



A Note from Executive Director

As we enter our 17th year of inspiring children to love reading and learning, we are awestruck by their resilience. It will be many years before we

will focus on the integration of literature and the arts in the curriculum and seek to refresh and equip teachers with innovative ideas and approaches to further engage students in the learning process. We have already received funding support from a foundation and plan to apply to the Maine Humanities Council and others.

know the true impact of the Covid pandemic on children and education, but what we do know is that IRW, through the generous help of many, is providing needed supports and opportunities for children to grow and thrive. We continue to design programs that awaken the hearts and minds of children and inspire a sense of wonder and intrinsic motivation to learn.

In this newsletter you'll get a glimpse of our plans for the year ahead, new studies and projects that are underway, and highlights of 2022. We are thrilled to be hosting a conference in October 2023 for Rural School Educators from around the State. This comes at the request of teachers and will include keynote speakers and workshops led by authors, illustrators and educators.

Our goals are to provide an opportunity for Maine teachers to come together to learn, share, and return to their classrooms inspired to teach. We will significantly broaden our reach of support to rural school educators, both within and beyond our existing partner school network. Given IRW's mission, the conference

We know that exceptional teachers inspire exceptional learners. While research on reading instruction is important, listening to children about their needs, interests, fears and dreams is essential, especially if we are to provide an equitable and strong foundation for children to thrive.

These are challenging and difficult times for schools, families and communities, particularly in isolated and underserved area of our state. Supporting IRW is an investment in the healthy development of children, their success in life, and Maine's future. Thank you for your past and future support of our mission driven programs and activities. We wish you and your family a happy New Year!

Gratefully,

Jan Coates



2022

2632 Books Given
2122 Children Served
51 School Programs
8 Community Programs

BY THE NUMBERS

PURPLE CRAYON SOCIETY:

Planning for IRW's Future

In fall 2022, IRW debuted our planned giving program, The Purple Crayon Society, to honor those individuals whose legacy will help sustain IRW for generations to come. The Purple Crayon Society is named after the classic children's book, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, the favorite book of our Executive Director Jan Coates. *Harold* is a book that celebrates imagination and the power to manifest one's dreams. We think of each commitment to IRW as just that: a magical purple crayon placed in the hand of a child with untold creative potential.

We are overjoyed by the positive response to the Purple Crayon Society and look forward to celebrating its new membership.

There are several options for leaving a lasting legacy to IRW. For more information, visit islandreadersandwriters.org/purple-crayon or contact Executive Director Jan Coates, jcoates@islandreadersandwriters.org.



We were on the road again with 51 school visits this year, almost entirely in-person! Two new-to-IRW author/illustrators joined our team: Lita Judge and Matt Myers. Lita hails from land-locked Perterborough, New Hampshire, so visiting the islands of Islesboro, Vinalhaven, and North Haven to dive deep into *The Wisdom of Trees* was a true adventure for her and her husband, Dave. Matt Myers traveled from Charlotte, NC through Bangor and onward, deep into Washington County, a place not entirely unfamiliar as family ties are rooted in Steuben. His book *Hum and Swish* shows he's no stranger to the Maine coast.

Many other wonderful authors & illustrators joined us in providing book-related activities that ignited imaginations and brought hands-on fun. This semester, we created nature-inspired sculptures with Matt Myers, inspired by his artistic main character in *Hum and Swish*, and drew self-portraits with Maya Myers after reading *Not Little*, a book about a small girl with big emotions. Steven Costanza was back on the road with both his book *The King of Ragtime* and his piano to bring art and music together. We drew robots and monsters alongside comic and graphic novel artist Ben Bishop, and Chris Van Dusen modeled how he draws familiar picture book characters like Mr. Magee or Mercy Watson. Skilled birdwatcher and author/illustrator Annette Cate took students hiking at Moosehorn National Wildlife refuge, where we played games that taught us about how birds' beaks have adapted to help them eat their favorite foods, plus a round of "Duck, Duck [Your favorite bird here!]" Author Abdi Nor Iftin brewed Somalian tea and served maiawah (sweet pancakes) to middle grade students during con-

versations about his memoir and life as a Somalian refugee. The goal of all IRW programming is to make books come to life, drawing out threads that turn reading into a memorable, active learning experience.

