



KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge Spring 2023 Newsletter

Dear KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge Community,

With the arrival of Spring, we have moved into the final months of the school year. As evidenced in my previous letters addressed to our community, reflection is a fundamental virtue in my practice as an educator. Join me as I reflect upon a few highlights of this year at KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge.

During the 2022-2023 school year, KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge provided professional learning and support for our members. We are grateful for the contributions of the outstanding presenters who brought a variety of lenses to literacy teaching and learning. Our programs this year were:

In the fall, we started the year with presenters Emily Trace, Ryan Kaiser, Amy Crider sharing simple and effective ways to incorporate STEM into literacy instruction using authentic and diverse mentor texts.

We started the new year in January with Dr. Pam Kastner who returned for a second year to share her invaluable knowledge of the science of reading.

Next, Dr. Lynne Dorfman & Brenda Krupp facilitated a session in March about how to effectively use book clubs to center students in literary response and book choice.

In April, author Kate Walton spoke to our members about her process for writing contemporary YA novels and how teen social emotional challenges are addressed in her books.

As an organization we have learned together. As individual educators, we have worked extremely hard for our students, our families, and our communities throughout the year. Although some might find themselves feeling anxious about standardized testing or experiencing overall fatigue from a job well done, I encourage my fellow educators to rest in the progress you've made this year. Reflection is important, but let's give ourselves

permission to celebrate the wonderful things that have happened in our classrooms and to look toward the future.

When I need inspiration, I think about one of my favorite poems by Langston Hughes in which he offers the most beautiful portrait of Spring.

In Time of Silver Rain

In time of silver rain
The earth puts forth new life again,
Green grasses grow
And flowers lift their heads,
And over all the plain
The wonder spreads
Of Life,
Of Life,
Of life!

In time of silver rain
The butterflies lift silken wings
To catch a rainbow cry,
And trees put forth new leaves to sing
In joy beneath the sky
As down the roadway
Passing boys and girls
Go singing, too,
In time of silver rain When spring
And life
Are new.

Hughes' words remind me of the beauty in new beginnings. I'm encouraged to reflect on the work I've done this year with contentment and to look forward with hope toward what awaits in the next year.

KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge acknowledges the wonderful year that we have shared as a community. We look forward to the new ideas and leadership that the 2023-2024 Executive Board will bring under the leadership of our incoming KSLA-BVF President, Sandy Shacklady-White.

To literacy and to new life,
Renee Jacobs, Ed. D.
President, KSLA-BVF
Literacy Specialist



Mark Your Calendars!!!
KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge
2023-2024 Program Sneak Preview!!

Morning Meeting- K-6 SEL Theme
Saturday September 30, 2023
Cindy Kruse & Lauren Bryant
Time: 9am to 12noon (Act 48 3 hours)
CCIU or possibly hybrid/virtua

Censorship in Today's Times
January, 2024
Lee & Low Book Publishers
<https://www.leeandlow.com/>
Time: TBD
Online Virtual (Act 48 2 hours)

Teaching News Literacy with the News Literacy Project
February 15, 2024
News Literacy Project- Mike Webb
<https://newslit.org/faq/>
Time: 4:30 to 6:30pm
Online Virtual (Act 48 2 hours)

Exploring Identity
March, 2024
Dana Kramaroff-Teacher/Author/Presenter
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/710127/the-do-more-club-by-dan-a-kramaroff/>
Time: TBD
Online Virtual (Act 48 2 hours)

Celebrate Literacy Award

Brandywine Valley Forge Chapter

by Marsha Townsend

The Brandywine Valley Forge Chapter was proud to present their annual Celebrate Literacy Award to the Literacy Council of Norristown on March 8th. Eileen Hallstrom, executive director, accepted the award on behalf of the Literacy Council.

The Celebrate Literacy Award is presented each year to a person or organization that supports literacy in a significant way. The Literacy Council of Norristown was chosen as the 2023 winner for a variety of reasons. The Literacy Council serves approximately 400 adults in Montgomery County; 300 of which are involved in their ESL program while the rest are students receiving basic education in reading, writing, and math and studying for their High School Equivalency/GED. Their ESL program has helped numerous Afghan and Ukranian refugees during the past few years. In their desire to expand into family literacy, the Literacy Council worked with RSVP to develop a strategic plan for their new family literacy initiative which includes a library area, teaching parents while their children are learning in daycare, and joint parent-child programs where the parents and children come together for shared learning.

