

CHESTER COUNTY READING ASSOCIATION

An IRA Honor Council, A KSRA Exemplary Council

WINTER 2011-12 NEWSLETTER



www.ccil.org/~ccra

Jan Pizarro, editor

CCRA Executive Board 2011-12

President: Carol Harris – GVSD – harris.carolj@hotmail.com
President Elect/Vice President: Glendia Kennedy – CCIU – glendiakennedy@aol.com
Recording Secretary: Rose Cappelli – WCASD - ryc1011@hotmail.com
Corresponding Secretary: Carole Valentine – CCIU - cnsvalentine@comcast.net
Treasurer: Jane Schultz, DAsD, Ret. - jakvma3@comcast.net



Other Board Members:

Dr. Susan Caroff – WCU – susancaroff@comcast.net
Gretchen Denlinger - DAsD - gdenlinger@dasd.org
Deb Dinsmore – WCASD - ddinsmore@nmi.com
Joanne DiSabatino - WCASD - jdisabatino@gmail.com
Dr. Lynne Dorfman - UMTSD - LD0512@umtsd.org
Jane Dulin: Membership – KCSD, Ret. – jdul@ccil.org
Tina Faccioli – DAsD - tfaccioli1@verizon.net
Betsy Gallagher – WCASD - xmasbets@aol.com
Alicia Givey – WCASD – akelly213@gmail.com
Dr. Cynthia Haggard – WCU – chaggard@wcupa.edu
Eileen Hutchinson – WCASD - ethutch@verizon.net
Carolyn Kelly – WCASD - carolynkelly928@verizon.net
Jean Kerrigan – VMA, Ret. - jakvma3@comcast.net
Mary Ann Mallory – OJRSd, Ret. – [mallory65@gmail.com](mailto:mmallory65@gmail.com)
Jan Pizarro – WCASD – jrpizarro@comcast.net
Susan Rodebaugh – PASD – rodebaughs@msn.com
Jane Schultz – DAsD – mjschultz46@hotmail.com

CCRA's Newsletter is published four times a year. It is emailed directly to all of our members, and is also posted on our website as above. Electronic newsletters can be easily shared with friends and colleagues, and offer interesting and pertinent direct internet links. We also send out occasional "email blasts" of current important literacy and educational updates and interesting items, as well as program reminders for your use. Please watch for these. If you are not receiving your newsletter via your email address, please contact Jan Pizarro or Jane Dulin, as above. If you have changed your email address, please advise us so that we can be sure to include you on our listserve.

Greetings to CCRA Members and Friends

From Carol Harris, President of CCRA

Hello, literacy friends! I hope by now you are in "the zone" with your learners and colleagues. It has been a great start to the 2011-2012 academic year. It is well into December, and we have not had one snow day to date. There is also the newly designed *Pennsylvania Reads*, the Keystone State Reading Association's journal, filled with expertise and current trends of thinking in the world of literacy. On the outskirts of the academic arena, we have the entertaining political campaign scene to keep our minds off the global economic crisis. Finally, the war is coming to an end. Indeed, we have much to celebrate.

A recent personal celebration was the November birth of our first grandchild, Story Jane. While holding Story, I find myself sharing my favorite family stories with her. I also tell her the stories of my favorite children's authors. When I am rewarded with a smile, I reflect on the power of words and stories in a person's life. As you consider your gift giving, consider giving the gift of a story, oral or written.

Enjoy the newsletter. It is a resource of literacy and a work of love. I wish you a wonderful holiday season. I wish for you quality time with family and friends; a day, or two, to read; happiness, health, and wonderful adventures in the New Year. I look forward to seeing you at the January 2012 CCRA program. Until then, stay well. - Carol Harris



Chester County Reading Association Program Meetings*

Thursday, January 19, 2012

Speaker: Ellen Jensen Abbott, Chester County Author

Title: *Building Characters*

Time: 4:30 Registration; 5-7 Program

Location: Chester County Intermediate Unit

Act 48 Hours: 2 Hours

Members: Free Non Members: \$10.00 Students: \$5.00

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Speaker: Dr. Lynne Dorfman & Susan Rodebaugh, PAWLP

Title: *Teachers as Readers, Teachers as Writers*

Time: 8:30 Registration; 9 - 12 Program

Location: Chester County Intermediate Unit

Act 48 Hours: 3.0 Hours

Members: Free Non Members: \$10.00 Students: \$5.00

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Speaker: Lisa Glavin & Linda Barbato, Delaware County Intermediate Unit

