

President's Message

Growing Community

RRCNA President Amy Smith



When I was elected RRCNA vice president, I never anticipated that my presidential term would coincide with a global pandemic. I always expected that the year would be challenging, but not like this. Even before I gaveled in as president, it was clear that absolutely nothing about the year would look like the year I imagined. As I think about this journey, I realize that for much of 2020, all I could see were the hurdles in front of us. Sitting here today, however, what I see most clearly is the incredible, fearless, collective work our group did to clear them. It's counterintuitive that being forced into isolation and separated from one another could bring us closer together. But from my perspective, that's exactly what happened. In the midst of a pandemic, our community sought connections with one another like never before. And, it was important.

We have always been a professional learning community, but far too often, our connections are limited to a few close colleagues. Indeed, we often operate in silos with limited opportunities to connect and with few systems in place to maximize the outcomes of those connections. When the world abruptly changed in Spring 2020, the structures, systems, and processes that typically guide our work were insufficient to address the myriad of challenges we were all facing.

Although there are likely innumerable examples of how members of our community worked together during the pandemic, one of the most powerful was a partnership established between the UTCs at The Ohio State University, National Louis University, and Saint Mary's College. The trainers at each site joined their TLs together to problem solve and strategize through the summer of 2020 (see page 27). This

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structure maximized efficiency by distributing the burden of our work across numerous TLs. More importantly, it connected colleagues from different parts of the country and enabled them to share their diverse perspectives with one another. These trainers gave their TLs a process and an impetus to break out of their individual silos and learn together. Throughout the summer, I received frequent messages and updates from many TLs who participated in the collaboration. I knew their work would be exceptional (it was). What I did not anticipate, however, was the

overwhelming emotional impact the experience had on my friends. Their messages revealed a sense of excitement and momentum that was absent at the onset of the pandemic. After months of anxiety and uncertainty, they began to describe their confidence and hope about the future. By cultivating new relationships and connecting with one another, my TL colleagues realized they were less daunted by the work, because they were doing the work together.

Be sure to read the article, "What Is Possible Through Widespread Teacher Leader Collaboration," whose authors shared in this unique learning experience. It begins on page 27 in this issue. The partnership between these sites is a powerful example of systematic collaboration and should be a model for how we might move forward as a more connected community. It illustrates what is possible when people are freed of their silos and joined together with a common purpose. That mattered in 2020. It matters, still.

Just as the three UTCs were trying to solve problems they had never faced, RRCNA was grappling with the challenge of planning a virtual LitCon. No blueprint existed for this endeavor, and we had to draw a new one. As we struggled to find our way forward, we realized that we needed a way to connect with teachers to get their feedback on how to make a virtual conference meet their

needs. With very little time to plan a completely novel event, we needed to do it quickly. Trainers and TLs from across the country and Canada helped us assemble a teacher focus group that represented the diversity of our community. This group provided crucial guidance that reshaped our thinking about nearly every aspect of the conference and gave us positive momentum that continued throughout the fall and winter. These teachers were instrumental in making LitCon 2021 a resounding success and we owe them a debt of gratitude for that.

However, their impact on our work at RRCNA goes far beyond the conference. In essence, this focus group fundamentally changed our understanding about the need to establish systems to give members of our community greater agency and voice in the decisions we make. And, as a result, convening focus groups is now a standard work process for RRCNA to elevate the voices of individual members of our community. In so many ways, a group of 30 teachers helped RRCNA recognize and break out of our own silos and gave us a mechanism to be more connected to the community we serve.

Somehow, in the midst of an unrelentingly challenging year, we began to intentionally break free of our silos and seek connection with and help from one another. And the outcomes of these connections were powerful.

These are only a couple of examples of how our community came together in new ways in the midst of a crisis. But it is important to elevate them as they are powerful testaments to the ways in which more systematic, intentional collaboration enables us to respond to and overcome the challenges we face. Most importantly, these connections provided an opportunity for each of us to see and hear one another and to *know* one another, not only as professionals, but as human beings. While I've always admired the work ethic within our community, this year made me reflect upon the fact that our laser-like focus on the work in front of us can blind us to the struggles and perspectives of the people doing the work, ourselves included. This, too, is a silo. Perhaps, it's the most isolating of all. But, somehow, in the midst of an unre-

lently challenging year, we began to intentionally break free of our silos and seek connection with and help from one another. And the outcomes of these connections were powerful.

My teacher leader colleague, Braedan Schantz, helped me understand just how important this was when she said, "We have broken out of our silos and there is grain everywhere." Thank you, Braeden. Thank you to everyone in our community. You've helped me stop seeing this year as a crisis and, instead, focus on the remarkable things we accomplished. So, instead of remembering 2020 as the year we were separated and isolated and alone, I'll forever look back on it as the year our community came together.

RRCNA Board of Directors Election Results

We are pleased to share results of the recent election for terms beginning July 1, 2021.



