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BOOK LOVE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES ITS 2018 GRANTEES

North Conway, NH (June 18, 2018) -- The Book Love Foundation awarded **60** classroom library grants totaling \$120,000 to teachers in the United States and Canada this year. Since 2013, the Book Love Foundation has given \$365,000 in grants to teachers in 38 states and four provinces who work to create a lasting love of reading in all students. These extraordinary teachers work at local, state, and national levels to inspire their colleagues. If you have any doubt about engaging today's busy teenagers in reading, these teachers will convince you it is not about time, not about technology, it is about putting the best books you can into their hands and then giving them time to read them. Every one of these teachers is on the path to creating a future generation of readers. The Book Love Foundation Board of Directors reviewed hundreds of applications in order to select this year's grant winners.

Please help us celebrate the following teachers:

Margarette E. Allen has been teaching for 18 years at Lincoln High School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Margarette has built a rich classroom library from her own funds for years because she understands the need to provide busy teenagers with engaging books. She regularly reads educational research and uses it to more closely align her practices to the needs of her students. Margarette has set up Little Free Library-style bins for students to discover books they can take home. A student recommendation was a highlight of this exceptional teacher's story.

Russ Anderson teaches all levels of students at William Fremd High School in Palantine, Illinois. His commitment to social justice was evident in his wish list for books and his passion for helping students rise to their greatest potential with literacy. He is an educator committed to his own professional learning and growth. He belongs to several professional organizations and regularly reads books, blogs, and research. He co-produces a student podcast about writing and impressed our board with his humility in light of all of his accomplishments.

Olivia Van Buskirk is a second-year teacher with an impressive set of presentation skills. Her application was beautifully and carefully done. She said, “My students deserve literature that speaks to them, resonates with them, and inspires them.” She teaches high school students in Wilkesboro, North Carolina and works hard to get engaging books into their hands. She is already focused on her own learning: attending conferences, connecting with colleagues on Twitter, and sharing her insights and challenges with others. With this grant we celebrate the promise of new teachers, alive to the joy of working with teenagers.

Dara Caldwell has five years of experience teaching at Spalding High School in Griffin, Georgia. She has steadily built a classroom library through Donors Choose grants and her own money. She not only ensures that every student has engaging books to read, she has been exploring forms of assessment that show the quality of reading and learning, not just the quantity. Dara is committed to leading all students to read both inside and outside of school.

Steve Clark has been teaching English for 22 years at Palm Springs High School in California. Steve has built a classroom library in order to convince students from the moment they walk in the door that not only does reading matter, but that stories are valued—their stories and the stories of others throughout the world. Steve’s students arrive as determined non-readers, and it takes extraordinary effort to turn them towards regular reading. We support his mission.

Andria Cole leads a remarkable summer reading program in Baltimore, Maryland called A Revolutionary Summer. Twenty young girls come together each year to read, write, and study the writing of Black women under the leadership of an impressive board of business women. Andria is a former special education teacher who works hard to bring a sense of community to students hungry to learn. We celebrate her commitment to young people and to a rich, literacy tradition.

Della Collins is dedicated to middle school students in Buchanan, Tennessee. Her 26-year teaching career has also taken her to Maine, Alaska, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire. She has built a classroom library in each school and has kept public library cards from each community where she taught in order to check out e-books for her current students to read. She actively pursues professional learning and has remained current with her understanding of young adult literature. Della’s love for readers is evident in her commitment to them.

Kristin Crouch has been teaching for 13 years and is currently a 5th-grade teacher in Rensselaer, New York. Kristin co-founded Collabookation on Twitter in 2016. Collabookation is a way for educators across the country to learn about children’s literature by sharing their knowledge of books with each other. Kristin’s vast Twitter professional learning network allowed her class to Skype with three authors this year and connect with many of their favorite authors through letter writing. Currently, she works at the local library in addition to classroom teaching with the sole intent of purchasing books for her own classroom library. Kristin’s continued demonstration to find ways to provide her students access to texts is why she is a Book Love Foundation Grant winner. We are inspired by her creativity and passion.