The Literacy Council of Norristown has been a strong supporter of adult literacy for years and their new strategic plan will increase that support by offering additional services to their students' or adult learners' families. It works to improve lives and strengthen families in Greater Norristown and Montgomery County by providing adult literacy and English language programs. It recently broadened its mission to reflect the community's need for initiatives to improve literacy intergenerationally. This updated mission reflects the critical need for building families' capacities and strengthening literacy resources in the community. The Literacy Council of Norristown has been working to develop, expand, and/or support partnerships focused on multigenerational literacy engagement. Early collaborative efforts include One Book, One Norristown and EARN Family Workshops, both now entering their second years. With resources coming in and interest in exploring further collaboration growing, the Literacy Council of Norristown is working to help shape future collaboration. Through initial partner conversations, they are gathering information on current literacy offerings and priority areas for involved organizations/institutions. Together, they will look to better understand literacy challenges and assets in their community, then

design a collective strategy to expand literacy-supportive opportunities and resources for multiple generations.

Eileen and the Literacy Council also work closely with the administrative team of Norristown School District to support them in accomplishing their literacy goals. They have held Read Across America events in three schools, organized school day events for parents and children to address reading and literacy connections, and received a grant of \$16,000 to fund the implementation of the Heggerty Program for kindergarten through 2nd grade. Their work is not done though; next year they will be helping to expand the classroom libraries in the district. Improving literacy outcomes for children directly influences the attainment of a parent's learning goals. In the NCFL model, 96% reported becoming a better parent, 75% improved their English skills, 46% earned more money, 34% got a better job, and 21% earned their GED or high school diploma. Having books in the family home substantially increases literacy and education outcomes for the whole family. The presence of books in a child's home is a bigger determinant of their future academic success than their parent's income, nationality, or level of education. The work of the Literacy Council goes a long way toward achieving those outcomes.

For all of the above reasons, the Literacy Council is very deserving of the Celebrate Literacy Award. Congratulations, Eileen Hallstrom and the Literacy Council of Norristown, and thank you for all you do for the people of Montgomery County!



How to Motivate Readers Through Book Talks & Book Clubs

By Jennifer Sahijwani

The virtual session, *How to Motivate Readers Through Book Talks & Book Clubs* on March 8th, drew more than forty attendees. It was presented by Brenda Krupp and Lynne Dorfman, who have co-authored a new book titled, *The Reading Workshop: Structures and Routines that Support All Readers*, available August by Stenhouse Publishing Company . Many ideas for book talks, clubs, and interactive read alouds were shared in order to establish community and foster a love of reading among students.

Book talks, clubs, and interactive read-alouds are used to provide motivation for students and boost engagement. The idea that books are “mirrors” and “windows” for students was prevalent throughout the presentation. Students need to see themselves reflected in the characters of a story while also building new perspectives as global citizens. It is important to empower students while providing a platform of “choice” and “voice,” so they can take ownership of their literary experiences.

Brenda and Lynne’s PowerPoint presentation included video models of student-led discussion and opportunities for shared reading and writing experiences. The presentations also included book recommendations for both educators and students. Handouts were provided to assist teachers in supporting students when engaged in literary activities. These included information such as tips for building home and school connections, suggested classroom activities and considerations for instructional practice. Thank you to Brenda and Lynne for their insightful presentation and resources loaded with information to encourage young readers!



Social and Emotional Challenges of Teens

Presentation by author K.M. Walton

by Marsha Townsend

KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge held a program, in conjunction with a fundraiser, on April 19th at the Barnes and Noble on Main Street in Exton. Author K.M. Walton presented the program, *Social and Emotional Challenges of Teens*. Ms. Walton is a former teacher from Delaware County who spent 10 years teaching, primarily 6th grade language arts, before pursuing a career as an author. While she misses teaching, she said that her books allow her to continue to work with students. She also feels that when she's writing, all of her "creativity cylinders are going all the time."

