



Planting Books – Seeds 4 a Better Future

Supporting Literacy for Long-Term Positive Impact

August 2026

Dear Friend of Planting Books – Seeds 4 a Better Future,

Imagine your life if you had not learned to read at an early age. What educational and career choices might have been closed to you? How would your life have unfolded? Perhaps you did struggle learning to read and realize the challenges this presents. Reading is a determining factor in the quality of our lives.

But give a child a book and you get a reader. And that's what we did again this year. I am proud to report that we accomplished further growth in our work and in the number of students we served over the course of the past year. At **Rock Island Academy** (RIA), we provided books to **70** students in Kindergarten, to **85** students in first grade, and to **65** students in second grade, and each of their teachers. At **Frances Willard School** (FWS), we provided book-bundles for **37** second-grade students and their teachers.

Families were able to begin or expand their home libraries, positively affecting the reading options of students during unscheduled time as well as those of siblings and adults in the household. As children and their families receive high-quality books year after year and build better, consistent reading habits, they will be better positioned to apply these skills during later grades.



Second-grade students at Rock Island Academy spill into the hallway in anticipation of receiving their books.



Now that they have received their books, they are excitedly exploring them.



Second-grade students at Frances Willard School are lining up to receive their books for the first time this year.

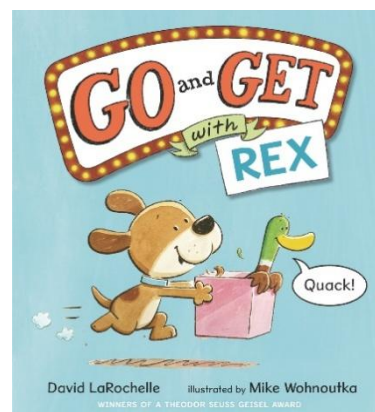
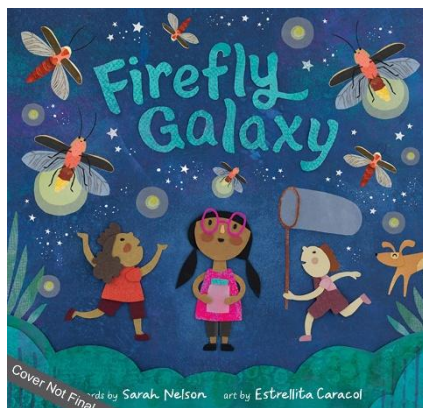
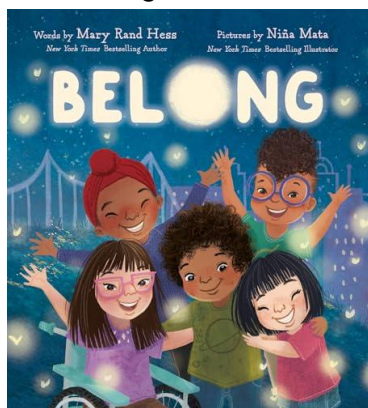
None of this would have been possible without your support. **THANK YOU** for all you do to help Rock Island kids read!

Teachers helped us by administering our annual Reading Attitudes and Behaviors Survey that our young students complete before receiving books and again after they have been able to work with those reading materials for several weeks. These numbers show a slight improvement in students' recreational reading behavior.

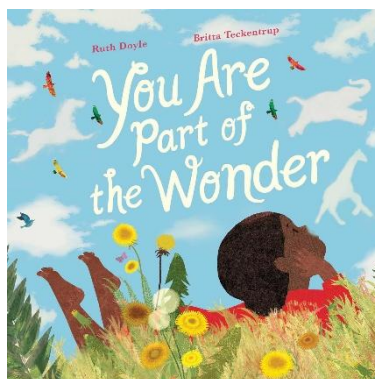
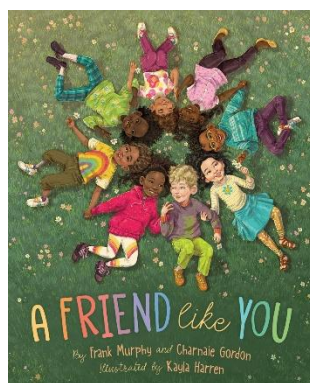
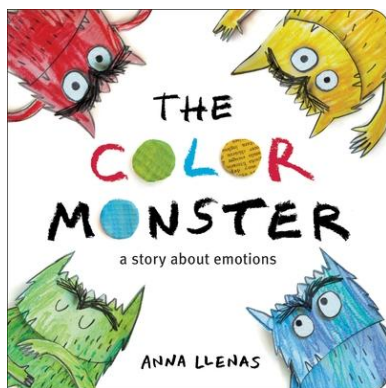
Official Illinois State data (Illinois School Report Card at <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com>) show a continuing decrease in the percentage of students who fall below proficiency in English Language Achievement and an increase in the percentage of students who are proficient in ELA at RIA. While many factors contribute to this positive change, we are being told by the school that our work creates part of that impact.

Here are the books Rock Island students received this year. For detailed information about each, please visit www.Goodreads.com.