Caley Crull-Rogers is a National Board Certified teacher and has been teaching English for eight years at Chesnee High School in Chesnee, South Carolina. She said, “I believe in the power of story to change lives—they’ve changed my own and more importantly, they have changed the lives of my students, and I’ve been there to watch it happen. It’s the most powerful transformation I’ve seen as a teacher.” Caley’s commitment to book talks and “piling choices on students’ desks” convinced the board to support this passionate young teacher.

Kelly Diamond Kelly has taught English for five years at the John R Rogers High School in Spokane Washington. She describes teaching in a “multiracial, multiethnic, high poverty, high trauma school in Washington State.” She has shifted from a punitive reading environment to interest based, engaging, relational, communal reading program. She stated she saw immediate effects in her classroom culture based on shifts in independent reading practices. “My classes became energized as books were celebrated and cheered through impromptu student book talks.” She seeks the best literature to empower her students as readers and critical thinkers.

Leslie DiMaio is a middle school teacher in Columbia Falls, Montana. She wrote, “I am working on growing a systemic culture of reading. This is my investment. You are my kickstarter.” She included a photo of the professional books that have informed her teaching, including a photo of her to-read stack of professional books. In describing her journey to confer with her students, she recognizes that, “While the growth I am seeing isn’t always documented in traditional points and grades, I have never known my students so well. I understand where my students are as readers because we talk.” Leslie is dedicated to building relationships with her students and helping them build relationships with books and reading. Her knowledge of young adult literature shows a commitment to learning we believe is essential work for all teachers.

Alison Edwards teaches English at Prince of Wales Collegiate in St. John’s Newfoundland. As she put it, she “reads, raps and shares repartee with teenagers in the hopes of making them lifelong readers, critical thinkers, and quick witted responders.” Her student recommendations noted that Alison “has introduced me to authors and characters I would never have found on my own. She is the first person to which I turn when I am looking for new book to read for enjoyment or for school projects. She teaches not only the prescribed curriculum but also through her own extensive collection of modern teen literature. She understands what teenagers want to read. She also understands that literature can change people.” We celebrate Alison’s work in the great cold north!

Noelle Gallant Noelle is an 8th grade teacher in Saco, Maine. Her application was the most imaginative and lively one we received to read this year. She included video clips, photographs, quotes, screenshots—so many artifacts from her teaching story that we felt we really got a glimpse into who she is as a person and teacher. She is doing everything she can to excite her middle schoolers with reading. Her knowledge of best practices and young adult literature is current, and through a Go Fund Me campaign in 2017, she was able to purchase a book for every one of her students to self-select and take home. The popular books in their classroom library are read by so many students that they are falling apart. Nothing stops Noelle. We are thrilled to support her work.

Jennifer Gallman teaches high school English in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Jennifer does more than teach, she started a Food Pantry in her classroom closet to house donated items like peanut butter, toothpaste, shampoo, etc. The Food Pantry has provided basic essentials, but also love, compassion, and a connection with students that she uses to engage all with literacy. She fills bellies while filling their literacy souls. We love this woman. We support her commitment to expanding her collection of books related to social justice and encouraging students to become active in the political process.

Angie Gibbs teaches a highly diverse group of students at Irvington Prep Academy in Indianapolis, a public charter school. Angie has 18 years of classroom experience. Her school serves adolescents who come from many different high schools or middle schools as well as halfway houses and juvenile incarceration. The school has no library or librarian and her room has become the go-to for kids who are looking for something relevant to read. Angie says that “investing in a classroom library at my school is investing in the lives of students whose parents may have never bought a book for them.” Angie reads widely in the best of YA and is thoughtful about steering kids towards books that will suit, encourage, and challenge them. Angie is passionate about understanding the challenges of poverty and offering teenagers both the solace of a good book and the opportunities literacy can bring.

Dawn Gosse teaches six sections of eighth grade reading and tutors seventh and eighth grade students reading below grade level in Pearland, Texas. Her school doesn't have the resources to provide each student with meaningful book access, and most of her students have few books at home. Dawn is dismayed that so many of her students lack support for their reading lives when they move on to high school. She is actively working to change that culture by providing information to families and ensuring that students at her school have the support and books they need. Her knowledge of young adult literature is current and she uses signposts, conferences, and other individualized methods for assessing her students' reading comprehension and engagement. Dawn is a leader for change.

