



**BOOK LOVE**  
F O U N D A T I O N

## The Book **Love** Foundation Grants \$85,000 to Teachers Across North America

North Conway, NH (August 27, 2021) --The Book **Love** Foundation awarded 63 classroom library grants totaling \$85,000 to teachers in the United States and Canada in 2021. If you have any doubt about engaging today's busy students in reading, these teachers will convince you it is not about time and not about technology; it is about putting relevant, engaging books into students' hands and then carving out school time to read them. Our 2021 grant winners are extraordinary teachers who work at local, state, and national levels to inspire both students and colleagues. Every one of the 2021 grant recipient is creating a future generation of readers.

Since 2013, the Book **Love** Foundation has raised \$960,000 to provide more than 330 teachers (from 41 states and six provinces) with grants to build classroom libraries.

The Book **Love** Foundation also provides annual professional development to hundreds of teachers and leaders through a summer book club, which included 1350+ educators in 2021. We continue to receive generous support from [Booksource](#) and [Heinemann](#), as well as hundreds of individual donors. You can find out more about the Book **Love** Foundation at [booklovefoundation.org](http://booklovefoundation.org) or follow [The Book Love Foundation Podcast](#) with Penny Kittle (@pennykittle) and Julia Torres (@juliaerin80).

**Please help us celebrate our 2021 Book **Love** Foundation Grant Recipients:**

So much depends  
Upon a good book  
Just the right book  
That the student doesn't  
Know just yet, that book they don't  
know they're looking for  
That they can't find  
That is calling their name  
Their match, their one and only  
The book that completes them  
Inspires them, makes them laugh

Keeps them coming back  
Maybe makes them cry  
Can't wait to keep reading  
Can't wait 'til the end  
to grab another.

~**Simone Hobbs**, 2021 grant recipient

**Jose Alfredo Anaya** is currently a seventh year seventh grade English teacher at Horace Good Middle School in Garden City, Kansas. The students he serves at HGMS come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and speak a variety of more than 12 different languages and dialects including Burmese, Chin, Creole, K'iche, Oromo, Rohingya, Somali, Swahili, Tigrinya, Vietnamese, and others. Mr. Anaya has developed many ways to instill a love of reading in his students, including implementing flexible seating into his classroom to make students comfortable while reading, using book talks to share discussions about literature, and coming up with movie trailer projects to get students excited about sharing what they read. One of Mr. Anaya's favorite sights is when a student is really excited about the book they are reading. He loves when students ask questions, have comments, and show emotions about books and stories! Overall, Mr. Anaya believes that stories are what help us build the strongest human connections.

**Janae Atwood** just completed her first year of teaching 7th grade English at Hickory Middle School in Virginia. She is an avid supporter of choice and self-selected reading. Janae loves reading YA novels to show her students what she is interested in. She is known to have titles on her shelf that deal with social justice issues, race, social identity, and more; she pushes to have her classroom be a place where hard discussions can happen in a safe space. Janae's library is continually growing to reach all of her students' needs and interests. She knows that to reach those who "hate reading" she needs to help them find their perfect book. Janae will never stop reading and learning along with her students.

**Rachel Aupperlee** is entering her 26th year of teaching at Zeeland West High School in Michigan. "Book Guru" is the name a former student gave her in a recent message, a moniker she proudly claims. No curriculum has been more beneficial than giving her students the opportunity to choose their own books, work that is now central to classroom life. The volume her students read has grown dramatically, as has their enthusiasm. Her sincerest desire is for all students to fall in love with reading, to have a favorite book, to hear people discussing titles and ideas, and to grow in empathy and understanding of the world.

**Amelia Barnes** teaches 10th grade English at Southern Guilford High School in Greensboro, North Carolina. She has 7 years of teaching experience and serves as department chair, mentor to preservice and beginning teachers, district teacher-leader, co-director for the Piedmont Voices Writing Project, and vice president of the North

Carolina English Teachers' Association. She has been working to build a culturally responsive, student-centered classroom library for several years and is excited for the ways that the Book Love Foundation grant will help her with this mission. As a National Writing Project teacher-consultant, her passion is teaching students to find their voices as writers, but Amelia believes that the foundation of a strong writing culture must always be a strong reading culture. She is eager to fill her classroom with books that will inspire students to tell their own stories and celebrate their identities.

