



P.O. Box 227 Mount Desert, ME 04660 | www.islandreadersandwriters.org



Island Readers & Writers Newsletter Summer 2024

Issue 17, Volume 2

STAFF GROWTH

IRW is pleased to welcome Celine Martin as our new Communications & Engagement Coordinator. Celine assists in event programming, communications and in coordinating social media. Before coming to IRW, she was an educator for 30 years in Washington and Hancock Counties, teaching many young learners how to read. Literacy and sharing the love of learning is her passion and she is excited to continue that at IRW.

Celine has a Bachelor's degree in Education with honors from the University of Maine Farmington. She has three grown children and 2 dogs. When she isn't busy getting into a good book, Celine and her partner, Toby, can be found exploring Maine in their RV, gardening and kayaking.



NEWS AND HAPPENING NOW

SUMMER PROGRAMS



IRW welcomed Hayley & John Rocco, co-founders of the Children's Book Creators for Conservation Group and the author & illustrator of *Wild Places: The Life of Naturalist David Attenborough* to the Northeast Harbor Public Library on Monday, July 8. This event kicked off our collaborative summer events series!

IRW has partnered with MDI libraries and the Oceanarium and Education Center to promote summer reading and fun with books. A complete calendar of IRW's offerings and other free book-based events for kids—Read Around

MDI—is available at five participating MDI libraries: Bass Harbor Library, Northeast Harbor Library, Jesup Memorial Library, Somesville Library, and Southwest Harbor Public Library.



SUMMER BOOKLIST '24

IRW's Summer Booklist is out now! You can find this list of 35 recommended new titles for readers pre-K through grade 8 on our website.

We would like to remember and recognize Annie-Laurie Flournoy for her thoughtful contributions as a Booklist reviewer and as a friend of IRW. The Booklist is made possible by the good work of volunteers such as Annie.

A Note from Executive Director

Looking back and ahead!

Reviewing files of our very first days of IRW, I was reminded of the myriad decisions that our organizing group made, all of which provided the foundation for what IRW is today. That group needed to

decide on a name for our organization, a mission, a vision, and a tone that would inspire children to have fun and engage with books and the learning they espouse.

From inception, IRW has been a learning organization responsive to the needs and interests of the children and communities we serve. Top of mind was ensuring children had access and bridging the opportunity gap. That meant taking our programs to children where they lived. An essential ingredient of each program was—and still is—bringing children's book authors and/or illustrators together with youngsters and giving a personally inscribed book to each child—a winning combination!

Our growth has always been intentional, inspired by a happening, an opportunity, a challenge, a gift, and/or pivotal moment in IRW's journey. In 2023, our legacy program, **The Purple Crayon Society**, received its founding legacy gift from Nancy Burrows Putnam. As many of you know, Nancy was a longtime Board member and treasured friend of IRW. She and husband George hosted our annual Summer Morning in Maine appreciation event at beautiful Cape Farm in Seal Cove. Nancy's generosity and belief in the importance of our mission helped our young organization thrive. Now, with her help, we can expand our reach, refine and grow our programs for early

readers and learners. This program named Forever Books was inspired by an encounter with a 2nd grader, who received her book, personalized by two-time Caldecott author/illustrator Sophie Blackall, squeezed it to her chest, and said—*This is my forever book*. Illustrator Chris Van Dusen will create a bookplate for this special program. Because Nancy loved poodles and frogs, Chris has a couple of fun images to work with!

Forever Books will provide book-centered tools that foster children's literacy development and a love of books. As you know, birth to age five are critical years for the development of a child's brain in ways that support reading, which is so essential for enjoying success in school and in life. A feasibility study is underway to assess the needs of childcare centers, libraries and preschool programs in the greater Hancock County area and in our partner school communities. This will allow us to thoughtfully develop and present options to our Board of Directors for the ongoing development of this important program.

Also, this Annual Report includes stories on IRW's continued involvement with the Library of Congress, new and upcoming programs, and professional development opportunities for teachers, as well as a brief retrospective on the past year. I also encourage you to visit our website ISLANDREADERSANDWRITERS.ORG for video content.

Your generosity makes our work possible. Thank you for investing in the healthy development of Maine children through reading.

