Reading Recovery® has been helping struggling readers for 35 years, and it has been my privilege to participate in the Reading Recovery and comprehensive literacy community for more than 25 years. This wonderful community has impacted me both professionally and personally. One of my Reading Recovery mentors, Linda Dorn said it well:

Literacy learning is complex — not only for our children, but for us as well. As teachers, we are constantly learning and experiencing transitions that reflect our new understanding. The children in our classrooms need us to work together as a team to support them on their pathway to literacy. Systemic change lies in our understanding of how our children learn and in our ability to problem-solve with colleagues who work with our children, who share our common experiences, and who speak our language of literacy. (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p. 181)

Recently, my work with improvement science and the Reading Recovery Hub has reminded me that as we learn and understand, we grow. I suspect Marie Clay would have been front and center. Working with the Hub is truly one of the highlights of my professional career. Almost 20 years ago, Gay Su Pinnell and Carol Lyons asked themselves: “What if we could create more and better ways for teachers to learn from their own teaching? What if we could provide high-quality, ongoing professional development and coaching for literacy teachers that result in improving their students’ achievement?” (Pinnell & Lyons, 2001, back cover). Learning requires ownership, self-regulation, problem solving, and reflection. The Hub work represents this.

Often the question I ask of others is: Are we a learned community or a learning community? Reading Recovery and comprehensive literacy are about learning. Our theories are tentative. Our focus is about how we can inform our teaching.

And I always try to remember that we don’t work alone, but in collaboration using conversation to support our work in an environment of reflection and responsiveness. It is about how we study the needs of the child that changes the trajectory of success for the young learner and for the teacher. Our collaboration creates a social community with a shared responsibility for student learning. When the child is successful, the teacher is successful, and the school is successful. And then we have succeeded.

The opportunity to collaborate with many individuals in the Reading Recovery network continues to enhance my professional and personal life. Look around you. How many friends have you made in this network? We share a common focus. We know that our work makes a difference. If we dialogue you will often hear me talk about the impact that Linda Dorn made on me professionally and personally. Her unconditional support and love supported...
me in the many transitions I have made in life. Dorn (2015) told us that “minds of educators can be changed only through authentic mutual experiences grounded in relevant events” (p. 6). Collaboration allows me to question, observe, and network. We are better in our work because of our collaboration.

Less than 30 years ago, Meichenbaum and Biemiller (1998) wrote:

What will it take to change the way students are taught? What will it take to close the learning gap? We don’t need to overwhelm teachers with a long list of new methods to try. Rather we believe what is needed is a theoretical model that explicates the teaching and learning process; a model that will allow the integration of multiple teaching methods, and that will challenge educators to rethink their efforts. (p. 59)

It is critical for all of us to remember that every child is different. They learn at a different pace, they come from different backgrounds, and they have different interests. Marie Clay (2014) said it best: “If children are to achieve common outcomes after two-three years in school it will be necessary to recognize that they enter school having learned different things in different ways in different cultures and communities” (p. 1).

Reading Recovery and comprehensive literacy have truly made me look at children in a wonderful way — recognizing their strengths and knowing that we have the knowledge and power to change their learning. We don’t have a “one size fits all.” Rather, we tailor instruction to the specific child. We change the child’s future. It is about the child. This truly adds to the joy of our work.

The challenge for us for the next 35 years is to honor our legacy and continue to be the learning community that collaborates and honors the uniqueness of each child. We can change the trajectory. It is about us offering the positive message to others that can transform the future.

The question we all should ask is, “Why not Reading Recovery? Why not comprehensive literacy?” Our expectations must be high for all learners including ourselves. Let us continue to hold ourselves accountable for high levels of performance. It is about children and their future.

References

RRCNA Board of Directors Election Results
We are pleased to share results of the recent election for terms beginning July 1, 2020.

Vice President
Maeghan McCormick
Jackson County Schools
Jackson, MI

Secretary
Mary Lou Petters
Charleston County School District
Ravenel, SC

Teacher Representative
Janet Irving
Sarasota County Schools
Sarasota, FL

Teacher Leader Representative
Helen Proulx
Saint James-Assiniboia School Division
Winnipeg, Canada

Trainer Representative
Debra Rich
Saint Mary’s College
Sumner, IA (Moraga, CA)
Executive Director’s Message

Passion, Energy, Commitment

RRCNA Executive Director Billy Molasso

As we continue to confront challenges in our daily work, I am fortified with the knowledge that Reading Recovery® has continued for more than 35 years, helped millions of struggling readers, shared knowledge with a new generation of educators, and spread our message of how well Reading Recovery professionals assist our schools and communities.