**Rachel Batson** has been teaching for 12 years and is currently at Urban Assembly Institute of Math and Science for Young Women in Brooklyn, New York. She is a warrior for choice reading and does whatever necessary to procure high interest texts that center young women of color for her students. In order to stay current, she reads at least 20 new YA books per year and delivers weekly book talks to her students to engage them in reading. When she moved to a dedicated 10 minutes of reading at the beginning of each class and weekly check-ins /conferences with her students, tracking what they liked, she saw a surge in independent reading participation. At the end of the 2020 school year, all of her 10th graders had read at least 7 books outside of curriculum. Many read even more, and others, who had been self-proclaimed nonreaders, found genres, themes, and authors they absolutely loved. Rachel believes in the power of reading to break down barriers of understanding, increase empathy, and provide true joy. Her first question to all her students (and to her friends) is always, "What are you reading?"

**Nicole Bichard** is entering her 21st year of teaching and her third year at Sooke Heartwood Learning Community (North Island Distance Education School) located on the unceded traditional territory of the T'Souke Nation. Her class focuses on compassionate communication, outdoor education, and social justice, and Nicole is building a classroom library that reflects these focus areas. She is committed to bringing inclusive literature into the classroom and into students' lives: "It's not enough to have books *about being* LGBTQ+, BIPOC, or neurodivergent - we need books that tell sweeping, dramatic, funny, enthralling stories with diverse heroes, villains, bystanders, and everyone in between." Nicole delights in seeing a student engrossed in reading a book that speaks to them - from novels to picture books to cookbooks to field guides! She is grateful for the support of BLF and looking forward to expanding her class collection.

**Megan Blaschek** is a high school English teacher who recently completed her first year of teaching at Chilliwack Secondary School in British Columbia, Canada. Megan is passionate about creating a reading culture in her classroom, where students have access to books that act, as Dr. Rudine Sims-Bishop said, as "mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors". She loves connecting students to books and watching them develop a love for literature. In her classroom, she places a high value on independent reading, and encourages students to self-select texts that speak to them as readers. Megan is also an advocate for social justice and uses the books in her classroom library to facilitate conversations about discrimination, equality, and marginalized communities. She hopes that through a powerful reading experience, her students will establish a

level of empathy and understanding towards all members of her school community. Megan looks forward to using her Book Love Foundation Grant to further expand her classroom library so that it is reflective of her diverse group of students.

**Amanda Blay** is a book lover and English teacher. This school year marks her third year teaching and she is currently at John Glenn High School in Westland, Michigan. She is a strong advocate for independent reading and curating a diverse classroom library for her students. She believes all students are readers, especially when they are given the time and the ability to choose their own reading material. Amanda would like to shout out her MSU and NCTE community for lifelong learning, encouragement, and support. She is grateful to have received this grant and is excited to share her love of reading with her students this school year.

**Danielle Brkich**, Ohio

**Maggie Bryant** is an 11th grade English teacher in Brandon, South Dakota entering her 7th year of teaching. She is the first teacher from South Dakota to ever win a Book Love grant and is ecstatic to build a classroom library that entices adolescent readers. Aiding students in their independent reading journeys always brings joy to Maggie's teaching; her favorite part of the year is helping students total their books read and celebrating their incredible reading successes! As a passionate advocate for literacy learning, Maggie consistently engages in discourses surrounding reading education and building cultures of literacy. In her district, and in her larger online professional circles, Maggie often shares her practices and supports other teachers who are beginning their journeys with independent reading in secondary classrooms. More than anything, Maggie wants students to recognize that everyone can appreciate and love reading, which in turn allows us to be curious and thoughtful change-makers in our communities and our world.