Title: *Supporting Students' Content Area Literacy: The Art of Text Mapping*

Time: 4:30 Registration; 5 - 7:00 Program

Location: Chester County Intermediate Unit

Act 48 Hours: 2.0 Hours

Members: Free Non Members: \$10.00 Students: \$5.00

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Speaker: Donna Topping

Title: *Playful Grammar*

Time: 4:30 - 7:00 PM

Location: Chester County Intermediate Unit

Act 48 Hours: 2.0 Hours

Members: Free Non Members: \$10.00 Students: \$5.00

***Flyers for these exciting programs are at the end of the newsletter.
Please share them with your friends and colleagues.**

"Remember that in the end it will be teachers who make a difference in children's lives. It is the teachers who will either lead the change or resist and stymie it. The focus of school change has to be on supporting teachers in their efforts to become more expert and reorganizing all aspects of the educational system so that they can teach as expertly as they know how."

- Richard Allington, 2004

Celebrate Literacy Award – 2011

By Tina Faccioli

At the November 12, 2011 meeting CCRA recognized Junior Girl Scout Troop 41600 as the recipient of the Celebrate Literacy Award in 2011.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Patty Finney, the girls assembled 10 story boxes for the visually-impaired students at the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia.

The girls, who are fourth and fifth graders at Caln Elementary School, first purchased story books from the Caln Elementary Book Fair that they thought would be enjoyed by younger children. After reading the story the girls each found some toys and items which represented important aspects of the story and placed them in the boxes so the children would have a tactile stimulus which matched the story as it was read aloud.

The girls also decorated the outsides of the boxes and wrote the name of the story in Braille. The scouts had to practice writing in Braille with a Braille writer to label each box.

Finally the girls delivered the boxes and took a tour of the school. The girls were impressed with the variety of teaching methods used to teach blind and visually-impaired children. In doing this project the troop earned the Bronze Award in Scouting.

The Magic of Whole School Reading

How to turn your school into a "reading school" - Drop Everything and Read!



For fifteen minutes a day, everyone in school - from pupils, to the headteacher, to the school caretaker - drops everything and reads!

Photograph: www.alamy.com

Whole School Reading:

- That would never work.
- Our children don't borrow books from the library.
- Senior leadership will never agree to or support this initiative.
- Children find reading a chore.
- My head teacher will never buy into this.

There are so many negative attitudes towards creating a reading culture in schools it can be difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel. But, never fear! With a few easily applicable strategies your school can become a reading school too. Believe us - anyone can do this. To every barrier, there is a solution. So, how do you get children to read?

Firstly, your staff must be seen as readers. Children need to see adults consistently reading for pleasure. Why should children see reading as a valuable activity if the adults around them do not demonstrate that reading is fun and important to them?

At the recent [Guardian Reading for Pleasure Conference](#) on 20th October 2011 we had the privilege of leading a workshop on embedding a reading culture in a school.

The results of our diamond nine exercise revealed that every participant decided the most important activity a school could initiate was Whole School Reading or Drop Everything and Read (DEAR). This is an activity that involves every member of the school staff and at an allotted time each week, or if you are able, every day, every member of your school community drops everything and reads silently. In our school, we have a totally blissful and welcome 15 minutes of whole school reading during Thursday's afternoon registration time, when you can quite literally hear a pin drop around school.

We hear you say, "That's all right for you – but what about us?" Well we believe everyone can do this. So, let's explore the barriers and find solutions for them:

1. Though we are well aware that we are lucky to have a whole school commitment and dedicated members of staff (including SLT and the head), you may experience trouble initially, getting the programme started. You might have to gain your Headteacher's or SLT commitment to the initiative. Being ever so slightly devious, one might have to befriend a dreaded member of the SLT team and convince them this is a good idea through academic reasoning. Obviously, you could argue that a whole school approach to reading will enhance literacy skills, benefit students and inevitably lead to an increase in attainment. Also, know your school development plan (SDP) and ensure you can argue that this programme should be compulsory to help meet the aims and objectives of the SDP. How can they so no after that?