With appreciation,
Jan Coates

school program statistics

2388 Books Given
2037 Children Served
42 School Visits

IRW Booklist SUMMER 2024

IRW Snapshots



FROM THE CLASSROOM



The Spring 2024 semester was filled with significant and special moments, both in our school programs and with our second program designed for homeschooling families. IRW visited Charlotte Elementary School for the last time before they closed their doors—an emotional but wonderful visit featuring illustrator Kevin Hawkes. IRW collaborated with the Island Institute’s Teaching and Learning Collaborate (TLC) to host a special program at the Island Institute that featured IRW Board member and author Alexandra Hinrichs. Later in the semester, longtime IRW supporter, former Board member, and award-winning author Cindy Lord visited two schools—Whiting Village School and Milbridge Elementary. Kim Ridley led a day of nature exploration, research and writing with homeschooling families at the Henry D. Moore Library in Steuben.

This spring we were thrilled to welcome children’s author, Leslie Connor to our roster of authors and illustrators—you may remember her profile in our Winter Newsletter!

Schools were thrilled to have a book based in Maine with accurate descriptions of the local way of life. In *Anybody Here Seen Frenchie?*, a nonverbal child gets lost and the whole community steps up to help find him. Leslie brought energy and new ideas to writing workshops for middle grade students. Using boxes, keys, and maps to prompt them, imaginations were sparked and the stories flowed. Teachers said they’d be using her ideas for writing in their classrooms moving forward.

– Alison Johnson, Director of School Programs

ASSESSMENT FROM PRINCIPALS

IRW recently sent an assessment to principals in our partner schools, asking them to reflect on their relationship with our organization and programs as a whole. We’re proud to share some excerpts here, with more to come!

“The books chosen by IRW are not only enjoyable, they share important messages and connect to other current events and content areas within the school. These connections deepen understanding and learning in those areas.”

The greatest impact IRW has had on our school is...

“...that our students have regular access to high-quality books, authors and illustrators.”

“...the collective pride in offering the highest quality programming in a Title 1/High Poverty school.”



Here’s what kids had to say about Leslie’s visit!
If you were sending a text to your future self about today’s program, what would it say?

Keep writing the book you start.
Don’t be nervous, be yourself.
Read a book, girl!

I always carry the students and staff I meet home in my heart.

– Leslie Connor, Author of
Anybody Here Seen Frenchie?



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
HONOREE GATHERING



“Early in May, I attended a meeting of the Library of Congress (LOC) Literacy Award Honorees and Winners in Newport, Rhode Island. IRW was recognized in 2020 for best practices in literacy and reading promotion

by the Library of Congress (LOC) along with 14 other organizations from around the world. The meeting was initiated by the LOC with the goal of bringing award recipients in the Northeast together to listen and learn from one another and build community. The gathering did just that! IRW joined others in identifying and sharing our organizational strengths, challenges and ways LOC could continue to help us meet our mission-driven goals. Whether working in Rwanda, India, Connecticut or on Maine’s coastal island with adults or children the commonality of our experience, purpose and belief in the power of reading to change and enrich lives was palpable and inspiring.

There are so many valuable resources available at our Nations’ library. We at IRW will continue to access them and hope you will take advantage of their many book and author programs and enjoy the annual Festival of the Book.

We continue to take pride in our recognition from the Library of Congress for the important work we do and hope their endorsement inspires you to continue to support IRW with pride.”

– Jan Coates, Executive Director



PURPLE CRAYON SOCIETY
Inspiring a passion for reading & Learning

Nancy Burrows Putnam’s legacy will ensure that Maine children get the right start in school and life through IRW’s Forever Books program. We are eternally grateful for this inaugural gift to IRW’s Purple Crayon Society.

Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson is a classic! It has enchanted and inspired children to dream and imagine what could be for generations. That too is the goal of IRW’s legacy giving program, the Purple Crayon Society. Legacy giving provides the security for IRW to dream and innovate with confidence of sustainability into the future.

To learn more, contact Jan Coates, Executive Director or visit ISLANDREADERSANDWRITERS.ORG/PURPLE-CRAYON.