Jennifer Green does everything possible to engage her dormant and striving middle schoolers with reading. She teaches at Larkspur Middle School in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Her reading intervention class library is a game changer for her students. She identifies about half her 300-book collection as “shabby” and uses Scholastic Warehouse Sales and Reading Clubs to purchase books with her own money. She continuously reads professional books and follows literacy journals and blogs, listing *Disrupting Thinking* by Kylene Beers & Bob Probst and *Passionate Readers* by Pernille Ripp as recent favorites. She wants to increase the diversity of books in her classroom library so that all of her students can find and share books that reflect their experiences. She firmly believes that all children deserve positive reading experiences.

Elisa Gregonis is in her third year of teaching high school English. She works in Eldorado, Texas where the only large book store (40 miles away) is now closed. Elisa built her small classroom library at their going-out-of-business sale. She said, “Students simply don't realize that reading can be something done for enjoyment, not for work. I try hard to find each student a book he or she WILL enjoy, so they can discover a love of reading that will last.” Clearly Elisa is having success as the director of instruction noted in her recommendation,

“Students are starting to view reading as the opportunity to travel, to understand, to learn more so than they have before, and to interact with one another in a positive way about the books they read. This is a huge shift from non-readers and it is all the result of having in-class access to a few books, a teacher who inspires a love of reading, and who facilitates their growth as readers.”

Bailey Hugaard is a first-year teacher at the Haltom Middle School in Haltom City, Texas. She says, “Though my library is tiny, it is fierce! It is something the students go to in search of a book every single day.” She states that the students know the books are their responsibility and they feel excited for it. She noted that when she was growing up, “my family did not have much extra money for vacations. When other kids went to the beach for summer vacation, I solved a murder mystery with Nancy Drew. Books helped me form experiences while growing up, and I know they are the greatest hope for my students to do so as well. I take my job very seriously and spend my days showing my students love while trying to immerse in the written word.” We support bold and brave new teachers, knowing their impact on the world will be great.

Meghan Herren teaches second grade at the Clifton Hills school in Chattanooga, TN. Meghan regularly has other teachers visit her classroom to watch her instruction in action. Her dedication to professional learning and her determination to fill her classroom library with diverse books convinced us of her deep commitment to all of her students. She would like to add books such as *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* by Vashti Harrison, *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World* by Chelsea Clinton, *Iggy Peck’s Big Project Book for Amazing Architects* by Andrea Beaty, and *What Do You Do with a Chance?* by Kobi Yamada to her classroom library. The Book Love Foundation works to support #WNDB (We Need Diverse Books) and the inclusion of all voices in our curriculum.

Kim Higdon has 26 years of teaching experience. Her current title is Reading Specialist and Humanities Department Chair at the American Dream School in the Bronx, New York. She returned to a classroom after years at university because she missed connecting with young readers. She once built up an eighth-grade classroom library to nearly 1000 books. However, when she became a reading specialist, she left the library with the new teacher and is now starting from scratch. She believes reading conferences are the most important way to assess students and seeks opportunities to help students connect to each other through book clubs and independent reading.

Taylor Hollowell is a first-year high school English teacher in rural Fayetteville, Arkansas where classroom libraries are the exception. She won us over with a story about the transformation of her younger brother who struggled as a reader until he was given choice, time to read, and a series of books that kept him engaged. Taylor said, “If I have a classroom library, this is what I hope to provide for my students; the opportunity to gain a love for reading. Reading is not an option for students, but a necessity. I do not consider this grant a gift to me, but rather, an investment in my students.” Taylor has developed systems to support readers and is hungry to learn. We proudly support her work.

Lindsey Housenick teaches 7th grade in the San Fernando Valley of California. She has made a significant investment of her own money in high interest books for her classroom. Her

classroom practices have been celebrated in her school and she recently led district professional development on “Classroom Practices that Encourage a Love of Reading.” She is a change agent for her students and other teachers. Lindsey has immersed herself in learning from other professionals, reading widely to more deeply understand the best way to align her content with her students. Lindsey is unafraid to lead. We look forward to watching her grow in her work.