Our community has a lot to celebrate as we experience our 35th anniversary of Reading Recovery in North America. Our intervention continues to be impactful on our students, and we have data as a true evidence-based program to demonstrate it. Our community explores opportunities to enhance our work with different populations, from IPLÉ to DLL, to Literacy Lessons™ to continually improving our daily practice of Reading Recovery with students who need that extra enthusiasm and support. Our leadership structures are filled with strong, passionate, and dedicated professionals who truly believe in the work of the organization and Reading Recovery.

In February, I joined my first national conference in Columbus. Brought to you by RRCNA, the newly minted LitCon: National K-8 Literacy & Reading Recovery Conference is the largest homecoming of leaders in childhood literacy in North America, and will continue to advance our field, enhance our skills, and mobilize our community as we work to help struggling readers. The passion, energy, and commitment to literacy learning I saw and felt in our few days together in Columbus was especially important given the things that started happening just a month later. That time together in Columbus further energized me to do what I can to support you in your work over the coming months.

I continue to be impressed and inspired by the sincere dedication of our members as they work with struggling readers. Our communities are experiencing an unprecedented challenge with shelter-in-place and stay-at-home orders. Our school communities are especially impacted in fundamental ways that are different from other professions and fields of work. As educators, we each miss our daily connections with our students, and worry about how this time will impact our students — today, tomorrow, and next fall. The work it takes to help readers to improve their literacy skills is difficult, sometimes frustrating, but also so incredibly rewarding. I encourage each of us to support our students as best we are able and lean on each other for more than just problem-solving advice, but also for emotional connection and support. Together, we can and will get through this.
2019-20 Teacher Leader Awards

Pioneer Valley Books

Pioneer Valley Books is dedicated to producing the highest-quality books for early literacy learners. Their books have been carefully written to support students in gaining control over early reading behaviors and in becoming strategic in their approach to print. Books have highly supportive pictures, carefully selected reading vocabulary, easy sentence structure, and they are specifically designed to help children gain fluency and independence in their reading. Pioneer Valley Books funded two scholarships this year. Jill Scott, Anderson County Schools, Anderson, TN, is pictured with Michelle Dufresne (Right). Not pictured is Sharee Barrus, Washakie County School District No. 1, Worland, WY.

Hameray Publishing Group and the Yuen Family Foundation

Hameray Publishing Group is dedicated to publishing innovative literacy materials for today’s educators by combining a sound research-based approach with cutting edge classroom solutions. The Yuen Family Foundation—a private charitable organization—in conjunction with Hameray Publishing Group funded one teacher leader award. Donors Christine and Ray Yuen are pictured with Meg Dyck (center), Douglas County Schools, Castle Rock, CO.

MaryRuth Books

MaryRuth Books offers instructional, clever books that provide reading practice using photos and illustrations to facilitate word recognition and engage the young reader. MaryRuth Books is the proud publisher of the Danny series of children’s books that not only provide reading practice, but also support the development of a lifelong love of reading. MaryRuth Books provided one teacher leader award. Jennifer Ladd, RSU 9, Farmington, ME, is pictured with donor Mia Coulton (right).
2020 National Conference Awards

Tenyo Family Foundation funded 10 National Conference awards. Founded by the late Sophie Tenyo, the foundation supports charitable, religious, scientific, literary, and educational endeavors for the public welfare and well-being of mankind. Pictured left to right are Monica Gallagher, Edmonson County Schools, Smiths Grove, KY; Stacey Mandel, Boulder Valley School District, Lafayette, CO; Robyn Brislin, Fayette County Public Schools, Lexington, KY; Kristi Craven, Liberty County School System, Midway, GA; Aimee Sexton, Metcalfe County Schools, Edmonton, KY; Ashley Davis, Oldham County School District, Crestwood, KY; and Donna Leiter, Dublin City Schools, Dublin, OH. Not pictured are Shauna Gourley, McClean County Unit 5, Bloomington, IL; Janet Irving, Sarasota County Schools, North Port, FL; and Jessica Klinker, Aspire Public Schools Central Valley, Stockton, CA.