DEAR TEACHER...
A CELEBRATION OF LITERACY & RURAL EDUCATION
2024



The 2024 Dear Teacher conference will be held on October 10 & 11, 2024 at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor, ME! We’re delighted to announce our keynote speaker will be Anna Crowley Redding, author and Emmy award-winning journalist. Educators can join us for two days of workshops, featured speakers, networking and fun by registering at ISLANDREADERSANDWRITERS.ORG/DEAR-TEACHER.

Registration closes Friday, September 13, 2024.



The greatest impact IRW has had on our students is...
“...the fact that our students have experienced such rich, hands-on experiences in preparation for each visiting author/illustrator. These experiences have made a huge impact on our students. Having the opportunity to learn from each visiting author, as well as having a chance to “show off” their projects have been highlights of their school years. They always look forward to fall and spring IRW visits.”

A Note from Board President Debra Lay

It has been a momentous year for IRW, distinguished by the generous estate gift received from our former Board member and beloved friend Nancy B. Putnam and a successful first annual conference celebrating literacy and rural education. Each affirming the importance of our mission-driven work and the power of books to touch children's lives.

Our Board's priority is IRW's long-term sustainability and, with it, expanding mission impact. This work has included reflections on our most recent Strategic Plan, as well as succession planning. Our Board is deeply invested in the lessons of recent years and visioning for our future growth. This has included significant work on the part of our Financial Health & Investment committee and the hiring of Harpswell Capital Advisors.

IRW was pleased to welcome two new Directors to our Board this year: Debbie Jamieson, and Alexandra Hinrichs. Each brings valuable experience and expertise to our organization, with Debbie in her leadership position at a partner school and Alex on the road as one of our valued authors. We are thrilled with what their expertise has already contributed to our board and look forward to years of value-added participation. We will soon bid farewell

to our Treasurer, Allison Kupfer Poteet, whose expertise has been invaluable to us for the last nine years, but look forward to keeping her close as a friend to our organization.

The debut of the Dear Teacher 2023 conference was a thrilling moment for IRW's Board and staff as we witnessed firsthand the impact this programming had on rural educators throughout Maine and from as far away as New Brunswick, New Hampshire and New York. After assessing professional development needs for teachers, IRW's staff took on the design and execution of this programming to deliver deliberate and targeted results. For our organization, this conference was a moment of heightened visibility and broadened our outreach significantly.

Your continued support as a donor, friend, and curious ambassador makes all of IRW's work possible. Thank you for joining us on our journey!

With gratitude,



Board President

Board Treasurer's Report

Highlights of the 2023 fiscal year were a 92% grant application acceptance rate, 144% above budget, totaling over \$216,000, and a founding legacy gift contributing to future program enhancement and long-term sustainability of IRW.

Total operating expenses were negatively impacted when unforeseen costs arose, specifically those related to the unexpected permanent closure of the Hutchinson Center, the original venue for the 2023 Dear Teacher conference. Individual giving decreased from last year with the number of donors remaining relatively unchanged. The gap between anticipated revenue and expenses was bridged by drawing on IRW's reserve funds.

Fiscal goals for 2024 include growing the number of individual gifts by 10%, continuing a high acceptance rate of foundation grant applications and drawing on investment income at 4%.

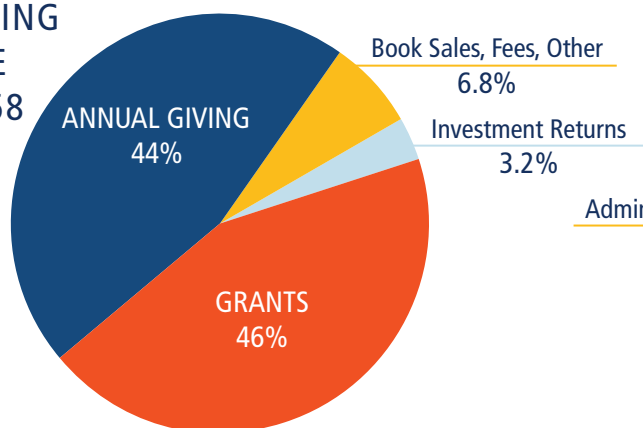
The accounting firm of Horton, McFarland & Veysey in Ellsworth have reviewed our financial records and prepared the 990 Report for 2023. Copies are available in our office for your review upon request.