**Sara Jane Burke**, New Brunswick

**Jaclyn Cassello** is entering her 14th year of teaching English in Chicago Public Schools. She recently received her National Board Certification in English for Adolescence and Young Adulthood. She has been teaching in the International Baccalaureate Programme for the last nine years from sophomores all the way up to seniors. The IB Program encourages students to be global citizens and lifelong learners which leads to an easy connection into reading books that mirror our realities but also show the world of others. Sometimes, the curriculum can become taxing with its attachment to assessments and college credit, so independent reading quickly becomes both a gift and an opportunity for her students. And she wants them to always appreciate it for just that. Reading is joy. And by having a range of texts in a growing and diverse library, students are all able to find a book that they can cherish. We learn from each other through stories. We teach others about us through story. What better way to foster students to be citizens of the world than to have them embrace the stories of others?

**Jennifer Connolly** have been teaching high school English for over 20 years in the blue-collar, suburban St. Louis city of Granite City, Illinois. She earned her Masters' Degree in the Teaching of Writing and have become a Dual Credit instructor with Southwestern Illinois College, providing qualified students at GCHS access to first year college writing courses while still in high school. Jennifer truly saw wonderful things start to happen in her classroom when she built a library right inside her own classroom walls and made guided choice reading a priority for ALL of her students.

**Eryn Decoste** facilitates learning in English, Media Studies, History and Learning Strategies with teens at North Albion Collegiate in Toronto, Ontario. She is entering her 21 year of working and learning with students. Eryn views education as something that should center the student, student interest and student lived experiences in order to be a vehicle for empowerment and social justice. For over 20 years she has approached student learning "the way I would want someone to teach my kids...engage them, support them and empower them". She implements her ongoing professional learning around skills based curriculum and anti-oppression education to create a model of learning based on the tenets of social justice, centering the students, disrupting systemic oppression and critical thinking. Securing this grant for a class library will center the diversity of voices often marginalized and omitted in curriculum and literature. Student voice was centered when selecting books and students will choose what they want to read once books arrive. Ensuring student choice and centering the lived experiences of learners is how we empower, engage and instill a joy for reading. Eryn has enormous gratitude for the Book Love's foundation's mandate to help teachers create a space for the always magical, intellectual and transformative power of reading and immersing ourselves in the stories of others.

**Riley Dunn** is entering her 7th year of teaching the 9th grade scholars of Everett, Massachusetts. She is known in the halls as the loud teacher who loves talking about books - a reputation she is quite proud of. Everett is a community made up of so many different ethnicities, cultures, and dreams. Reading and connecting with her students over books is her favorite thing about this work. Three years ago, Ms. Dunn had a goal of building a diverse and inclusive classroom library so her students felt seen and valued in literature. Today, she has more than 250 titles in her classroom and will now be adding book club selections from this wonderful Book Love grant. Book clubs will allow students to read and engage in critical conversations with each other, while also developing empathy for others. Daily choice reading and conferencing with students has completely changed the dynamic of her classroom, and has empowered so many young minds to gain confidence and use their voices! She is so excited for another year of reading, learning, and growing together with her students. She truly believes that reading changes lives, one student at a time.

**Veronica Furfaro**, entering her sixth year in the classroom, teaches Junior High English at Fairfield Junior-Senior High School in Goshen, Indiana. She is an avid supporter of student choice and challenge in independent reading. Veronica works to curate her classroom library in a way that is responsive to the needs of students and

helps them learn about the world and themselves. She is a strong believer in building relationships by investing in students' experiences inside and outside of the classroom. She can often be found cheering in the stands, organizing a school event, coaching English Academic Team, or connecting with students through shared interests such as video games, Marvel movies, stories of her cats or the newest YA dystopian novel.

**Jessica Gault** teaches 5th grade at Jesse Boyd Elementary School in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The first half of her career was spent teaching children to read. Her focus has shifted toward helping students develop a true reading identity, while experiencing the world through books. Jessica stepped out of the classroom for three years to serve our students and teachers as a Middle School Literacy Coach. While that experience was truly rewarding and brought incredible insight into adolescent readers, Jessica's heart yearned for the classroom. This is her first year back in the classroom and she couldn't be happier. The classroom library is the hub of her room with mini-lessons, read alouds, and group discussions all centered there. This grant will be focused on students' requests for books. She cannot wait to see the impact that these books will have on her students as readers, writers, thinkers, and communicators.