The Geri Stone Memorial Fund was established to remember the leadership of Geri Stone, who passed away in 2002. Geri Stone was one of Michigan’s first Reading Recovery teachers and served as the Reading Recovery teacher leader for the Livonia, Farmington, and Utica Public School Systems. The fund provides financial awards to help continue the work of Geri Stone and of RRCNA’s vision to “ensure that children who struggle in learning to read and write gain the skills for a literate and productive future.” Pictured left to right are BreeAnn Brushaber, Michelle Porter, and Nicole Allen, Michigan Center School District, Michigan Center, MI; Bobbie Barrier, Wayne County Schools, Monticello, KY; Carla Cresswell, Nevada Community School District, Nevada, IA; and Lisa Cave, Nevada Community Schools, Ames, IA. Not pictured are April Cornelius, Central Lee School District, Keokuk, IA; Christina Recktenwald, Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY; and Katie Terry, West Monona Community School District, Onawa, IA.
The Minnesota Professional Development Fund was established in memory of Diane Holum, former Reading Recovery teacher leader to honor her commitment and passion for Reading Recovery and literacy and learning. Pictured left to right are Tina Dickinson, Orono Public Schools, Long Lake, MN, and donor representative Kendra Tlusty.

SongLake Books hand selects and organizes books from a variety of companies into leveled book sets for guided reading and Reading Recovery. Collections include a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction genres, are culturally diverse and gender fair, and especially target at-risk readers. Benjamin Ley, San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, CA, is pictured with donor Sarah English.

Blueberry Hill Books were written by a certified Reading Recovery teacher and carefully designed to enhance a child’s strategic thinking and develop comprehension skills. Recurring characters inhabit stories filled with humor and excitement in the leveled storybooks. Pictured left to right are Kaye Hendricks, Logan County School District, Russellville, KY, with donor Patricia Harrison.

Rose Mary Estice Memorial Fund was established in memory of Rose Mary Estice, one of the original Reading Recovery teachers trained at The Ohio State University in 1984-85. An ardent supporter, Rose Mary provided leadership during the early days of RRCNA and continued to serve in many capacities throughout her career. Theresa Jones, Gahanna Jefferson Schools, Gahanna, OH, is pictured with donor representative Mary Fried (right).

RR Books offers a variety of fiction and nonfiction leveled books specifically designed for beginning readers with a goal of providing quality, affordable books for young children. Molly Hollister, Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY, is pictured with donor Matt Bonnell.
Dr. Julie Olson Literacy Professional Development Fund was established in honor of Dr. Julie Olson, retired director of ISD 196 elementary education and Reading Recovery site coordinator, to honor her commitment and passion for Reading Recovery, literacy and learning. Two awards were funded for the 2020 National Conference. Pictured left to right are Stacey Chaloux, ISD 196, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Egan, MN, Teresa Douglas (donor representative), and Keri Flaskerud, ISD 196, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Egan, MN.

Debby Wood Professional Development Fund was established in memory of Debby Wood, teacher leader in Prince George’s County, MD. Debby received an RRCNA grant to attend the National Conference and always looked forward to the excellent professional development. Denise Hawkins, Prince George’s County Public Schools, Capital Heights, MD, (center) is pictured with donor representatives Kathy Hardman (left), and Tiffany Garner.

Teacher Leader Professional Development Award was funded by the generosity of trainers and teacher leaders during the 2019 Teacher Leader Institute. Pictured is Jennifer Pruitt, Dyersburg City Schools, Dyersburg, TN.

Thanks to our generous donors for funding a total of $74,000 in awards for the 2019-2020 school year.

Teacher Leader Training Awards
Generous donors and advocates contributed a total of $50,000 to help train new teacher leaders for the 2019–2020 school year. These awards are granted to school districts that have demonstrated a commitment to continue Reading Recovery and selected a suitable teacher leader candidate.

National Conference Professional Development Awards
All members are eligible to apply for annual $1,000 awards to help fund registration, travel, hotel, and meal expenses associated with National Conference attendance.