Ms. Walton's mantra, "Write hard and clear about what hurts," is a quote from Ernest Hemingway. She cares deeply about acceptance and tolerance and works hard to change the atmosphere of bullying that is prevalent in our world. Ms. Walton fought against bullying when she was a teacher, and she now fights against bullying with the words of her books. She has a unique way of dealing with bullying. While most people focus on the ones suffering from bullying, she goes one step further and tries to reach the bullies also. As she explained, her goal is to "get to the heart of the bully and stop the suffering of the one being bullied."

Ms. Walton's books are excellent at telling the stories of both the bullied and the bully. *Cracked* alternates between the bully's story and the victim's story as both characters end up in the same psych ward....as roommates. *Empty* tells us the story of Dell who suffers from depression and with weight issues. *Ultimatum* gives us the alternate stories of two brothers, who are complete opposites, as they deal with their father's time in hospice and dying. Ms. Walton's books are honest, real and authentic, and they have powerful messages for young adults. She does an outstanding job of shining the light on those "who are silently suffering." Her books do an outstanding job of "peeling back the layers to get to the heart of the matter." Ms. Walton believes in the power of books and the opportunities that teachers have to share those books with young people. For those who teach older students (14+), her books are powerful books to have in a classroom. For more information about K.M. Walton, visit her website kmwalton.com.



KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge

March 2023 Election Results



Vice-President – Cindy Kruse
Recording Secretary - Andrea Mumford
Corresponding Secretary - Ro Batson
Member-At-Large – Kim Freese

KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge

2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

President – Sandy Shacklady-White
Vice-President – Cindy Kruse
Recording Secretary - Andrea Mumford
Corresponding Secretary - Ro Batson
Treasurer - Jane Schultz
Immediate Past President – Renee Jacobs

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

(July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025)

Lynne Dorfman
Kim Freese
Jen Greene
Jan Pizarro
Marsha Townsend

KSLA Brandywine Valley Forge Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report	
Jane Schultz, Treasurer	
FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE (July 1, 2022- March 31, 2023)	
TOTAL INCOME	\$4,508.61
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	(\$2,825.05)
NET INCOME	\$1,683.56
ASSETS (3/31/2023)	\$9,107.19
CHECKING	\$1,036.00
SAVINGS	\$6,432.30
PETTY CASH	\$1,638.89

Save the Date!!!

KSLA Conference 2023
Literacy Starts Here

November 26 - 28
Hershey Lodge & Convention Center

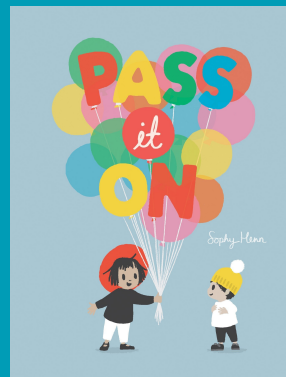
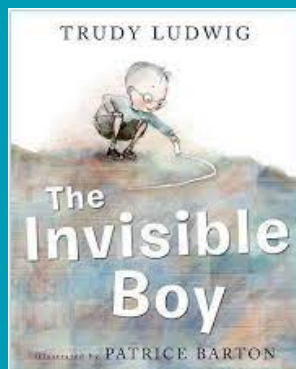
[Click here for more information](#)

Book Recommendations

Picture Books

The Invisible Boy - by Trudy Ludwig

Brian wants to join in but is overlooked, even ostracized, by his classmates. Readers first see him alone on the front endpapers, drawing in chalk on the ground. The school scenarios are uncomfortably familiar: High-maintenance children get the teacher's attention; team captains choose kickball players by popularity and athletic ability; chatter about birthday parties indicates they are not inclusive events. Tender illustrations rendered in glowing hues capture Brian's isolation deftly; compared to the others and his surroundings, he appears in black and white. What saves Brian is his creativity. As he draws, Brian imagines amazing stories, including a poignant one about a superhero with the power to make friends. When a new boy takes some ribbing, it is Brian who leaves an illustrated note to make him feel better. The boy does not forget this gesture. It only takes one person noticing Brian for the others to see his talents have value; that he has something to contribute. Brian's colors pop. In the closing endpapers, Brian's classmates are spread around him on the ground, "wearing" his chalk-drawn wings and capes. Use this to start a discussion: The author includes suggested questions and recommended reading lists for adults and children.