Ally Hrkac created our first ever multi-genre application that told us a great deal about her beliefs and thinking as a teacher. It included a two-voice poem, both wanted and missing posters to describe books she is seeking, and a rich history of her reading life as a professional. Ally describes her work in Oregon, Wisconsin as, “Teaching 125 sophomores how to live through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and empathizing.” Her afterword included this six-word memoir: Plane tickets are expensive, reading’s cheaper. We are excited to see where this grant will take Ally as a teacher and a teacher leader.

Julie Jaeger spent 13 years as a middle school teacher and department chair in Woodland, California, and is now starting over in Rohnert Park. She is dedicated to increasing access to books for all of the students at Technology Middle School. Julie solves classroom problems in expansive and creative ways: students record book talks, create QR codes for them, and put them on the inside covers of her books, so that any student can access the book talk while book shopping. Julie reads Young Adult Literature and professionally, including recent favorites *From Striving to Thriving* by Stephanie Harvey & Annie Ward and *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* by Adams, Bell, & Griffin.

Taylor Johnson is a first-year third-grade teacher in Saint Paul, MN. In her application, she reflected on her own learning as she read *Dyamonde Daniel* to her class. She said, “This book was fundamental in my growth as a teacher, and especially as a teacher in a predominately African American school.” Taylor applied for a Book Love Foundation Grant because of her children’s reactions to hearing *Dyamonde Daniel*. She wants to provide her students with a varied selection of books that showcase main characters who reflect the students in her class. Currently, she has very few choices for her students to read independently. She explains, “I want my students to be able to stick their noses deep into the binding of a book so engaging that they lose themselves in their thoughts.” Taylor’s determination is a powerful model.

Jessica Kalina is a second-career middle school humanities teacher at Carl Sandburg Middle School in Mundelein, Illinois. In her first four years of teaching she has immersed herself in professional development. She was honored to give a TED talk to her district on how a transition to a writer’s workshop model has created an authentic experience for her students. At Jessica’s school a librarian is on staff only two days a week, so attempts to diversify books to match the students she teaches has been nearly impossible. She said, “I want to do my part to close the achievement gap between my Hispanic students and their white peers. I believe this can be achieved by a strong push for literacy, and Book Love has been my beacon.” She noted that “if funded, “I plan to carry the torch for Book Love, and spread it to the elementary schools that feed into my school.” Jessica is unstoppable. We are honored to join her on her journey.

Aimee Leaton teaches at the Stephens Middle School in Salem, Oregon. She has 14 years of experience and has read 32 Young Adult Literature books this year, working hard to know the literature that will reach all of her students. In the last three years her professional development has been centered on teaching long term English Language Learners about the power of reading and the development of their academic English. 100% of her students utilize her library. She states, "I believe that I must strive to become a little better every year; thinking about that group of students and their unique needs. As a language arts teacher I believe it is my job to get students to love reading." We couldn't agree more.

Kalysta Leary is currently a second-grade teacher at the Clare Primary School in Clare, Michigan. Kalysta considers herself a reading warrior. She begins the school year with empty classroom library shelves. During the first few weeks of school, students unwrap series and genre collections and add them to the classroom library. Kalysta explains, "This starts our year-long process of rejoicing over literacy. We celebrate characters, new series, new additions to the library. We celebrate finding a new favorite author, discovering a new favorite genre, or finishing a first chapter book." By the end of the first month of school, her students have seen every book in the classroom. We celebrate Kalysta's creativity and vision for engagement with reading.

Julianne London is in her fourth year as a 9th grade English teacher in Kansas City, Kansas. She led her department to start a Reading Empathy Initiative. Julianne believes the "habitual impulse to bond with those most like us can be mitigated by studying a purposefully diverse literary canon." YES. Julianne has created reading lists for students and teachers at her school, designed a summer reading program, and brought such passion to her department that the school library circulation has more than doubled. Julianne reads professional literature extensively, challenging herself to improve her understanding of both the content she teaches (and imagining new possibilities) and the teenagers she is devoted to. She also finds time to coach the forensics team, manage the box office for school plays and coordinate the school's annual Poetry Slam.

