Students of the Dr. Gerald B. Probe School in Lethbridge, Alberta can’t get enough of reading together. The school has rolled through nine One School, One Book selections in recent years, with plans for a tenth underway.

Michelle Dimnik, learning support teacher, said participating in OSOB has provided a crucial boost to the school and its families. “The project engages our community and helps us grow together,” she said. “Conversations about books, characters, themes, lessons, literacy and the value of reading aloud arise in every project and each time that happens our children benefit, our parents feel valued and they understand our roles as educators a bit more.”

Educators work hard to engage parents and students from the outset, using vibrant decorations, spirited assemblies, art projects, creative writing, podcasts, and performances to build enthusiasm, so that, Dimnik said, “the school is buzzing with conversations about what the students have read the night before.” In addition, the school has developed a Family Literacy Night, which promotes literacy, reading aloud, and family communication while raising money for a cause linked to the book being read. The Probe School also collaborated with two nearby schools on a “3 Schools, 1 Book” project. “The whole west side of Lethbridge was talking about our book and its characters like they were real,” Dimnik said.
What interests you about writing mysteries for younger readers?

There are really two parts to this question—what interests me about writing for younger readers, and what interests me about writing mysteries. I love writing for younger readers because of their innate ability to suspend disbelief. E. B. White once said, “Children can sail easily over the fence that separates reality from make-believe. They go over it like little springboks.” There are so many possibilities when you write for children, and you don’t have to bog yourself down in elaborate explanations of how, for instance, a beetle is able to understand a boy. As for mysteries, I like their puzzly, interlocking complexity. They force me to be thoughtful and smart when I’m writing, and I think they force my characters and my readers to be thoughtful and smart in order to solve them. All of my mysteries have high stakes, so the sense of danger or dire consequence is strong. Those situations reveal the core of a person’s character: how brave or trustworthy or resourceful they are, not to mention how they solve difficult problems.

What has been your experience with Read to Them’s One School, One Book program?

My experience with the Read to Them program has been amazing. Many schools have discovered Masterpiece through Read to Them, and I’ve traveled all over the country to talk to children from kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade who’ve read the novel for a One School, One Book read. There’s something so wonderful about entire families reading one book, throughout the school community; it becomes a shared experience, a topic of conversation between parents and children, teachers and students, and children and their siblings and friends. The schools I’ve visited have come up with the most creative and interesting ways to connect Masterpiece with readers. They’ve not only used the terrific suggestions from Read to Them, but they’ve developed scavenger hunts, game shows, plays, miniature art contests, and their own in-school stolen art mysteries to be solved by students, all based on my book.

Which books most inspired you growing up?

I was a huge reader as a child, and still am—of everything from adult fiction to memoirs to short stories to poetry to children’s books. I had so many beloved books when I was young, but I would say the most inspiring to me as a writer were Laura Ingalls Wilder’s Little House books, A Little Princess and The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett, The Great Brain series by John D. Fitzgerald, and virtually anything by E. B. White. In thinking about those books, the subjects of miniature worlds, magical worlds, history, and adventure clearly always appealed to me.

Tell us about The Wolf Keepers, your novel due for release in October.

I am very excited about it. It’s a novel set in Yosemite, about a zookeeper’s daughter, a runaway boy who’s been hiding out at the zoo and noticing strange happenings at night, and a mystery that involves dying wolves and the secret location of John Muir’s lost cabin (which is a real historical puzzle). Muir lived in Yosemite for a few years in the mid-nineteenth century, and wrote much about his experiences there, but nobody has ever been able to find the exact location of the cabin he built. In The Wolf Keepers, my two characters end up deep in the wilds of the park, in all sorts of danger, trying to figure that out. And as I type this, I’m happily realizing that my themes of history and mystery, friendship, courage, and moral choices are all part of the story! :)

For the complete interview with Elise Broach, visit readtothem.org/interview-elise-broach.
A riveting stage performance played a central role in a thrilling kickoff for St. Joan of Arc School’s reading of *The Cricket in Times Square*.

**HONORED SCHOOLS:**

- **Oak Grove-Bellemeade E.S. in Richmond, VA,** has moved, in the space of three years, from one spare title to reading three books a year – two years running. Jessica Carpenter and her team are working to establish a culture of literacy in a challenging environment.

- **St. Joan of Arc School in Chagrin Falls, Ohio,** in its very first year, produced a remarkable series of enthusiastic assemblies and related events as they read *The Cricket in Times Square*.

- **Colerain E.S. in Colerain N.C.** read *Because of Winn-Dixie* in the fall, *The One and Only Ivan* in the winter, and *Charlotte’s Web* in the spring. They even brought a baby pig to an assembly.

- Hats off to **Jane Addams E.S. in Chicago, Ill.** the sole school in Chicago to pull off *OSOB* in 2016. The school read *The Lemonade War* and engineered Lemonade War Jeopardy between students, parents and teachers.

- **Windemere Park Charter Academy in Lansing, Mich.** read *The BFG*, as library technical coordinator Angie Moore amply demonstrated the school’s embrace of the book and *OSOB* on social media.

Congratulations to **North Shore Elementary School** in St. Petersburg, Fla., Read to Them’s 2016 *One School, One Book* School of the Year. North Shore’s success is largely due to the efforts of Sally Baynard, director of the gifted program. Sally brought *OSOB* to North Shore in 2015. Her community responded so well that she expanded her efforts. In 2016, North Shore read *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* while neighboring Bear Creek read *The World According to Humphrey*. In 2015, to celebrate *Kenny and the Dragon*, Sally organized a ‘Knight’ of Reading Under the Stars – which featured books, food, instruction and games and culminated with families reading outside on the school grounds by flashlight and candlelight. In addition, Sally delivered a presentation on *OSOB* to the Florida Association for the Gifted convention. Leaders like Sally, who share their experiences with family literacy, are a principal reason *OSOB* continues to spread to other communities.

**Share Your One School, One Book Tweetables**

Has your school or district had success with a Read to Them program? Email stories, pictures, videos, and/or links to newsletter@readtothem.org.
One School One Book
for Middle Schools

After a long wait Read to Them is happy to announce the arrival of our One School, One Book for Middle School program.

We know that Middle Schools want to choose novels - classic and contemporary - to explore themes native to today’s middle-schoolers. We’ve had a team of RTT staff working hard to add Middle School titles and create augmented resources to help middle school students discuss and explore the rich themes and moments in each novel.

Our Middle School packets come with Discussion Questions to cue your in-school dialogues; Suggested Activities aimed to enrich adolescent hearts and minds; and a variety of sly Role Playing games so you can nudge every student into your school-wide conversation.

We’re going to add new titles as fast as we can. Check out our complete list of current and coming titles here at: readtothem.org/programs/one-school-one-book/books/

Texas Reads

A special committee of Texas Superintendents has selected The Lemonade War, by Jacqueline Davies for Texas Reads One Book 2017.

Dallas Cowboys head coach Jason Garrett will kick off the program for the third year, reading the first chapter in a videocast shared with schools all across Texas. As Mission CISD Superintendent Dr. Ricardo López explains, hundreds of thousands of students and families will experience “sleepless Sunday nights” as they anticipate each week’s chapters while reading The Lemonade War together in April 2017.

If you are interested in developing a “Your State” Reads One Book program in your state, contact cathy.mitchell@readtothem.org and let’s start talking!

Learn more about Read to Them’s selected titles at: www.readtothem.org/book