Vice President
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Reading Recovery
Trainer
Sumner, IA



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Reading Recovery
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Trainer
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Reading Recovery
Trainer
Willisburg, KY



Teacher Leader
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Beth Magsig

Reading Recovery
Teacher Leader
Lexington, KY

Executive Director's Message

Building Intentional Connections Through Online Community



Community. It's one of those words that means something a little different to every person that describes it; but by every definition, community is essential to the human experience. Especially in a year fraught with social distancing and often isolation, community has never felt more important.

As a professional association, we've made community building an intentional goal with the recent introduction of the Reading Recovery Community Forum. This valuable addition to the membership experience connects our members to resources, professional development, and—most importantly—to each other.

Think of the Community Forum as a 24/7 virtual “teacher’s lounge,” where you can go to ask a question, share a funny anecdote, commiserate over

a tough situation, or just chat with other members. Maybe you...

... are the only Reading Recovery person in your school and need advice. *Add a new thread in the Member Forum.*

... found a great handout you think other members would find useful. *Share it in the library.*

... want to connect with others who trained at your UTC. *Browse for members in the directory.*

... want to find ways to advocate for Reading Recovery. *Search for Volunteer opportunities.*

Plus, the Community Forum is exclusive to active members, creating a safe space of like-minded folks who know your lingo and value the impact Reading Recovery has on our learners and in our schools.

In the short time the Community Forum has been active, we've already been pleased with the conversation generated among our early adopters. Funny, insightful, important discussions are already happening. We can't wait to see what *you* have to contribute! Look on the following page for easy steps to get started. →

During my time as executive director, I've noted the educators in our community as some of the best collaborators, generous with their resources, ideas, and opinions (in a good way!) It's our hope that the Reading Recovery Community Forum will make it even easier to come together and fulfill our mission of constructing “collaborative partnerships to change the trajectory of literacy achievement.”



Reading Recovery Community
Learn. Engage. Connect.

HOME COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY EVENTS BROWSE PARTICIPATE search

Welcome to the Reading Recovery Community Forum
The Reading Recovery Community Forum is the home of RRCNA members! Here you will find resources that allow you to connect with members across North America, engage in important initiatives, take action, and grow yourself and others, all while making the world a better place.

Important Community Links:
 > [Update Your Profile](#)
 > [Community Help/FAQs](#)

Explore Our Community
 > [View All Communities](#)
 > [Find Fellow Users](#)
 > [User Resource Library](#)

Now more than ever, virtual communities connect educators with essential knowledge and resources -- and with each other! The new Reading Recovery Community Forum will help you learn, engage, and connect with members from across North America.



5 TIPS TO GET STARTED

1

LOG IN: No need to register or set up an account. Simply click on the Community Forum link from www.readingrecovery.org home page and log in using your regular member password. You're in! Click on your profile to add some personal details if you like, or just jump right in.

2

FIND COMMUNITIES: Click on My Communities to see a short list of communities to which you belong. Or click on All Communities to find a group aligned with your interests. Have an idea for a Community you'd like to start? Email community@readingrecovery.org with the details.

3

JOIN DISCUSSION THREADS: First, stop by the Welcome and Introductions thread to say hi. Then scroll through the other discussion threads or start your own! Ask questions, give feedback, share a story...we can't wait to hear what you have to say!

4

USE THE DIRECTORY: Search for colleagues and other members by name or email address. Send an invitation to stay connected with new friends and the people in your network.

5

BROWSE AND SHARE: Use the Browse feature to search for threads of interest or to find uploaded resources from other members. Plus, upload your own files & resources to the library to make the Reading Recovery Community Forum a richer, more vibrant meeting place!

WELCOME! WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE PART OF OUR COMMUNITY!



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Columbus, OH
President Elect



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Jackson, MI
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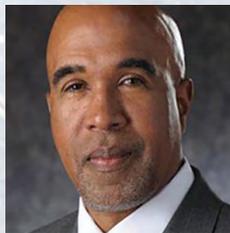
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President



Reading Recovery
Community

LitCon Provides 15,000-Plus Hours of Literacy-Rich Learning

In a whirlwind year of change, flexibility, and of course, plenty of Zooming, our annual conference found its place in the virtual world. With a new name and a refreshed look, LitCon: National K–8 Literacy & Reading Recovery Conference delighted and educated more than 1,500 literacy educators from 5 countries.

Our virtual conference combined a powerful mix of literacy best practices and practical takeaway in both live and on-demand formats, designed to work around educators' busy schedules. Over the week of live sessions, and the month of access to recorded content, our attendees consumed more than 15,000 hours of literacy-rich learning!

This year's keynotes included a look at education's role in equity with the inspiring Cornelius Minor, a deep dive into executive functioning skills with the delightful Jeffery Williams, and a hilarious and heartwarming



RRCNA President Amy Smith introduces Cornelius Minor, one of three keynote speakers at this year's annual conference.

appearance by Gerry Brooks. It was truly a homecoming of literacy leaders, albeit from our own living rooms and offices.

And while we missed seeing our Reading Recovery Community in person this year, the virtual format allowed us to welcome many new faces — and more cats crawling on keyboards than we could count!