Sara Marin is deeply committed to her ninth-grade students in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Students read every day, lead book talks, and she confers with students every day to encourage, challenge, and teach strategies so that they can more deeply engage with their reading. Her small library has been built on thrift store titles; however, 100% of her students use her library. She has created a culture where reading is a priority in an urban charter school with no library and no librarian. Sara began career in Teach for America where she discovered a love for teenagers and is now finished a Master's degree in Education. We know Oklahoma teachers need resources, and we are proud to support Sara.

Malissa Martin taught sixth grade for 19 years and is currently teaching 3rd grade at the Armstrong Elementary school in Conroe, Texas. Malissa regularly participates in Twitter chats, reads the Nerdy Book Club blog, and also joins #TitleTalk each month to stay up-to-date on books. Malissa helps her students live a reader-ly life by introducing them to series and authors they might love, encouraging them to find answers to their wonderings in nonfiction books, and facilitating conversations with other like-minded readers and giving book talks. Malissa believes that she has not done her job unless she has grown readers that will continue to read after they have left her classroom. We agree.

Caitlin McClure surrounds her students with books. She is a National Board Certified middle school English teacher in Louisville, Kentucky who works with her colleagues to ensure their high-poverty school is a place where reading (and readers) are valued and celebrated. Caitlin has a deep knowledge of Young Adult Literature and works hard to match students to titles that represent not only who they are and where they come from, but also help them imagine other possibilities. She is part of a teacher-led leadership group focused on action research in the classroom, and we are confident that her leadership will move our profession forward.

Kate McKinnon teaches high school in a rural school in Martensville, Saskatchewan. She is already a mentor to others in her district, showing teachers how she uses mentor texts and writing notebooks to deepen thinking with her English, History, Health, and Drama students in grades 9-12. Our board was impressed with not only her passion and commitment to engaging all students in reading, but her willingness to lead locally, regionally, and nationally across content areas. Kate currently has 90% of her students using her classroom library of 250 books; imagine what hundreds more will do in Kate's hands. We are thrilled to support her work.

Kim Minugh is a high school English teacher in Sacramento, California, who understands the complex challenges of the immigrants and refugees in her community. Her school district has partnered with Cal State Sacramento's Social Justice Institute. Kim says, "I am a social justice warrior who fights daily to cultivate a love of learning in my underserved students; to give them the skills they need; to introduce them to the joys, sorrows, and awakenings promised in books; and to help them understand the critical link between literacy and freedom." A warrior and an inspiration—Kim is a teacher all students need.

Danielle Monock has 13 years of teaching experience in New York City at M.S. 137 America's School of Heroes. She cultivates a classroom of "voracious readers, unapologetic writers and critical thinkers." A product of New York City public schools herself, she is proud to teach at one of the largest Title I middle schools in New York City. She is devoted to supporting her diverse students emotionally, intellectually and socially. For eight years, Danielle was part of the Measures of Effective Teaching Project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Over the course of the study she video recorded hundreds of her lessons, and critically analyzed her own pedagogy and provided feedback. Danielle's commitment to teaching excellence inspired us.

Cassie Owens-Moore told a story of personal transformation. She thought she was on her way to becoming a teacher "just going through the motions" when she discovered the work of several educational visionaries through professional reading. Now she's unstoppable: she has a part-time job so that she can buy books for her classroom. She has re-dedicated herself to the work of building authentic reading lives with her students at her middle school in Seneca, South Carolina. She has 25 diverse students who come in for a breakfast book club. Cassie uses her blog and social media to recommend books to colleagues and continues to attend professional development at Furman University. The media specialist at her school describes her as a person who is genuinely devoted to helping her young students develop reading lives that matter to them. We believe her.