**Allison Gorjian** teaches 6th and 7th grade ELA at Vista Middle School in Panorama City, California. She is the proud coach of the champion Vista Academic Pentathlon Team and also serves as ELA/ELD department chair for her school site. She loves helping her students find the freedom to explore themselves and the world through reading.

**Allyssa Graham** teaches 7th and 8th grade ELA in Newfield, NY and is going into her tenth year of teaching. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in Early Adolescence and English, and holds an M.Ed in Middle Grades Education. She is committed to social justice, and equitable and inclusive practices in and out of the classroom. Allyssa loves helping her students to rediscover their love for reading by promoting choice reading time and book talks daily. Over the last two years, she has focused her attention on improving the quality and quantity of books readily available for students, ensuring that all voices are heard and represented. She is an avid reader and thrives on sharing recent reads with her students to encourage them to pick up books that may be outside of their comfort zone.

**Martha Guarisco**, veteran middle school teacher at Episcopal of Baton Rouge, is a long-time champion of recreational reading not just for the academic gains it provides but also for the empathy it fosters and develops. This core teaching philosophy has been reinforced by a multi-year study on the relationship between literature and empathy development. Her classroom library is carefully cultivated, rooted in the belief that all students deserve to see positive reflections of themselves in the pages of books. She achieved National Board Certification, serves on the East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control, and enjoys writing fiction.

**Julia Guthrie** is a second grade teacher on a mission to transform the world through literacy. Julia was honored to be named New Jersey's Non Public Teacher of the Year



in 2018. Out of the classroom, she is pleased to serve as a co-organizer of #nErDcampNJ, an EdCamp-inspired conference with an exclusive focus on literacy instruction connecting teachers, librarians, administrators, and authors. Her greatest joy is getting to share books with students at the school where she learned to love reading: Notre Dame Academy in Palisades Park, New Jersey.

**Casey Hackett** has taught Grades 9-12 English at G.L. Roberts C.V.I. in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada for 17 years. Literature circles have been a central part of her department's reading instruction for more than 10 years, and she has been building her classroom library for independent reading in order to prioritize choice and volume. Learners are at the center of Casey's classroom where they create their own reading lists, and gradeless assessment promotes frequent self-reflection on skill development. Her favorite part of each class is when students read and she is able to confer with individuals - this is where the magic of uncovering students' thinking happens. When classrooms went virtual this past year, soft starts and conferring allowed that important connection to continue. She is ecstatic about being able to bolster her library in order to reach every student.

**Bethany Hands** has served as an English teacher at Largo High School in Upper Marlboro, Maryland for five years. As a long-time lover of literature and reading, it's been integral to Bethany's teaching practice to instill a love of reading in her students. She realized that providing students with more choice was the key to opening that doorway. Over the last two years, she's been growing and diversifying her classroom library in order to incorporate daily independent reading into her students' routine. This simple practice of daily reading has led to the creation of a Social Justice Book Club by the students within Largo's National Honor Society who wanted to take their reading further and engage in productive conversations about real-world issues reflected in the books they enjoy. She would like to sincerely thank the Book Love Foundation for their support in her work because this grant is more than just a grant. This grant represents excitement, wonder, and discovery--everything students experience when they finally pick up a book they love.

**Dailen Harris** began her second year of teaching this fall as a 7th grade English Language Arts teacher in the historic city of Selma, AL. With a majority of the school population, which is made up of approximately 99% African-American students, performing below grade level in reading, bridging the opportunity gap is at the core of Ms. Harris's mission. Although some students are not yet performing at grade level, they are all eager to have their big dreams realized through learning. By exposing students to Ms. Harris's diverse library filled with enticing stories, the hope is that students not only fall in love with reading but have their thirst for knowledge quenched and discover the infinite possibilities of their bright futures.