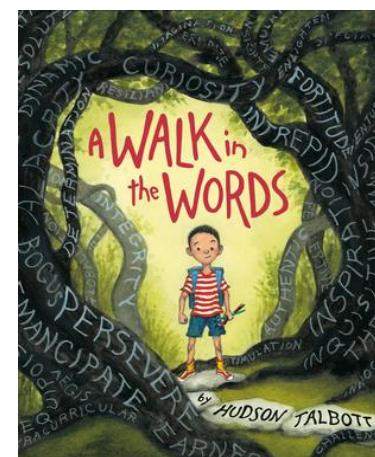
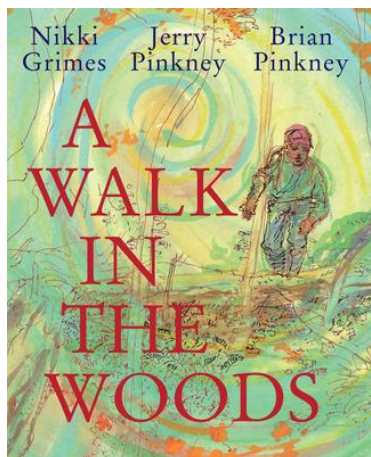
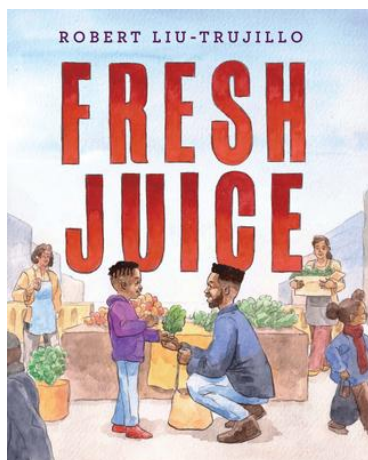
RIA Kindergarten:



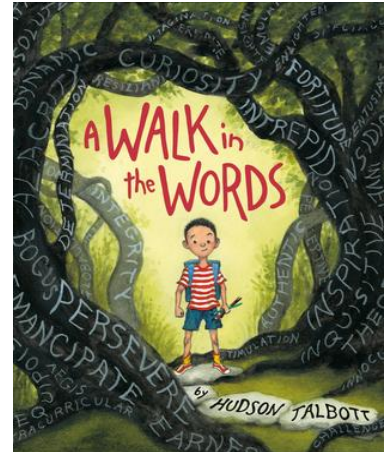
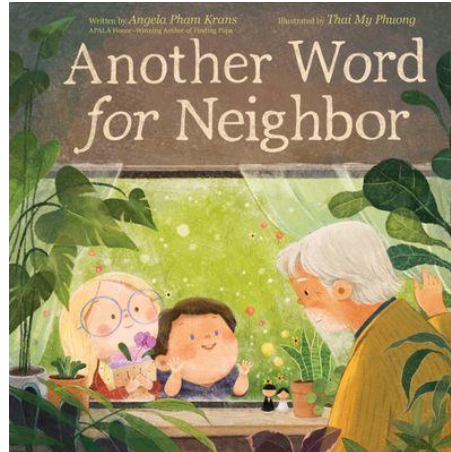
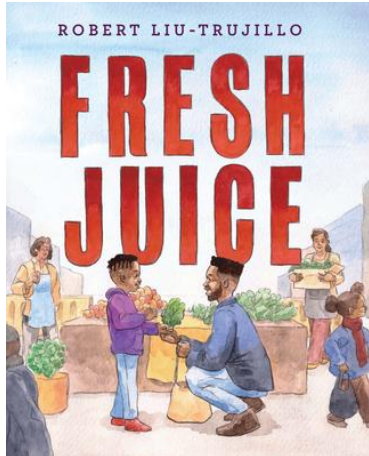
RIA First Grade:



RIA Second Grade:



FWS Second Grade:



Looking forward to a more literate future for Rock Island kids,

Tamara Felden

Tamara Felden, PhD (she/her), President
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Our Mission and Vision

It is our mission to

Support improved literacy of populations for whom our contributions may have the greatest long-term positive impact. This includes, but is not limited to, children from traditionally underserved backgrounds and their families, their schools, and community organizations with a role in their literacy development. We undertake this work from a perspective of social justice, seeking to help recipients of our support gain greater equity in all areas of life.

Our focus is on populations in our community for whom need is greatest and for whom challenges abound. With a focus on root causes of social and economic problems, we seek to support childhood literacy by providing resources to the youngest students in the most underserved area of our city, the West End of Rock Island. We specifically seek to work with the elementary schools there and continue to expand our support from year to year. These schools are places of exceptional dedication and hard work on the part of teachers and staff, and a visit there is to step into an arena of persistent encouragement and hope. But families' and the schools' lack of resources present daunting challenges and additional help is needed. This is the role we have adopted since 2022 and intend to carry well into the future.

We believe that by providing added resources to children in Kindergarten through third grade, we can help them develop attitudes and approaches to reading that will carry through future grades and give them a better chance at succeeding academically and socially. Doing so consistently year after year will provide not only the students with the basics of a home library but also draw their siblings and adult family members into improved reading practices.

Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, with some having experienced regular schooling and others never having been to school before. Meeting students where they are at the time they receive our support, we seek to see 25% of all students in the grades we support improve by at least one additional reading level over the course of the year. Improved reading performance leads to better academic performance overall and has the potential to reduce absenteeism. Helping children build stronger literacy skills affects their lives in multiple ways.

Planting Books -- Seeds 4 a Better Future
Statement of Activities
For Year Ended December 31, 2025

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenue, gains, and other support:			
Individual Donations	4,266.11	-	4,266.11
Corporate Donations	1,506.59	-	1,506.59
Foundation Grants	-	7,750.00	7,750.00
Fundraising Events	45.00	-	45.00
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	-	-	-
Total revenue, gains and other support	5,817.70	7,750.00	13,567.70
Expenses and losses:			
Books	2,531.88	6,500.00	9,031.88
Operation (General)	1,812.20	-	1,812.20
Promotion	618.74	-	618.74
Fundraising	113.70	-	113.70
Total Expenses	5,076.52	6,500.00	11,576.52
Losses	-	-	-
Total expenses and losses	5,076.52	6,500.00	11,576.52
Change in net assets	741.18	1,250.00	1,991.18
Net assets January 1, 2025	2,232.35	3,000.00	5,232.35
Net assets December 31, 2025	2,973.53	4,250.00	7,223.53

THANK YOU!

We are deeply grateful to our supporters. Our work would not be possible without you!

\$1 - \$49

Donna Carmack
Valerie Kiel
The Atlas Collective

\$50 - \$99

Alan Carmen
Angela Campbell
Jeff and Natalie Condit
Jerry and Steve Drucker
Kristi Masterson
Lisa Seidlitz

\$100 - \$199

Anonymous
Mark Archibald
Alfred K. and Joan C. Beck
Maureen Bennett
Cynthia Blamire
Birdies for Charity
Bernadette Carmack
Nick Dobson
Donna Frye
Jason Heinres
Laurie Inghram

\$100 - \$199 cont.

Sonja Knudsen
Kathy and Bob Leunek
Sue Rector
Molly Teigland
Sharon Williams

\$200 - \$299

Natalie Mulholland
R.I. County Retired Teachers Foundation

\$500 - \$999

David and Becky Archibald
Modern Woodmen of America
Barbara and Mark Zimmerman
Doris and Victor Day Foundation

\$1,000 or more

Rebecca Christoffel and Andrew Williams
Kurt Christoffel
Tamara Felden
Judy Gackle
Rauch Family Foundation
Rock Island Community Foundation

Board of Directors

Angela Campbell
Berni Carmack
Kurt Christoffel
Ranell Dennis
Tamara Felden (President)
Judy Gackle

Volunteers

Thurgood Brooks, Nick Carmack, Daniel Flosi, Cynthia Green
Renata Lara-Ramirez, Kristi Masterson, Nicole Melody, Nancy Morris,
Natalie Mulholland, Shaniece Payne, Laurie Smith, Elena Vallejo

Our Plans Moving Forward

The Big Picture – Our Five-Year Vision

At *Planting Books – Seeds 4 a Better Future*, we believe that literacy is the foundation of opportunity – not only for individual children and their families but for the vitality of our entire community. Our vision for the next five years is to build an ever stronger, sustainable literacy initiative that supports students, families, and schools across Rock Island’s West End.

Immediate Priorities for 2026-2027

1. Book Distribution:

Provide three new books to all Kindergarten, first- and second-grade students at Rock Island Academy, Frances Willard School and Earl Hanson Elementary School.

2. Reading Partners Program:

Recruit, train and organize volunteers to serve as Reading Partners at Rock Island Academy throughout the academic year.

3. Reading Comprehension through Writing:

Launch “Reading to Write” and “Literature to Art” young readers projects, inviting third-grade students to reflect on their reading experiences in their own writing and artistic expression.

4. Data and Evaluation:

- a. Conduct a detailed assessment project focusing on day-to-day reading and performance data of 25 students from each grade level served (K-3) over a period of one year.
- b. Conduct a needs-assessment study with teachers of all grade levels served.

5. Family Engagement:

Host the organization’s first Family Literacy Events, where parents can learn strategies to support their children’s early reading and where attending families receive an additional book to start or expand their home libraries.

6. Community Outreach:

Hold public events to highlight our activities, build partnerships, recruit volunteers, and solicit donations.

Providing sets of high-quality books to children in Kindergarten through second grade in our West End schools remains our priority. Through readily available books, we seek to strengthen their love of reading and help them develop the best possible reading attitudes and behaviors. To further bolster their reading skills, our volunteers visit Rock Island Academy as Reading Partners, spending time reading with individual children or with small groups. Some serve as story-time visitors to offer full-length stories or weekly segments of chapter books children may not yet be ready to read on their own. And to strengthen their reading comprehension and critical thinking skills for long term reading achievement, we are adding a program that has children in third grade reflect on their reading in writing and art. We are working to help all elementary school students in the West End become more proficient readers and attain better opportunities in life. For all this, we continue to seek your support in the form of your service on our board and committees, as volunteers, and through your donations.

THANK YOU!