We hope our new friends and all of our returning guests will join us in Columbus, January 30–February 2, 2022. We're looking forward to a terrific LitCon 2022, featuring keynotes by Lucy Calkins, Gay Su Pinnell, and Carmen Agra Deedy.

Many thanks to the 2021 sponsors and exhibitors who helped make LitCon: National K–8 Literacy & Reading Recovery Conference possible.

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Exhibitors

Collaborative for Teaching and Learning
Flying Start Books
Follett Learning
Gibbs Smith Education
International Data Evaluation Center
MaryRuth Books
Pioneer Valley Books
Scholastic

LitCon Professional Development Awards



The spring issue of JRR typically features photos of award recipients and their donors taken during the Scholars and Partners Luncheon at the national conference. While the virtual format of LitCon 2021 didn't allow us to do share their smiling faces, we are still pleased to share their names in recognition.

Generous donors contributed over 30 awards of up to \$500 each to help offset the cost of conference registration. Awards are given to Reading Recovery teachers, teachers-in-training, teacher leaders, university trainers, or administrators who support the implementation of Reading Recovery.

Tenyo Family Foundation

funded 20 Professional Development Awards. Founded by the late Sophie Tenyo, the foundation supports charitable, religious, scientific, literacy, and educational endeavors for the public welfare and well-being of humankind.

Recipients:

Maureen Bowie

Uniondale School District
Uniondale, NY

Cynthia Bruno

Fayette County Schools,
Lexington, KY

Amy DeWitt

Tucson Unified School District
Tucson, AZ

Michael Edom

Cleveland Municipal School District
Cleveland, OH

Tracy Hagan

Monroe County School District
Tompkinsville, KY

Kaye Hendricks

Logan Schools
Russellville, KY

Nancy Knaup

Columbia School District
Brooklyn, MI

Michael Kuenzel

Mayfield City Schools
Mayfield Heights, OH

Lizbeth Kyser

ISD 196
Apple Valley, MN

Amanda Mattingly

Grayson County Schools
Clarkson, KY

Tabitha Ockleston

Pasco School District
Pasco, WA

Cheryl Panchur

Cleveland Municipal School District
Cleveland, OH

Shannon Richardson

Fayette County Public Schools
Lexington, KY

Amy Shiever

Orange City School District
Pepper Pike, OH

Christa Siegel

Dowagiac Union Schools
Dowagiac, MI

Pamela Slicker

Mogadore Local Schools
Mogadore, OH

Amanda Smith

Fowlerville Community Schools
Fowlerville, MI

Stephanie Smith

Henderson County Schools
Henderson, KY

Jennifer Taylor

Grass Lake Community Schools
Grass Lake, MI

Ashley Waechter

Fayette County Schools
Lexington, KY

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 books that not only provide reading practice, but also support the development of a lifelong love of reading.

Recipient:

Kathleen Butigian

Sarasota County Schools
North Point, FL

Debby Wood Professional Development Award

was established in memory of Debby Wood, Reading Recovery teacher leader in Prince George's County, MD.

Recipient:

Tamara Watson
Auburn City Schools
Auburn, ME

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.

Recipient:

LaShaunta Lake
Orange City School District
Pepper Pike, OH

Minnesota Literacy Professional Development Fund

was established in memory of Diane Holum, former Reading Recovery teacher leader, to honor her commitment and passion for Reading Recovery, literacy, and learning.

Recipients:

Kristi Paulson & Shelley Lynch
District 196
Apple Valley, MN

Geri Stone Memorial Fund

was established to remember the leadership of Geri Stone who passed away in 2002. Geri 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. Awards help offset the cost of conference attendance, teaching supplies, and more.

Recipients:

Kristina Krohn
American School of Warsaw
Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland

Lindsey Edens

Duncan Elementary School
of the Arts
Duncan, SC

Sally Coughlin

Columbia Elementary School
Brooklyn, MI

*Applications for
future professional
development awards
will be available on the
RRCNA website.*



RRCNA Welcomes New Director of Information Systems

Please join us in welcoming the newest addition to the RRCNA professional staff, Laura VanTress.

Previously the database and business analysis manager for the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I), Laura brings a wealth of knowledge in managing and coordinating business analysis and database development-related activities in a matrix management environment to support the successful delivery of technology projects. She also has held roles focused on member recruitment and retention, database management, and volunteer management.

Laura is a graduate of The Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in education and human ecology, with a specialization in consumer sciences.

Teacher Leader Training Awards

Three teacher leaders are in training thanks to generous donations to the Linda Dorn Legacy Fund. **Nicole Tschohl** from District 196, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan, Rosemount, MN; and **Kerin Kuechel** from District 47, Crystal Lake, IL, are training at National Louis University. **Crystal Bryant** from Union County Schools, Union, SC, is training at Clemson University.

Applications for 2021-22 Teacher Leader Training Awards
will be available late spring, along with details on
a newly established Teacher of Color Training Award.
