Local Minnesota Literacy Director Expands ODOB to Three Districts

Lori Posch and Sue Paasch knew before the session was over. The Minnesota pair - the Sauk Rapids-Rice Integration Coordinator and the Mississippi Heights ES Principal - were listening to Gary Anderson of Read to Them present at the 2010 IRA Reading Conference in Orlando when they texted their superintendent Dan Bittman, “This is exactly what we are looking for!” Bittman responded, “Think big – Think community.” With that exchange, One District, One Book found a foothold in Minnesota.

After more than six months of planning, and key assistance from Laura Arndt, their Elementary Literacy Coordinator, they started the program the very next school year, reading. The Cricket in Times Square in three elementary buildings and one middle school – even including their preschoolers.

Fundraising was a big part of it. Their goal was to provide each family with a copy of the book at no charge. They cracked out the phone book and contacted local businesses. They wrote letters to anyone connected to the school. They presented to their local Rotary Club. They even gained funding from a local church using one of their schools as a temporary meeting space. Mission accomplished!

Following a rousingly successful first year, the donations flowed more freely, and they were able to read Charlotte’s Web in 2013. In one of life’s wonderful coincidences, the local children’s theater, GREAT, had already planned a production of “Charlotte’s Web.” The group added a special performance, exclusively for the families in the school district. It was so popular that the educators and performers have now planned a book-play partnership for the next five years! They have also already created a Roald Dahl theme for 2016 – the 100th anniversary of the author’s birth.

Posch has since moved to the St. Cloud Area School District and taken the ODOB program with her, even mentioning it in her initial interview as a key program she envisioned starting right away for their 3,700 preschool and elementary families. She presented to her new superintendent’s cabinet and to the elementary principals to gain support. And she spread the word to the neighboring Sartell district, which is hoping to join ODOB in 2014-15. This year, the program will span 13 buildings in two districts – all reading The World According to Humphrey.

It may be -30º in Minnesota, but reading is hot!
YEAR ROUND READER

Why limit the experience to just one book a year?

Has your school considered becoming YEAR ROUND READERS?

More and more “One School, One Book” members have decided to keep the excitement going year round – by reading two, three, four, or even five books together every year!

Jenny Lind Elementary School in Minneapolis, MN has read three books a year for the last two years, and they are loving the results! Sharing multiple books every year keeps the benefits going non-stop, and establishes reading as a habit: a life-long source of learning and pleasure.

Jarvisburg Elementary School in Currituck County, NC reads five books a year! They exclaim, “Reading has gone viral at our school!”

Some schools choose sequels, or other books by the same author; some choose to mix it up. Some keep the reading going over the summer. Whichever way, the educational experts here in the Read to Them office are here to help you craft the perfect YEAR ROUND READER experience for your school or district!

![Reading Scores Improve during One District, One Book](image)
How to Have Fun with Humphrey

Schools across the nation and even around the world are having fun with *The World According to Humphrey*. Here are some ideas from our member school Edward C. Killin in Okinawa, Japan:

- Opening assembly featuring Aldo, the custodian having his nightly conversation with Humphrey
- Hamster Races at the closing event
- Hamster Calisthenics during P.E. – check out those ab exercises!
- Fun with music: “Hamsters Can’t Play the Piano”
  [http://safeshare.tv/w/BTdCcaXoX](http://safeshare.tv/w/BTdCcaXoX)

We also have a five minute video presentation by Humphrey author Betty G. Birney for exclusive use by OSOB and ODOB schools.

March is National Reading Month

...and March 3 is NEA’s Read Across America Day. The theme for the 17th annual event is “Seussical,” so get ready to celebrate with Horton, Yertle, The Cat in the Hat, and any number of Red and Blue Fish! For more information follow this link:

[http://www.nea.org/grants/886.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/886.htm)
Feedback We Love to Hear

“Oh - one more fun tidbit...we had a really great moment at our Back to School Night last Tuesday. Our PTA president was doing her little back to school speech where she mentions many of the things that the PTA funded the previous year - when she mentioned OSOB we got a huge round of applause!!! No clapping for anything else - just OSOB right in the middle of her speech! It was fantastic!!”

- Leslie Compagna, Daniels Farm School - Trumbull, CT

Do You Have Ideas?

For newsletter features?
For new titles to add to our list?
For great book related activities to share with other OSOB and ODOB schools?

Please share them! We’d love to hear from you!!

Please send your ideas and suggestions to:
Cathy Mitchell
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New Newsletter Editor

Cathy Mitchell

Cathy has been volunteering with Read to Them since the fall of 2012. She is a classroom teacher with "Young Scientists" providing elementary school science lessons as in-school field trips all over the Richmond, VA area. She also tutors after school. A former Fairfax County, VA first grade classroom teacher, Cathy earned her B.A. in Economics from Duke University, her M.Ed. from Marymount University (Arlington), and is Reading Recovery and Orton-Gillingham trained. She lives in her native Richmond with her 3 teenage daughters. In her spare time, Cathy enjoys reading, tennis, Bikram yoga, travel, and beekeeping.