**Victoria Hiebert** teaches senior English in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, Canada. Her love for education and reading has helped to expose her to different ways to achieve her goals in these two avenues and includes methods such as book clubs, choice reading, and side-by-side learning. Victoria has taken it upon herself to encourage her

colleagues to read more by constantly recommending books for them from her ever-growing classroom library; she also began a staff book club this year to help engage other staff members. One of her favorite things that she is able to do in school is to confer with students about their reading, as well as sitting down with students and writing beside them, and being able to have numerous conversations with students, and future students, about what they are currently reading and what books they enjoy. Victoria is an avid reader and often finds herself implementing new ideas and books from her own readings in order to expand her classroom library in order to reflect her students' experiences while also exploring new ideas and stories that they have yet to have exposure to. She plans on continuing her constant encouragement for reading, both with her colleagues and students.

**Amy Hill** teaches first grade in Mineral Wells, Texas and has been teaching for 15 years. To many people, she is just another teacher trying to make a difference in the world, but to her students, she is their teacher, role model and someone who loves them unconditionally. Amy has a passion for reading and wants to instill that passion in her students. She builds relationships with them and to her, it's the most important part of teaching them how to read. She teaches her students the power of YET, a growth mindset that teaches children to believe they CAN. The book, *Giraffes Can't Dance*, is one of her favorite books to begin the year with to model diversity, acceptance, love, and self-confidence. She guides them in the right direction so each student knows they are different and unique, and she discusses those differences so they can understand them. Amy does a great job building a classroom culture of trust, positivity, structure, and acceptance. She considers her class "family" and wants her students to remember how she made them feel, so when they leave her classroom, they leave feeling loved and self-confident. Books are a bonus and they help teach so much more than just the curriculum. She will continue to utilize these books in her classroom library so her students can find books they love just as much as her.

"Settle in, settle down, get to reading" is a phrase borrowed from Pernille Ripp that **Simone Hobbs** says every class, every day with her sixth grade students at C.K.Price Middle school in Orland, California. Having taught in classrooms for about twenty years as a K-6th grade public and private school teacher, Simone constantly shares her joy of reading by giving her students multiple opportunities to read, in their rural community, creating a culture of kindness, teaching active listening and collaboration skills, engaging conversations called "table talk", and encouraging students to take books home, after checking them out using booksource classroom. Anyone who walks into Room 29 will instantly know what Simone is reading, what she will read next, and what she has just finished reading, because signs are constantly changing. These middle school book commercials help inspire students to learn about new authors and genres, and lay the foundation for a community of diverse readers. Along with building her students' passion for reading, Simone has been supporting other teachers to organize and expand their classroom libraries, creating more equitable reading selections.



**Dr. Tammy Holdip** is a 26-year veteran currently teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Lindley Middle School located in Mableton, Georgia. In the last 3 years Tammy has built her classroom library to house over 250 books, often funded by her own funds and donations. Creating a diverse library is an ongoing project and she makes a concerted effort to buy culturally inclusive books for her scholars. Tammy tries to ensure that her classroom library provides a mirror for her students—a world in which they can see characters and themes that reflect their identities and experiences and also expose them to a broader world.

**Amanda Holt** is currently in her 7th year of teaching at Immokalee Middle School in Florida. She teaches 6th grade ELA and Intensive Reading. Her students arrive in her classroom at a variety of reading levels. Often, they express they hate reading and it's her goal each year to change that. She incorporates choice reading daily. The students aren't confined to reading books at their "level" and they can read whatever piques their interest. With the Book Love Foundation grant she will be able to expand her current library to include even more books of various topics and levels for all to enjoy. She will never tire of seeing a student finally find a book they like and clamor to read it every free chance they get. Amanda is grateful to all of you who have made this possible.