Pass it On - by Sophy Henn

An exuberant child with straight, black hair, light-brown skin, and a cheery red hat beseeches readers to smile, laugh, and jump for joy—but most importantly, to pass it on. Friends (of many ethnicities and a few from the animal kingdom as well) reap the benefits of the narrator's jolly worldview. They giggle and marvel in concert, whether they are under the sea, high in the treetops, or whizzing along on a roller coaster. Set against vast swaths of almost every color of the rainbow, the matte background changes with each page turn, bopping along with the infectious mood. Of course, it's not all roses: "Sometimes the fun and glee / aren't in their usual place. / But search around, / there's always some ... // a hum, a hug, a happy face." Although the text has been Americanized, the book's British origins are hinted at by the inclusion of "wellies" on the gray, rainy page, which also shows that puddle-splashing is universal.

Intermediate Books

Hummingbird - by Natalie Lloyd

Olive Miracle Martin loves her oddball family, church, writing, birding, her wheelchairs, and the idea of attending Macklemore Middle School after years of being home-schooled. Macklemore is the land of her hopes, full of potential friends and wild adventures, yet her osteogenesis imperfecta makes the prospect a challenge. While navigating new social mores and finding her niche within the quirky theater crowd, Olive and intrepid new friend Grace Cho hunt for the local hummingbird said to grant one fantastical wish. In a town where vividly described magic is taken as a point of fact and white feathers fall from the sky like snow, Olive's fairy-tale wish is for bones like steel, not glass. Now she must contend with the question of whether she should—or even wants to—be anyone but who she already is. Olive can lean a tad pitch-perfect, and the world Lloyd builds is at times saccharine, but the energetic first-person narration, interspersed with Olive's thoughts in free verse, is full of bold personality. Refreshingly, her obstacles don't come from being a wheelchair user but from navigating an inaccessible world. Her grappling with fears and bold dreams offers a rare depiction of physical disability that is allowed to be both complicated and empowering.



The Aquanaut - by Dan Santat

Ever since her father was lost at sea, Sophia has been moping around Aqualand, the marine theme park her dad and uncle created. But Sophia's world is turned upside down when an "aquanaut" breaks into the park's research lab.

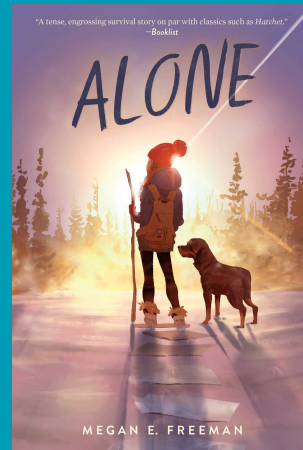
To her amazement, Sophia discovers that the aquanaut is not what it seems -- inside lives a band of four goofy sea creatures! And when they all realize that Aqualand has evolved into something much darker than Sophia's dad had envisioned, Sophia is determined to help the aquanaut crew free the park's captive marine life before it's too late.

Middle Grade Books

The Chance to Fly - by Ali Stroker & Stacy Davidowitz

Thirteen-year-old Nat Beacon loves a lot of things: her dog Warbucks, her best friend Chloe, and competing on her wheelchair racing team, the Zoomers, to name a few. But there's one thing she's absolutely OBSESSED with: MUSICALS! From Hamilton to Les Mis, there's not a cast album she hasn't memorized and belted along to. She's never actually been in a musical though, or even seen an actor who uses a wheelchair for mobility on stage. Would someone like Nat ever get cast?

But when Nat's family moves from California to New Jersey, Nat stumbles upon auditions for a kids' production of Wicked, one of her favorite musicals ever! And she gets into the ensemble! The other cast members are super cool and inclusive (well, most of them)—especially Malik, the male lead and cutest boy Nat's ever seen. But when things go awry a week before opening night, will Nat be able to cast her fears and insecurities aside and “Defy Gravity” in every sense of the song title?



Alone - by Megan E. Freeman

When twelve-year-old Maddie hatches a scheme for a secret sleepover with her two best friends, she ends up waking up to a nightmare. She's alone—left behind in a town that has been mysteriously evacuated and abandoned.

With no one to rely on, no power, and no working phone lines or internet access, Maddie slowly learns to survive on her own. Her only companions are a Rottweiler named George and all the books she can read. After a rough start, Maddie learns to trust her own ingenuity and invents clever ways to survive in a place that has been deserted and forgotten.

