

ORANGE COUNTY READER



The Newsletter of the Orange County Reading Association - P.O. Box 7143, Orange, CA 92863-7143
President: Julie Peterson *Editor: Lori Morgan, 714-779-6186 and lori.morgan@sbcglobal.net*
Affiliated with California Reading Association and International Reading Association

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President's Message by Julie Niles Petersen

While the school year is coming to a close, so is my presidential term. I cannot tell you what an honor it has been to serve as president for such a wonderful nonprofit organization. Here are some of happenings this past year:

1. We were awarded the International Reading Association's prestigious Honor Council Award for the 29th consecutive year--every year the award has been in existence. This speaks volumes about the dedication of the members on our Executive Board and Executive Council. (Did you know they are all volunteers?!)
2. We offered two conferences with nationally recognized keynote speakers--Elfrieda "Freddy" Hiebert in the fall and Kelly Gallagher in the spring. If you attended them, I'm sure you know they were fabulous!
3. Dr. Erica Bowers gave a literacy presentation to parents in Jan. at an event organized by Orange County Junior League.
4. Our very talented, Lori Morgan, created and sent out three newsletters to all our members.
5. We began using Google Docs so we could collaborate more efficiently and keep the documentation from our past 47 years of service in order.
6. Dr. Erica Bowers received our Outstanding Contribution to Reading Award and KidWorks was the recipient of the Celebrate Literacy Award.
7. We provided stipends to OCRA board members so they could attend CRA and IRA conferences and conventions.
8. We donated several free memberships to OCRA, CRA, and IRA, as well as free OCRA conferences, to our OCRA conference attendees.
9. We donated one IRA membership to a teacher in a developing country to help promote literacy worldwide.
10. At our fall conference, we selected future educators to assist us with the conference. In exchange, they received free conference registration.
11. Two schools won a set of the books from us that are nominated for the California Young Reader Medal Program.
12. We donated money to the Red Cross to help purchase literacy supplies and rebuild schools.
13. We collected new and gently used books at our conferences and gave them to the Reading by 9 Program. The books collected were distributed throughout public schools in Orange County.
14. We donated a CSUF Reading Clinic scholarship to a nine-year-old who was reading significantly below grade level.

15. We collected money at our conferences for the Pennies for Peace Program to help build schools and provide school supplies in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

16. We raffled off some major prizes at our fall conference thanks to Joya Ryerson's efforts, the kindness of Freddy Hiebert and Kelley Gallagher, and the generosity of so many supportive educational vendors.

We have already confirmed that Ron Boren from www.boren2tchtunes.com will be our keynote speaker for our fall conference. He has received rave reviews from past conference attendees and I am sure his energy will once again bring down the house! Once we have more details, we will announce them on our website, Facebook, and Twitter.

Since you are reading this newsletter, I am assuming you are a current member. Thank you for your membership and continued support! Being a member in OCRA means you are also a member of CRA. As a member of both organizations, you receive publications and discounts to all conferences. CRA has a professional development institute coming up in November in Vacaville: Plug into Content Literacy: Powerful Outlets for Teaching & Learning. See www.californiareads.org for more.

With summer drawing near, the summer slide is on my mind. Research shows that students who do not read over the summer lose some of the academic growth they made before school let out. One reason some students do not read is that they do not have access to texts. Please encourage all parents to take their children to the library once a week and to keep them intellectually stimulated while school is out. If you teach students who are reading on a 3rd to 5th grade level, Elfrieda Hiebert, created some FREE texts specifically for this purpose. Feel free to print them out and give them to your students. You can access them at: www.textproject.org/products/summerreads/. If you teach older students, you might want to print out Kelly Gallagher's Articles of the Week which can be found at: www.kellygallagher.org/resources/articles.html

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve as the president of such a wonderful organization. In conclusion, I would like to ask that you do the following if you haven't already done so: (1) Invite colleagues to join OCRA, (2) "Like" us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ocreading) and follow us on Twitter (www.twitter.com/ocreading), (3) Wish our incoming officers a year of greatness, and (4) Keep peace and literacy for all in your thoughts.