Charles Moore is a high school English teacher in League City, Texas, who as described in a recommendation, “has grown to become one of the school district’s most visible leaders.” Charles’ school was significantly impacted by Hurricane Harvey and when he blogged about it for Three Teachers Talk, it garnered 15,000 hits in the first 24 hours. Charles encourages his students of every ability “to craft, share, and publish their written work and to read texts that inspire, challenge, and move them.” He started a Book Buddies program where administrators and counselors are paired with students who like to read similar types of books. Charles is an inspiration.

Kristina Moore is a high school teacher and media specialist in Clarion, Iowa. She is a voracious reader (150 books and 300 articles in the last year) in just her second year of teaching. She led a department-wide study of professional reading and designed a school-wide “Free Read Wednesday” full class period where teachers, administrators, and students read. She has extended her reach to middle school teachers in her district to help redesign curriculum in order to foster a love of reading. Kristina reminds us that teachers with a mission are warriors in our work. Nothing stops them.

Stacey Reece is a high school teacher in Knoxville, Tennessee who is driven to have representation of every student she teaches in her classroom library. She is the host of the We Read YA Book Club which focuses on real-world issues affecting youth today. It is a collaborative project with a University of Tennessee professor and college students, librarians, teachers, and administrators in her school district. She is respected in her school as much for her kindness and compassion as for her skills as a teacher. According to a student, “I know when I step foot into her classroom I will not be judged and that I am in a completely safe zone. I will forever be grateful for the positive environment she has created.” We celebrate Stacy’s commitment to diversity in reading.

Rebecca Riggs is a high school teacher in Houston, Texas. She is just completing her first year of teaching, but pursues professional learning through the Cult of Pedagogy podcast, observing her colleagues, and has already read six professional books by leaders in the field of teaching English. She has compiled 266 books for her classroom library, and said the first book she would buy with this grant is *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson. (If you follow the Book Love Foundation summer book club for teachers, you know how much this book means to us.) She was chosen for the district’s Lead4Ward cohort which focuses on independent reading and how to move students from first to final drafts of writing. She collaborates with colleagues to adopt independent reading built on student choice into all English courses at her school. And yes, she is in her FIRST year of teaching. Imagine all that’s possible in the years ahead.

Rebecca Rufener is a 20-year veteran high school English teacher in Chapman, Kansas. She said, “I realized I wasn’t doing nearly enough to create a new generation of literate, informed individuals.” We know the best teachers constantly reevaluate their work as Rebecca has done. Through participating in both KATE and NCTE she reimagined the teaching of English around standards based teaching and the power of student choice in engagement and growth. She has 110 books in her library, and has read almost all of them. She is determined to diversify the reading choices in her community to help students “realize that just because someone’s story is different from their own, that doesn’t mean it doesn’t have value.”

Rebecca knows she must read widely in order to achieve that mission, and we are confident that this grant will lead her forward.

Allison Sirovy teaches 8th grade English in a high poverty school in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. She has 400 books, mostly purchased at her own expense. We know Allison would keep building her library even without our support, but she has great ideas about how to spend the money. Allison is an active blogger who shows a wide familiarity with award-winning Young Adult fiction as well as adult and Young Adult non-fiction. In her own words, “I want my students to hear voices like theirs and to have the power to do great things in their lives. The more books I have in my classroom—books that are both windows and mirrors—the more voice and power my students have.” We support her mission as well as the development of teacher voices to help move this profession forward.

Bonnie Smith teaches middle and high school students in Durand, Illinois. She has been inspiring readers for ten years and said her classroom library has helped her students become more empathetic and open-minded. When she began shifting her teaching to engage more readers she collected data on progress and attitudes of her young students. She said, “I had a front row seat to witness students begin to identify themselves as readers (either for the first time ever or in awhile).” She says her classroom library is the most important tool she has in reaching all of her students and helping them learn. We celebrate Bonnie’s commitment to students and her own professional development.