2. Of course, there may be timetabling issues: Be prepared when discussing this with SLT and offer suggestions of when the sessions could be held. As a result of a previous conference, a colleague we met at the Guardian workshop implemented a system whereby every day at 11.00am all staff and students must Drop Everything and Read. He maintains that this has transformed the ethos of the school. However, our timetable was not as flexible so one afternoon registration a week works very well for our school. So, think about what would work for your school?

3. You will have problems engaging all of your staff and students with this ethos. A tried and tested method we used was a whole school inset session on reading for pleasure. Once you have the senior leadership team on side, ask them for a small slot on an inset day or twilight inset. Have a box of tricks ready - poetry, prose, magazines for different audiences, Guinness Book of World Records, etc! Ask staff to pick a text they want to read and show them how much fun you can have in 15 minutes – simply reading in a room with all your colleagues. Secondly, you could start a "Caught Reading" poster campaign. Take photos of staff "Caught Reading" – make posters which are fun and exciting! Our science teacher "Caught" reading whilst his hand was deliberately (yet safely) set on fire, is particularly thrilling. State what they are currently reading, what they read yesterday (including emails, maps, etc) and their history of reading. Students should see that reading can be functional and necessary as well as pleasurable. Students really do respond to seeing their favourite and worst teacher's photos.

4. There may be some issues with having enough resources. A well-stocked library with a plethora of eclectic books is definitely an advantage but not a necessity. Local librarians are normally willing to come into schools and offer information on local services (mobile libraries, author visits, etc) and how these will benefit the students. Try to liaise with and maintain a positive relationship with staff in the library as visiting the library as a class or tutor group is a pleasurable experience.

Though it may seem like a lot of hard work, we believe any of these initial barriers can be overcome with creative thinking and enthusiasm. Once the systems are in place, this really is the most rewarding and enjoyable way of seeing an embedded culture of reading, come to fruition in your school. As Miles, one of our year 8 students says, "At the end of the day you can calm down, relax and enjoy a good book, unwinding with your friends and teachers. But, you have to have a good book to enjoy it!" Even year 11 students showing prospective parents around the school stated, "It was awesome, the one time in the whole week when the whole school falls absolutely silent and two thousand people are quietly reading at the same time!"

Louise Kanolik and Ela Turker teach at [Loxford School](#) in Essex, England.

Annual CCRA Scholarship Award

By Carolyn Kelly, Scholarship Chairperson

Rebecca Williams, a senior at the Oxford Area High School, is this year's recipient of the Annette T. Rabin Memorial Scholarship. Miss Williams was awarded the grant at The Senior Awards Night for the Oxford Area High School on Wednesday, May 26, 2011. We were pleased to have the award presented by Ms. Mary Rash, a CCRA member and Rebecca's teacher at the CCIU Teacher Academy this past year. During her senior year, besides participating in the Teacher Academy at the CCIU, Rebecca also attended CCRA members meetings, as a student ambassador. Rebecca will fulfill her long time goal of becoming a teacher by attending West Chester University in the fall and majoring in elementary education. Congratulations, Rebecca!

This scholarship is a \$500 book award presented by the Chester County Reading Association and was named after Annette T. Rabin, one of the first presidents and a charter member of the CCRA. Each year the scholarship is awarded to a Chester County high school senior with a scholastic average of 3.0 or higher and who plans to major in education. The school district is chosen on a rotating basis and the 2012 scholarship will be presented to a senior from Phoenixville High School, Phoenixville School District.

Fall Programs: Good Reminders of Best Practices

By Susan Caroff

Our September and November programs provided participants with tried and true methods for teaching comprehension and research skills. Two veteran teachers shared the benefit of their expertise as they highlighted what they found works best in teaching strategic reading and inquiry.

In the September after school workshop, McGraw Hill reading consultant Kathy Bumgardner presented a range of effective scaffolds based on her "Reading is Thinking" approach to comprehension. She cited [William Glasser's](#) work on learning as inspiration for many of her methods. Teaching strategies recommended by Ms. Bumgardner included range of visual supports and peer learning activities.

- Give all students opportunities to analyze and evaluate difficult texts. Use peer collaboration and visual prompts to provide struggling readers with access to challenging texts.

