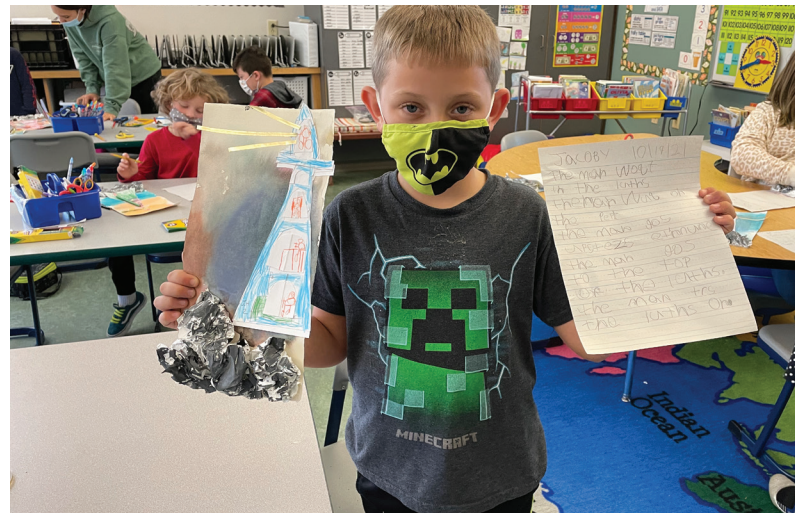
This year we’re excited to bring you programs that honor Ashley Bryan—acclaimed author, painter, printmaker, illustrator, puppet maker and storyteller—and the recent recipient of the 2022 Maine in America Award, given by the Farnsworth Art Museum. Check our website and social media for upcoming events and programs. One date to note will be Ashley Bryan Day, July 13—Ashley’s 99th birthday!

Ashley Bryan in his Maine home.



Winter 2021 Booklist

Our volunteers selected 35 titles for pre-K through grade 12 readers for the Winter 2021 Booklist! You can access the Booklist online at islandreadersandwriters.org/book-list.



Staff Spotlight

IRW welcomed two new staff members in 2021:



Organization Administrator **DAWN SEVERNS**

Dawn assists all directors and colleagues in optimizing IRW's mission impact through quality implementations and evaluating IRW virtual, community and school programs and general operations.

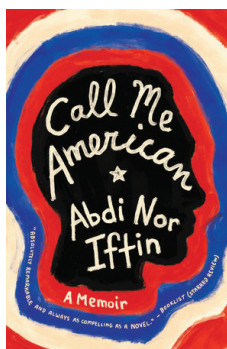
Dawn has a Bachelor's degree in Early Education with honors from the University of South Florida. She taught Kindergarten for seven years in Florida and has been a tutor and substitute teacher in several elementary grade classrooms in Carthage, Illinois. She has also worked in retail setting and in the after-school program Knowledge Universe in Washington. She resides with her family in Lamoine.

Director of Communications & Engagement **KELSEY BUCKLEY**

Kelsey is responsible for capturing and telling the story of IRW's programming and mission through our print and digital communications. Her work is focused on engaging our community, connecting to new audiences, and building new IRW online experiences.

Kelsey holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of Maine Farmington, and a Master of Arts in English: Writing, Rhetoric, and Media Arts from Trinity College. She and her husband live in Ellsworth, where they cook and read adventurously.





Letters to Abdi

Abdi Nor Iftin participated in the 7th Grade Read with students on Mt. Desert Island this year through virtual workshops. He also visited Charlotte Elementary School in Washington County, ME in October 2021 for an in-person program around his memoir *Call Me American*. Here's what students had to say about the visit:

Your book was wonderful, it was written well, it was put together better and was true, which to me was the best part. You have had a long and hard life and could not begin to put all of it into a book but I really felt like I already knew who you were when you came to talk to us. Next time you talk to any of your family in Somalia, tell them the children at Charlotte School say As-salamu alaykum.

—Dana

I thank you for coming to our school and talking to us about the struggles of the thousands of immigrants trying to get to the US for a better life for their children and themselves. Thank you for being strong enough to endure all the struggles to come and enlighten all of us.

—Billy

Thank you so much for coming to our school. We really enjoyed reading your book and meeting with you. It must have taken so much courage, strength and faithfulness to get where you are today. I am so happy that you are living right here in Maine!!!!!!"

—Charlotte