Watch your email and the website for 2020-2021 opportunities!
The 2019–20 Officers and Board of Directors of The Reading Recovery Council of North America

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Don Pope-Davis
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Reading Recovery and Early Literacy Inc. Representative

Debra Rich
Sumner, IA
Presidential Appointee

Lori Taylor
Orono, ME
Trainer Representative
Announced at the 2020 National Conference, the Foundation for Struggling Readers (formerly the Reading Recovery Fund) raised funds to support the development of early literacy scholars and practitioners who guide struggling readers.

Development Committee Chair Annie Opat and Executive Director Billy Molasso kept attendees engaged with raffle drawings and fundraising updates during each general session.

Many thanks to all who stopped by the Foundation booth to donate, play games, and enter the 50/50 raffle drawing. A total of $27,254 was raised for the Foundation! Special thanks go to Pioneer Valley Books for their generous matching gift of $10,000.

We thank all of our generous donors for your support as we launched the Foundation for Struggling Readers. Keep an eye on your email for important announcements regarding applications for financial awards to help with costs to attend the 2021 conference.
Day of Learning Ends with Snacks and Prizes at Annual RRCNA Membership Meeting

After a full day of learning, RRCNA members gathered for snacks and fun during the 2020 Annual Membership Meeting. The agenda of this year’s gathering, held on Monday, February 10, highlighted the important work of RRCNA’s standing committees. And as always, door prizes were awarded to dozens of lucky winners! A special thank you to exhibitors who donated door prize items: Blueberry Hill Books, Booksource, Eaglecrest Books, Hameray Publishing Group, Hand2Mind, Heinemann, MaryRuth Books, Pioneer Valley Books, Read Naturally, RR Books, Red Canoe Books, Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc., SongLake Books, Stop Falling Productions, and Townsend Books.

Scott, Foresman Reading Unlimited Children’s Books Now Available from the RRCNA Store

Last winter, Pearson granted RRCNA exclusive rights to reprint the popular Scott, Foresman & Company’s Reading Unlimited children’s books. These timeless, engaging stories have been cherished by Reading Recovery teachers and students for decades. Each title offers the variety in text complexity, text layout, and language structure that helps develop flexible readers.

Our original collection started with five titles, but due to popular demand, seven additional titles have recently been added.

**Collection 1**
- The Lion’s Tail
- Catch That Frog
- Pat’s New Puppy
- Ten Little Bears
- The Missing Necklace

**Collection 2**
- The Pot of Gold
- Three Little Pigs
- Happy Faces
- The Bus Ride
- The Baby Monkey
- The Little Knight
- The Great Big Enormous Turnip

The Reading Unlimited collections are available at the RRCNA Store, where you can also purchase the Scott, Foresman Testing Packets. See page 26 in this issue for more information and pricing — for RRCNA members only!

Helping you stay engaged with powerful, free online PD

Now is the time to see for yourself what RRCNA’s e-Learning Center is all about! You’ll find videos on a wide range of topics, featuring 45- to 90-minute sessions recorded during recent National Reading Recovery and K-6 Literacy conferences. Topics range from parts of the Reading Recovery lesson to small group literacy, coaching, writing, word work, and much, much more.

If you’d like to earn PD credit after watching a session video, simply complete a brief quiz and generate a certificate that can be emailed to your teacher leader or administrator, showing how productively you’re spending your day while working at home!
Reading Recovery teacher leaders from across the country nominate individuals to receive this annual prestigious award. It is given to recipients who display a strong commitment to expand and maintain Reading Recovery’s high standards and who make significant contributions to its implementation beyond the local level. This year, the recipient is Kristine Griffor, assistant superintendent for elementary instruction for the Troy School District in Troy, MI, since 2015. The award was presented during the opening session of the 2020 National Reading Recovery & K-6 Literacy Conference.

Griffor took action to establish Troy as its own Reading Recovery site and significantly expanded the district’s Reading Recovery services. Due to its expanded intervention services with Reading Recovery and Literacy Lessons, the district has seen several of its students, formerly classified as “special education,” now achieving literacy success in the classroom and no longer in need of special education services. Long-range plans for the district serving 12,000 students include continuing to expand the district’s intervention services and investments in teacher expertise.