- Pair students of similar abilities for most learning tasks.
- Use props, such as think clouds, to scaffold comprehension. See [Ms. Bumgardner's website](#) for examples of these props and other literacy tools.
- Use cartoons, signs and other visual elements to teach inference skills.
- Model comprehension with texts students are currently reading.
- Model differences between “narrow and thick” questions so students will learn to ask powerful, higher-level questions.
- Provide multiple contexts for students to apply and celebrate uncommon academic and literary words.

For more on strategic reading, listen to this IRA Radio interview of Valerie Ellery on “[A Strategic Plan for Creating Strategic Readers.](#)”

At the November Saturday brunch program, Lancaster City Schools’ media specialist Sue Grimm Mattox shared several excellent techniques for teaching students how to conduct research. She recommended Eisenberg and Berkowitz’s [Big6](#) as an inquiry model that can be adapted for many classrooms. Ms. Grimm Mattox addressed several aspects of teaching the research process, especially the need for students to evaluate the credibility of sources. Among her recommendations:

- Teach students to evaluate resources by looking at them from several dimensions, such as those included in the information evaluation model [RADCAB](#), an acronym for **R**elevancy, **A**ppropriateness, **D**etail, **C**urrency, **A**uthority and **B**ias.
- Have students maintain a “rough draft” resource page to note the location of possible resources. Once they have gathered enough information, have them evaluate resources as to their credibility and suitability in answering the research question.
- Encourage students to record and organize notes in a variety of formats, e.g., simulated journals of explorers and scientists.
- Provide options for sharing research results. Have students represent their learning in creative ways that develop their strengths as learners. For example, students with artistic interests and talent can represent their knowledge through painting, drawing and sculpture.
- Work with your media specialist to plan and conduct student research projects. School media specialists are knowledgeable about the research process and information resources and can support teachers and students in inquiry learning.

For a good resource on library media and information literacy, see Joyce Valenza’s blog, [NeverEndingSearch](#).

How About Better Parents?

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Published: November 19, 2011 - NYTimes

In recent years, we’ve been treated to reams of op-ed articles about how we need better teachers in our public schools and, if only the teachers’ unions would go away, our kids would score like Singapore’s on the big international tests. There’s no question that a great teacher can make a huge difference in a student’s achievement, and we need to recruit, train and reward more such teachers. But here’s what some new studies are also showing: We need better parents. Parents more focused on their children’s education can also make a huge difference in a student’s achievement.

How do we know? Every three years, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or O.E.C.D., conducts exams as part of the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA, which tests 15-year-olds in the world’s leading industrialized nations on their reading comprehension and ability to use what they’ve learned in math and science to solve real problems — the most important skills for succeeding in college and life. America’s 15-year-olds have not been distinguishing themselves in the PISA exams compared with students in Singapore, Finland and Shanghai.

To better understand why some students thrive taking the PISA tests and others do not, Andreas Schleicher, who oversees the exams for the O.E.C.D., was encouraged by the O.E.C.D. countries to look beyond the classrooms. So starting with four countries in 2006, and then adding 14 more in 2009, the PISA team went to the parents of 5,000 students and interviewed them “about how they raised

their kids and then compared that with the test results” for each of those years, Schleicher explained to me. Two weeks ago, the PISA team [published the three main findings](#) of its study:

“Fifteen-year-old students whose parents often read books with them during their first year of primary school show markedly higher scores in PISA 2009 than students whose parents read with them infrequently or not at all. The performance advantage among students whose parents read to them in their early school years is evident regardless of the family’s socioeconomic background. Parents’ engagement with their 15-year-olds is strongly associated with better performance in PISA.”

Schleicher explained to me that “just asking your child how was their school day and showing genuine interest in the learning that they are doing can have the same impact as hours of private tutoring. It is something every parent can do, no matter what their education level or social background.”

For instance, the PISA study revealed that “students whose parents reported that they had read a book with their child ‘every day or almost every day’ or ‘once or twice a week’ during the first year of primary school have markedly higher scores in PISA 2009 than students whose parents reported that they had read a book with their child ‘never or almost never’ or only ‘once or twice a month.’ On average, the score difference is 25 points, the equivalent of well over half a school year.”

Yes, students from more well-to-do households are more likely to have more involved parents. “However,” the PISA team found, “even when comparing students of similar socioeconomic backgrounds, those students whose parents regularly read books to them when they were in the first year of primary school score 14 points higher, on average, than students whose parents did not.”