Allison Poteet, Board Treasurer

Financial Summary Financial Report for the year ending on December 31, 2023

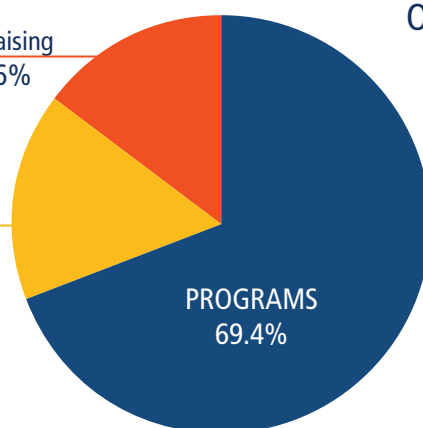
**OPERATING
INCOME**
\$472,358



Fundraising
14.6%

Administrative Services
16%

**OPERATING
EXPENSE**
\$511,458



For more detailed financial information, please contact: Jan Coates, Executive Director (jcoates@islandreadersandwriters.org).

2023 Donors

Anonymous
Anonymous,
Chicago Community Foundation
Charles F. & Beatrice D. Adams
Charitable Trust
Trudi & William Allcott
Elly & Schofield Andrews
Elizabeth Angelbeck
Anonimo Foundation
Meredith & Philip Anson
Ausolus Trust
Patricia & Alan Baldwin
Vicki & Peter Bartholow
Judith Bassnett
Jane Batzell & Robert Cleaves
Kate Baxter
Molly & John Beard
Jean Beckley
Katherine Bell
Jennifer Benz
Joan Blaine
Sylvia Blake
Alice & Jim Bradfield
Brenda Brodie
Joan Bromage
Emily & Dan Burke
Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust
Charles Butt
Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation
Barbara Campbell
Eliza & Daniel Carney
Catherine Carter & John Palfrey
Mary Cerullo
Charity Aid Foundation
Tanny Clark
Andy Cline
Jan Coates
Carol Coleman
Ruth M. Colket
Nancy & Howard Colter
Sarah Kinney Contomichalos
Elizabeth Hodder Corbus
Sarah Corson & Dick Atlee
LeaAnn & Chris Crowley
Joanne Deacon
Jean Dean
Susan Dempster & Jerry Doughty
Deborah DeWitt & Charles Lucas
Pam & Doug Diehl
Julia DiNapoli
William & Ellen Dohmen
Emily & James Douthat
Clare & Jared Edwards
Jeannie & David Emala
Benjamin Emory & Karin Tilberg
Andrew & Faye Evans
Jean & David Evans
Matt Evans
John Favour
Ruth Feldman
Catharine Fender
Leonard C. & Mildred F.
Ferguson Foundation
Sallie Findlay & Gene Nelson
Michelle & Doug Finn
Jean Finney
Susy Flach
Annie* & Tom Flournoy

Wendy & William Foulke
JoAnne & Richard Fuerst
Gigi Georges & Jeff Oxman
Gerrish H. Milliken Foundation
Andrea & David Gilmore
Mazzie & Charlie Gogolak
Neva Goodwin
Ann Grinnell
Growald Climate Fund
Susan & Charles Guilford
Nancy Harris
Anne-Marie Hart
Genie & Harry Havemeyer
Susan & Tom Hayward
Ann & Leslie Heilakka
John Herron & Julia Moore
Marion Higgins
Ryan Higgins
Alexandra Hinrichs
Susan Hirschman
Nancy Ho
Lissa & *Mel Hodder
Alma Homola
Lisa Horsch-Clark & Bob Clark
Sharon Lee Hostler
Jeannine Hoyt
Sarah & Fred Irons
Martha & Orton P. Jackson
Lauren Jennings & George Baker
Ann & Lee Judd
Anne & Joe Juster,
The Cleveland Foundation
Susan Kahn & Daniel Kirschner
Pamela Kallner
Sue & Bob Kazin
Maggie & Jack Kelley
Anne & Steve Kemper
Ann Kinney
Alan Kornberg & Harold Koda
Melissa & Michael Kupfer
Liz Laverack & Jake Jacobson
Julie Lawson & Cow Cove Family
Debra & Doug Lay
Annette LeBlanc Cate
Debra & Paul LeBlanc
Kristen Lindgren & Alex Pearson
Beth Longcope
Susan & Scott Low
Jackie & John Lowe
Ann Luginbuhl
Pat Lundholm
MacArthur Foundation
Jeannette & Bruce MacFadden
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Humanities Council
Suzie & Bruce Manger
Pamela Manice
Maude & John March
*Trish & Owen Marx
Anne Mazlish
Ann McCann
Mimi McConnell
Linda & Clement McGillicuddy
Joan McIlhenny
Susan & Thomas McKay
Nancy McKelvy
Julie Meltzer
Andrew Miller