Emily Steffen describes herself as a high school English teacher whose life is “a messy, disjointed, limitless stack of books.” As she balances her own reading diet of pleasure and challenge (in particular, pedagogy on the teaching of adolescents) she also has a daily commitment to her own growth as a writer. We were impressed with her passion for spoken word poetry and publications like *Rethinking Schools*. She sees reading as a place where students can find solace in the struggles and triumphs of others. In the last seven years she has built a large classroom library of donated titles, many in poor condition. Her passion for social justice has led her to examine her own racial identity and to understand how media shapes our perceptions of individuals and groups of people. Her classroom is featured in a documentary called ‘America to Me’ which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival this year. We are proud to welcome Emily to our Book Love Foundation family and help fill her classroom with current books.

Carrie Targhetta teaches English at El Camino High School in Oceanside, CA. She states, “The reason I keep asking questions and suggesting books to my students is because I want them to know they not only have a place in this world but also a voice with which to contribute to it. For me, reading is an essential part of finding that power.” She watched this happen in February when many of her students were reading *Columbine* in a book club as the Parkland shooting happened. Her students made speeches and organized a walkout because they were already deeply engaged and informed about the issue. Carrie has demonstrated the commitment to regular independent reading and conferring, even with 200 students who need her guidance. Carrie calls herself a book matchmaker and hopes this grant can help her purchase books by authors of color, books with non-binary characters and books with creepy plots.

Chelsea Accursi-Thornton is an English teacher at a continuation high school in Yuba City where students are trying to finish a high school diploma. Chelsea's school does not have a library. She asked us, "Why invest in me? Because it means investing in at-risk and disengaged students. It means putting books in the hands of those who need them most." New students arrive every four weeks, and she knows the critical importance of engaging all of her students immediately in regular reading. She works to get all students to experience not only deep connections to literature, but to reach for more complex texts as they grow. We hope this book flood of new titles will help Chelsea reach many more young readers.

Shantel VanderGalien teaches 8th grade English in Wyoming, Michigan. Shantel grew up in a single parent home and dealt with poverty. She shares her story in order to connect and relate to her students. However, she also shares how reading helped her understand that life could be different. She is determined that all students understand the importance of reading in imagining possibility in their lives. Shantel works to know students and aligns their interests to books, helping them to develop the sustained engagement with reading that improves proficiency and joy. Shantel is raising readers. We are happy to support her.

Abigail VanMalsen is a second-year middle school teacher in Mona Shores, Michigan, but she is a force of nature and clearly, a future leader. She has already presented at both state and national conferences of English teachers and gave a TEDx talk on the importance of collaboration. Abigail has dedicated herself to building a large classroom library. One of her students told her during a reading conference, "I have never had a teacher before, or anyone, who had a shelf of books with characters like me. I've never seen books sitting out for me like that...thank you." Abigail's references from her building principal and two students convinced us of her effectiveness. This is a teacher to believe in.

Nia Vestal teaches high school English in rural Columbia Falls, Montana. After nine years of teaching she took a sabbatical to read and write and reflect on her practices while working at a local college. She read widely in professional literature, from brain development and poverty to the study of engaging readers, returning to her high school classroom fired up. Nia is driven to transform district culture where she says "we assign class novels and class essays in the same manner that Taco Bell serves a chalupa: watered down, wrapped in inauthentic mess and lacking nutritional value." She plans to bridge the gap between junior high and high school by working with her colleagues to create healthy readers. Nia's application was a joy to read, line after line, and we celebrate her work.

Sophia Viglione is a second-year high school English teacher from Reynoldsburg, Ohio. Her school not only does not have a library, but the closest one is five miles from her school and is inaccessible to most of her students. Last year she took students on a field trip to the Columbus main library and 25% had never seen a library before. On her wish list for this grant were a wide range of books written by people of color. She recognizes the need to diversify the literature she puts in students' hands and has seen the engagement of her students deepen as they encounter worlds so like and unlike their own. She said, "Books have been a refuge in my life. Sharing that refuge with my students sometimes leaves me without words." We know a book flood will be in good hands here.