As months pass, she escapes natural disasters, looters, and wild animals. But Maddie's most formidable enemy is the crushing loneliness she faces every day. Can Maddie's stubborn will to survive carry her through the most frightening experience of her life?

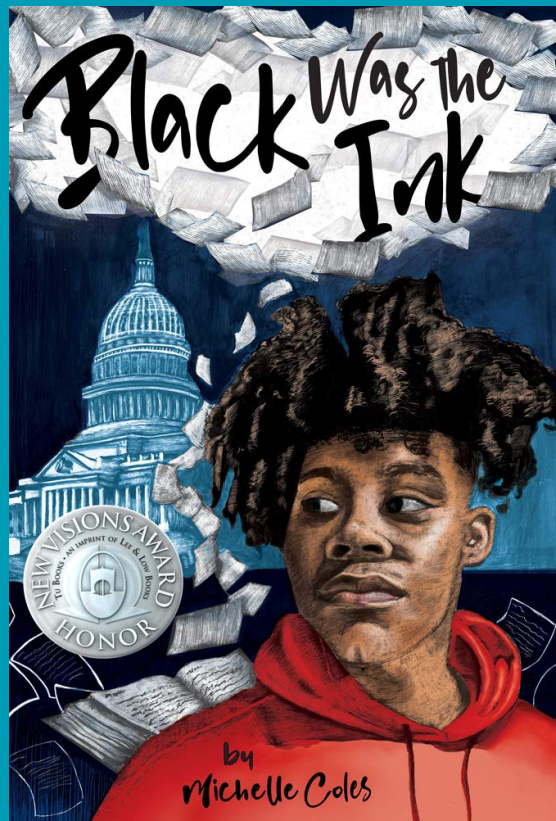
High School Books

Black was the Ink - by Michelle Coles

Malcolm Williams hasn't been okay for a while. He's angry and despondent and feels like nothing good ever happens for teens like him in D.C. All he wants is to be left alone in his room for the summer to draw or play video games--but no such luck. With growing violence in his neighborhood, his mother ships him off to his father's family farm in Mississippi, and Malcolm is anything but pleased.

A few days after his arrival, his great-aunt tells him that the State is acquiring the farm to widen a highway. It's not news Malcolm is concerned about, but someone plans to make it his concern. One minute Malcolm is drawing in the farmhouse attic, and the next he's looking through the eyes of his ancestor Cedric Johnson in 1866.

As Cedric, Malcolm meets the real-life Black statesmen who fought for change during the Reconstruction era: Hiram Revels, Robert Smalls, and other leaders who made American history. But even after witnessing their bravery, Malcolm's faith in his own future remains shaky, particularly since he knows that the gains these statesmen made were almost immediately stripped away. If those great men couldn't completely succeed, why should he try?



Professional Learning Website

Here you will find the English teachers dream come true! Read.gov is from the Library of Congress and is a new website for readers of all ages. The site offers pages specifically designed for kids and teens, as well as adults, educators, and parents. There is so much here: Contests, books online, book lists, and more. The webcast section is truly extensive. There are Webcasts from famous authors such as R.L. Stine, Jon Scieszka, Jan Brett, David Baldacci, John Grisham, Neil Gaiman, and many more. These webcasts also include interesting topics like "Mystery Writers Discuss Their Craft" and "The Nuts and Bolts of Historical Fiction" among others.

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The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress invites people of all ages to discover the fascinating people, places and events that await you whenever you read.



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The position of National Ambassador for Young People's Literature was established in 2008 to raise national awareness of the importance of young people's literature as it relates to lifelong literacy, education, and the development and betterment of the lives of young people. [Meet the current ambassador](#) >

Library of Congress Literacy Awards

Through the generosity of David M. Rubenstein, the [Library of Congress Literacy Awards](#) recognize and support organizations that have made outstanding contributions to increasing literacy in the United States or abroad. The Literacy Awards program encourages the continuing development of innovative methods and is intended to draw

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After opening the conversation on the books that shaped [America](#), we're developing a new list of great books that have affected the world throughout history. You can help us choose the books that will go on that list by taking a short survey. [Take the survey](#) >

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