Carene & Alan Miller
Mimi & Dr. David Miller
Stephen & Rebecca Milliken
Lynn & Toby Monaco
Mary R. Morgan
Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
Kathryn & Thomas Nelson
Louisa & William Newlin
Abe Noyes
Carol & Jacob Null,
John W. & Clara C. Higgins Foundation
Nancy O'Connor & Steve Rush
Susan Onion, Literacy Fund, Maine
Community Foundation
Linda & C.W. Eliot Paine,
Puffin Fund,
Maine Community Foundation
Robin Patton
Disty Pearson & Phil Zuckerman
Susan & Robert Peck
Judith Perkins
Sophie Pfeiffer
Polly Pierce
Point Harbor Fund,
Maine Community Foundation
Anne & Bruce Pomeroy
Allison & Dan Poteet
Kathy & George Putnam
Hope Putnam
Susan & Judson Raven
John Scott Redmon
Sharon Creech Rigg
Susan & David Rockefeller
Sydney Roberts Rockefeller
Fran & Eric Rosenfeld
Cornelia Cogswell Rossi Foundation
Jan & William Russell
Cynthia Livingston & Hank Schmelzer
Jane & Dennis Shubert
Joan W. Sorensen
*Howard Monroe & Victor Stanley
Christopher Stevenson
Val & Cliff Storms
Sarah & Paul Strickland
Sue & Amanda Stuebner
Caren Sturges
Carol Sullivan & Pat Jackson
Sumner Scholarship Endowment
Foundation, Inc.
Patricia Taylor
Jean & Timothy Taylor
Mary Ann Tynan Charitable Trust
The Diana Davis Spencer Foundation
Mia Thompson
Alexis Toegel
Edith Toegel
Helene Tuchman
Norma Vela
Robin & Paul Vermeylen
Drs. Peggy Vettese & Ed Benz
Edward Walworth
Courtney Waring,
Washington County Fund,
Maine Community Foundation
Heather & Karl Watras
Rick & Mollie Wheeler
Cathy & Jim Willey
Dennis Wint & Debra Bjornard

Cass Wright
Yoakum Fund,
Maine Community Foundation
GIFTS IN MEMORY
Katie Bell
in memory of Phoebe Milliken
Tom Flournoy
in memory of Annie-Laurie Flournoy
Susan & Tom McKay
in memory of Hannah Wilkinson
Cate Tynan O'Dwyer &
Emily Tynan McDaniel
in memory of Mary Ann Tynan
Heather & Karl Watras
in memory of Annie-Laurie Flournoy

GIFTS IN HONOR OF

Joan McIlhenny
Joan Blaine
Pomeroy's & Camusos
in honor of Jan Coates

GIFTS TO THE PURPLE CRAYON SOCIETY

The estate of Nancy Burrows Putnam

DEAR TEACHER CONFERENCE SPONSORS

Bar Harbor Bank & Trust
Island Institute
Maine Humanities Council
National Rural Education Association
University of Maine Department of
Education & Human Development
WERU Community Radio

BUSINESS SPONSORS

Acadia Yurts & Wellness Center
Bramble & Stone
Bubs Burritos
Carroll Drug
Clark Point Cafe & Catering
Elizabeth's in Ellsworth
Fogtown Brewery Company
Harbor Table
Imago Dei Café in Ellsworth
Salt Shop
Sawyer's Market
Sawyer's Specialties
Tom Cat Tide

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Abrams/Hachette Publishing
Sophie Blackall
Capstone Publisher
Jan Coates
Andrea Gilmore
Alexandra Hinrichs
Alison Johnson
Lakeshore Learning Materials
Ann Luginbuhl
Susan & Bob Peck
Simon & Schuster, Inc.

* Deceased