The kind of parental involvement matters, as well. “For example,” the PISA study noted, “on average, the score point difference in reading that is associated with parental involvement is largest when parents read a book with their child, when they talk about things they have done during the day, and when they tell stories to their children.” The score point difference is smallest when parental involvement takes the form of simply playing with their children.

These PISA findings were echoed in a recent study by the National School Boards Association’s Center for Public Education, and written up by the center’s director, Patte Barth, [in the latest issue](#) of The American School Board Journal.

[The study](#), called “Back to School: How parent involvement affects student achievement,” found something “somewhat surprising,” wrote Barth: “Parent involvement can take many forms, but only a few of them relate to higher student performance. Of those that work, parental actions that support children’s learning at home are most likely to have an impact on academic achievement at school.

“Monitoring homework; making sure children get to school; rewarding their efforts and talking up the idea of going to college. These parent actions are linked to better attendance, grades, test scores, and preparation for college,” Barth wrote. “The study found that getting parents involved with their children’s learning at home is a more powerful driver of achievement than parents attending P.T.A. and school board meetings, volunteering in classrooms, participating in fund-raising, and showing up at back-to-school nights.”

To be sure, there is no substitute for a good teacher. There is nothing more valuable than great classroom instruction. But let’s stop putting the whole burden on teachers. We also need better parents. Better parents can make every teacher more effective.

[Link to NPR Best Books of 2011:](#)

<http://www.npr.org/2011/12/14/143293240/year-end-fiction-wrap-up-the-10-best-novels-of-2011>

WHAT WE’RE READING...

If you’ve been to the Chester County Book Company, you’re seen the cards attached to the shelves designating the various “Staff Picks” highlighting those books that CCBC personnel found to be especially worthwhile. If you have read a book that you feel would be particularly valuable for our members, please email the information to jrpizarro@comcast.net for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Chester County Reading Association

A KSRA Exemplary Council & IRA Honor Council

Presents

Ellen Jensen Abbott,

Chester County Author of Watersmeet and Centaur's Daughter

Topic:

Building Characters

Thursday, January 19, 2012

Registration: 4:30 PM Program: 5:00 PM -7:00 PM

Chester County Intermediate Unit

2.0 Act 48 Hours

Members - Free Nonmembers - \$10.00

Full Time Undergraduate Students - \$5.00

RSVP by Friday, January 13, 2012

to glendiakennedy@aol.com with PPID# or

Call 610-764-9664

Check www.ccil.org/-ccra or www.cciu.org for cancelations due to weather.

Chester County Reading Association

*A KSRA Exemplary Council & IRA Honor Council
Presents*

Susan Rodebaugh & Dr. Lynne Dorfman

Topic:

Teachers as Readers and Writers

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Registration: 8:30 AM Program: 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Chester County Intermediate Unit

3.0 Act 48 Hours

Members - Free Nonmembers - \$10.00

Full Time Undergraduate Students - \$5.00

RSVP by Monday, February 7, 2012

to glendiakennedy@aol.com with PPID# or

Call 610-764-9664

Check www.ccil.org/-ccra or www.cciu.org for cancelations due to weather.

Chester County Reading Association

A KSRA Exemplary Council & IRA Honor Council

Presents

Lisa Glavin & Linda Barbato

Delaware County Intermediate Unit

Professional Development Specialists

Topic:

The Art of Text Mapping

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Registration: 4:30 Program: 5:00 PM -7:00 PM

Chester County Intermediate Unit

2.0 Act 48 Hours

Members - Free Nonmembers - \$10.00

Full Time Undergraduate Students - \$5.00

RSVP by Friday, March 2, 2012

to glendiakennedy@aol.com with PPID# or

Call 610-764-9664

Check www.ccil.org/-ccra or www.cciu.org for cancelations due to weather.

Chester County Reading Association

*A KSRA Exemplary Council & IRA Honor Council
Presents*

*Dr. Donna Topping,
Millersville State University Professor and
Author of Several Professional Books*

Topic: Playful Grammar

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Registration: 4:30 PM Program: 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

***Chester County Intermediate Unit**
2.0 Act 48 Hours*

*Members - Free Nonmembers - \$10.00
Full Time Undergraduate Students - \$5.00*

*RSVP by Wednesday, April 18, 2012
to glendiakennedy@aol.com with PPID# *

or

Call 610-764-9664

Check www.ccil.org/-ccra or www.cciu.org for cancelations due to weather.