As part of our constant reflection on feedback from the field, we continued to adapt our Explore More Book Guides this year—a set of custom resources for extended learning—to meet the needs of educators and students. As a result, we've seen usage spike! Student feedback we've received speaks for itself:

I learned how people wear headscarves. I learned how people have different languages. —1st grader, responding to Anne Sibley O'Brien picture book, *I'm New Here*

This IRW program made me feel like we need to take care of the planet. I learned to draw a butterfly and got ideas to write a book! —4th graders responding to Lita Judge's nonfiction picture book *The Wisdom of Trees*

I learned that you can always oppose a life for yourself that seems set in stone. I learned that you can always get back up and keep going, no matter what happens. I learned that you will never truly be able to leave memories behind; all you can do is live with them. —7th grader responding to Abdi Nor Iftin's memoir *Call Me American*

The students we work with never fail to move us with their creativity, observations, and thoughtful questions. We're privileged to do this work.

—Alison Johnson, *Director of School Programs*

SAVE THE DATE

IRW invites you to join us for the following special in-person events.

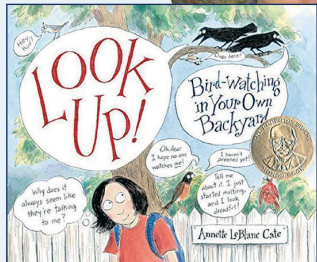
Summer Morning in Maine, Thursday, August 3, 2023: IRW's Annual Meeting is held at the Causeway Club in Southwest Harbor, ME.

Conference for Rural Educators, Thursday, October 5 & Friday, October 6, 2023: IRW invites educators across the state to join us for a two-day professional development conference held at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast, ME.



Annette Cate

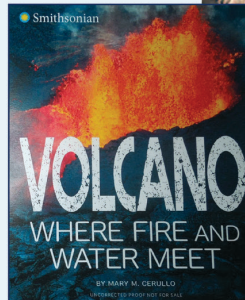
**Look Up!
Birdwatching in
Your Own
Backyard**



We will build observation skills, learn about nature journaling, and draw from life with Annette!

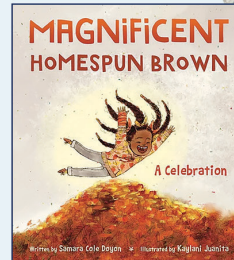
Mary Cerullo

**Volcano: Where Fire
and Water Meet**



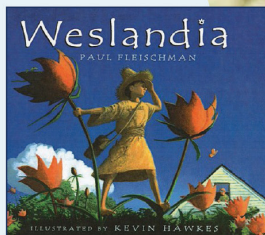
We will explore the science behind erupting volcanoes, sharpen writing skills and make connections to current events.

Samara Cole Doyon
**Magnificent
Homespun
Brown**



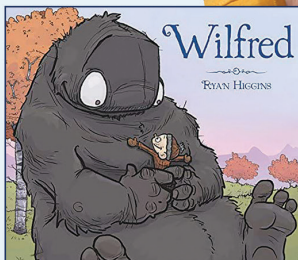
With this lyrical picture book, we will dive into poetic devices and the beauty of diversity.

Kevin Hawkes
Weslandia



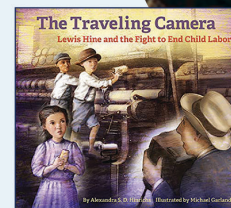
This book will inspire students to think about culture and civilization, and use their imaginative powers to build worlds of their own.