Prior to her current role, Griffor served as the director of curriculum in Warren Woods, MI, from 2010–2015, where she first worked in partnership with Oakland University to implement Reading Recovery. She oversaw a strong Reading Recovery implementation and added Literacy Lessons to the district’s literacy learning opportunities for at-risk students. In 2016, the Warren Woods-Macomb Area Reading Recovery Site was established.

Kris Piotrowski, Reading Recovery teacher leader from the district, submitted the nomination package that highlighted Griffor’s extensive work in supporting and growing Reading Recovery in Michigan and beyond.

I believe literacy is a right for all students. Leading systems of comprehensive literacy changes the lives of children and sets them on the path of the joy of learning.

— Kristine Griffor
Exceptional Speakers Help Celebrate 35 Years of Reading Recovery

The nation’s premier K-6 literacy conference, dedicated to improving literacy, connected educators from around the world and created momentum in the reading community. Nearly 2,100 Reading Recovery professionals and other educators took part in this rich learning experience February 8-11, 2020 in Columbus, OH.

More than 100 professional development sessions provided research-based literacy instruction that balanced theory with practice. In addition, Preconference Institutes offered even more in-depth experiences. Six institutes were offered, including a new outreach to middle school educators in Grades 5–8 led by Penny Kittle. The rich learning in sessions was enhanced by special interest group meetings, where small communities with the same interests were created to address information they need. Groups were established for literacy coaches, Literacy Lessons professionals, DLL educators, and Reading Recovery site coordinators. General sessions and a packed exhibit hall also added to conference excitement.

Many literacy leaders contributed congratulatory videos that were shown during general sessions and in other locations throughout the conference. The pinnacle of the celebration was a special anniversary luncheon where Gay Su Pinnell outlined 35 years of accomplishments and looked toward the future and the possibilities that it will bring. Two former Reading Recovery students also shared the impact of Reading Recovery on their lives. You can read all their comments in the Special Anniversary Section, beginning on page 80 in this issue.
ATTENDEES SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

“As someone not trained in Reading Recovery, this conference included valuable information that I could easily implement in my kindergarten classroom. The conference was appropriate for any one who teaches children to read!”

“Attending the 2020 conference has been the most valuable professional development that I have attended in my 17 years of teaching primary grades. My mindset has been changed forever. This experience has taught me to be very intentional in all and everything that I teach.”

“I am so happy to be back! The conference is truly a time of renewal and energizing ourselves as educators. The conference allows like-minded, best practice, lovers of literacy, persons dedicated to educating our future readers, opportunities to sharpen our instruction and add to our knowledge base. I am so glad to have had the opportunity to attend.”
The Last Word

Real Teachers
When I took one of my Reading Recovery students to a behind-the-glass session, I introduced her to my teacher leader. The next day, she questioned me about why I had a teacher. I told her that she helps me to learn more so that I can be a better teacher. Several weeks later, we were in the middle of a lesson when my student suddenly turned to me and asked, “So, are you a real teacher yet?”

— Joni Robinson, Ohio

Getting Out of Bed
I was introducing the book Wake Up, Dad (Rigby PM Reader) to one of my students. He enjoyed watching as each child in the family tried to get Dad out of the bed. As the book built to the ending, the little boy turned to me and said with a knowing smile, “I know why Dad doesn’t want to get out of the bed.” To which I responded, “Why?” His reply: “Because under that blanket he’s naked!”

— Janet Holbrook, California

Finding New Happiness
Monday: Michael comes to my room for RAK 1. As he steps in the door, he begins crying. He cries through most of the lesson saying, “I’m not smart. I can’t read.” No matter how much pumping up I do, I can’t get him to get over that hump, and he’s sad the whole time.

Tuesday: Michael comes to my room for RAK 2. Today there are no tears and he works through the lesson. At the end, when I tell him he had a great day, I only get a little smile.

Wednesday: Michael comes to my room for RAK 3. He has the biggest smile on his face and says, “I’m so happy.” Expecting an answer about something in class or at home, I asked why he was so happy. “Because I’m in here,” he replies. Made my day!

— Anonymous

Partners in Excellence — Our Associate Members

RRCNA offers a special associate membership level to companies that provide the books, assessment materials, and resources you need for your lessons and classrooms. Our associate members support Reading Recovery through generous sponsorships, grants, donations, and by exhibiting at Reading Recovery conferences throughout North America.

When you visit their booths, be sure to say “thank you for all you do for Reading Recovery!”