Lexy Viscardi is a second-year middle school teacher from Auburn, Maine, where she teaches a diverse population of students in an urban setting. Her classroom library is almost all secondhand books sourced from Goodwill, generous friends, and “Free Books!” boxes set out in the staff room, so it lacks the myriad of new Young Adult Literature that will meet the needs of all of her students. And yet, earlier this year, she got an email from a parent who said, “I found my son reading in bed last night and again at the kitchen island this morning. Please understand that has never happened without threats of punishment, arguments, bribes, etc. Thank you!” Lexy’s recommendations were passionate in their support of her and we are thrilled to make her a part of the Book Love Foundation family.

Emily Visness is an 8th grade teacher at Park Crest Middle School in Pflugerville, Texas. She said, “Words save lives. I believe that with all my heart, but the first step is for kids to have access to the books they need to read. My calling, my service, and my life’s work is to help my students find the Right Book.” Emily reads professional literature widely and writes a blog called The Bookish Advocate. She is part of the “No Place for Hate” initiative to promote anti-bias and diversity education in schools. She knows that diverse books are an ideal way to move readers to empathize as well as to celebrate the diversity of students she teaches. She has a rotating Book Talk Book Shelf with a theme centered on diversity to promote authors of color. This effort has resulted in a large number of students reading widely.

Annie Wade has eight years of teaching experience and currently teaches 4th graders at the Hartford Elementary School in Chandler, Arizona. Annie’s students love to read, and she tries to keep her classroom library as current as she can by purchasing books with her own funds so that she can continue to foster their love of reading. Annie’s dedication to filling her classroom with more diverse books that are accessible to her students is what made her an outstanding candidate to receive the Book Love Foundation grant.

Amanda Walker is in her fifth year of teaching 11th and 12th graders in an urban school in Ogden, Utah. Her commitment to daily time to read and focused, purposeful conferences has increased the confidence and the skills of her students. The gains Amanda’s students have made have convinced the principal to expand the reach of engaged reading throughout the high school. Amanda is a role model and a passionate, committed reader, both professionally and of Young Adult Literature she can recommend for the diverse needs of her students. Amanda knows her students and believes in them. She is responsive and reflective and sure to be an educational leader in Utah and beyond.

Allison Whitehouse is a 10th grade English teacher at Har-Ber High School in Springdale, Arkansas who has a contagious passion for reading. Her supervisors and her students attest to her deep understanding of books and how to unwrap their complexities for students. She pursues her own professional learning and has attended several conferences over the last year that impacted her work. She has a library that she describes as dated and dog-eared. She said, “I want to be able to buy books that illustrate several of the diverse cultures in our school, like our growing population of Pacific Islanders.” She knows she needs a supply of both fiction and non-fiction to engage and inform her students, and she invites teachers and community members in to do book talks in her classroom. Allison’s efforts are working. Parents now complain about students who skipped chores to read. We are excited to watch this young teacher’s career take off.

Marissa Widmer teaches middle and high school English to students in rural Strattonville, Pennsylvania. To answer our question on what to buy if she were to win this grant, she made a list of books she thought would appeal to boys. She then asked the boys to make a list and when they compared, their lists matched. Clearly she understands the interests of her students, but she has also reflected on what is missing in her library and is looking for a way to bridge that gap. She proposed a new contemporary young adult literature elective at her school this year which will feature *The Hate U Give* and encourage student choice. Marissa has sought out rich professional development opportunities and now is the school liaison to help other teachers grow as learners. We support her vision and love of reading.

Dax Zimmerman teaches high school English at Synergy Quantum Academy in Los Angeles, CA. He said, “When I find the right book for that reluctant reader, magic happens. And it’s happened. Students whom I had two years ago still come by to check out books, students who never would have considered themselves readers.” This happens because Dax is hungry to learn. In the last two years he has read dozens of professional books and then transformed his teaching. As his student, Naeurby said in her recommendation letter, “The thing is, students in South Central Los Angeles don’t see themselves in books; we don’t see a Latinx person running around in a wizarding school, we don’t see a black person living it up in the Upper East Side, more specifically, we don’t see our struggles mirrored back at us through a majority of books. Mr. Zimmerman has created an atmosphere in his classroom where we see ourselves in literature.” May all teachers teach with Dax’s empathy and vision.

Please help the Book Love Foundation extend its reach to hundreds of teachers next year. Donate at booklovefoundation.org.