Ryan Higgins
Wilfred



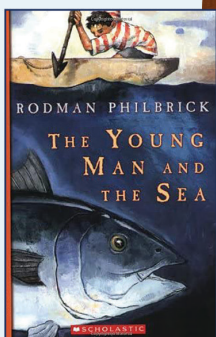
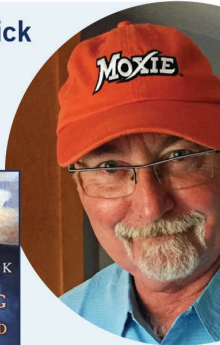
Wilfred is a misunderstood giant who can teach young readers about acceptance, understanding, and sharing.

**Alexandra
S.D. Hinrichs**
**The Traveling
Camera: Lewis
Hine and the Fight to
End Child Labor**



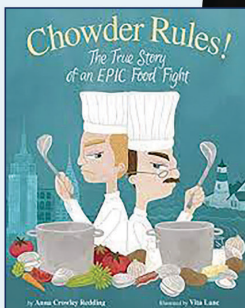
Students will explore American history through creative writing and photography, utilizing first person narrative and thinking about the intersection of art and social change.

Rodman Philbrick
**The Young Man
and the Sea**



Students will explore the world of this classic book through creative writing, discussion, and art.

**Anna
Crowley Redding**
Chowder Rules



Inspired by this book about regional cuisines, we will work on culinary skills, host competitions, and consider our own local food traditions!

Gary Schmidt
**Pay Attention,
Carter Jones**



Students will discuss big concepts and sharpen writing skills when they read this funny and profound middle grade coming-of-age story.



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NEWS

Our Library Community

This fall, IRW invited a group of librarians from Mt. Desert Island to participate in a two-part professional development workshop: “Exploring the Power of Picture Books,” with featured speaker Courtney Waring, director of education at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. The workshop, hosted at the Northeast Harbor Library’s Mellon Room, consisted of a session on the Whole Book Approach, followed by a session on reading Wordless Picture Books.

IRW utilizes the Whole Book Approach, a strategy for building visual literacy in children, in many of its programs, including Getting the Right Start.

Librarians left the sessions with wordless picture books to take back to their respective libraries, and tools to share with children and patrons.



Mock Newbery Reviews

IRW visited the Pemetic Elementary School library this fall to form a Mock Newbery Club with 7th and 8th grade classes! IRW Director of Communications Kelsey Buckley chose 11 titles for students to choose from and discuss together. Their favorite books so far? *Ain't Burned All the Bright Yet* by Jason Reynolds & Jason Griffin, *Jennifer Chan is Not Alone* by Tae Keller, *Northwind* by Gary Paulsen and *The Last Mapmaker* by Christina Soontornvat.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for the following online and hybrid events! IRW’s events are free of charge, but may require registration. Visit our website at ISLANDREADERSANDWRITERS.ORG/UPCOMING-EVENTS for program details.

All About Explore More Book Guides

January 12, 2023: Join IRW Director of School Programs Alison Johnson and Director of Communications Kelsey Buckley for a session all about IRW’s Explore More Book Guides—how to use them to enrich and extend learning, and understand how they’re made.

The Story of This Place: An Art & Writing Program Series for homeschooling families, cohosted by the Jesup Memorial Library.

January 17, 2023: Explore *The Traveling Camera* by Alexandra Hinrichs with writing, photography, local history, and an author visit. Each participant will receive a signed copy of *The Traveling Camera*. We recommend this program to homeschooling students aged 5–15; full schedule online.

Using Poetry to Explore Mental Health

January 19, 2023: Join Portland Poet Laureate Maya Williams for an online reading & poetry workshop! Maya will talk about the relationship between poetry, mental health, and resilience, and will give a reading of their own work. We’ll distribute a prompt for workshop participants to inspire their own poems, and will share our work together.

The Making of the Petra and Mo Show with Andrew Simon

Thursday, February 2, 2023: Theater-maker Andrew Simon will give us a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of his popular interactive puppet musical, *The Petra and Mo Show*, which toured MDI in summer 2022, and give insight on incorporating performance into programs for young people.