**Cat Holub-Ward** teaches 1st grade at Monaview Elementary School in Greenville, SC. This is her 2nd year of teaching and she believes deeply in kid leadership, connection, and community. Working in partnership with families and young people is at the center of the classrooms she's a part of. Her teaching is rooted in the idea that students are the experts of themselves and grounded in the hope of classrooms being spaces for dreaming. To her, literacy is not narrowly defined but rather a collective creation between herself, students, and families. She is committed to learning from folks in the field and, in the past year, has attended the Abolitionist Teaching Network's yearly conference as well as professional development sessions led by Cornelius Minor, Dr. Ghody Muhammad, and more.

**Julie Hough** is entering her 9th year as a classroom teacher with the Trillium Lakelands District School Board. She currently teaches Grade 8 at Central Senior Public School in Lindsay, ON. Julie runs a dynamic classroom which includes project-based learning, a commitment to social justice and imparting her passion for literacy to her students. She is excited to see how the Book Love Grant allows her to increase the representation and breadth of texts that are available to her students this year. Julie believes firmly in Rudine Sims Bishop's philosophy that every book is either a mirror that reflects us back to ourselves, a window where we can see another world or a door that allows us to enter another world. She believes that a diverse, inclusive, and dynamic classroom library can lay the foundation for students to create a better world.

**Hillary Howard-Fredrick** teaches 11th-grade English at East Jessamine High School in Nicholasville, KY. As high schoolers, many of her students have lost interest in reading due to years of teacher-selected texts with little room for student choice or free reading. Her goal is to help students cultivate a lifelong passion for reading by providing them the time, resources, and moral support to discover books they love. In

order to build a robust classroom library of high-interest titles, Hillary spends her free time reading young adult novels herself so she can better tailor book recommendations for her students. She plans to continue adding more diverse titles so every student can find mirrors of their own lives and windows into others’.

**Kyle Jordan** is a tenth-grade English Language Arts teacher entering his eighth year of teaching. His Book Love journey began in Louisville, KY and travelled with him to Columbus, OH, where he has been teaching for the past 4 years at Horizon Science Academy. His students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and they know that his classroom is a safe haven for books and students alike. Teaching at a STEM school, Kyle strives to build a robust reading culture from within as there is not currently a central library at his school. He estimates that there are more books in his classroom library than in every other classroom combined. He works tirelessly to get the right books in the right hands every day. To him, there is no greater pleasure than the "nosiness of youth discovering great literature." Kyle is passionate about redefining how students think about themselves as readers and helping them to discover “literary greatness” on their own terms.

**Shelby Knapman** teaches English to students from grades ten through twelve in Delisle, Saskatchewan, Canada. This coming school year will be Shelby's sixth, and his third year at Delisle Composite. Early in his career, Shelby discovered the potential transformative power of the implementation of a workshop model in his classroom. Now, he is working to build and diversify his classroom library while enjoying the deeper connections forged and vast learning advancements made with his students as a result of reading, writing, and learning together, side-by-side.

**Sarah Krajewski** is entering her 20th year as an English teacher, and her 15th year at Cleveland Hill High School in Cheektowaga, New York. Throughout her career, she’s found that continuous learning is vital to her success. At school, Sarah is known for her ability to recommend titles that suit each reader, with teachers and students seeking her out. As one of her former students says, Sarah is “extremely adamant about sharing the joys of reading with others.” To get books into younger students’ homes, her Project LIT chapter started her district’s Family Literacy Fun Night where K-8 students leave a fun-filled, literacy-based evening with their own bag of books. She also sought out, and secured, funding for four Little Free Libraries around her district. In her classroom, students would describe Sarah as someone who empowers them through choice reading, writing, and conversation. As a teacher and learner, Sarah puts herself out there--mistakes and all--to model the constant need for self-improvement. Reading and discussing books about various races, cultures, and people has allowed Sarah to learn just as much from her students as she aims to teach them.

**Heather Levine** is entering her tenth year of teaching and her third year at the Lower School Academy Grade 9 in Lawrence, Massachusetts. After spending nearly a decade teaching English Language Arts, she is transitioning this year to teaching English for Multilingual Learners. Five years ago, Heather initiated a pilot independent reading program based on Penny Kittle's *Book Love* and collaborated with several colleagues at

her school to bring this program to life. Witnessing students develop their identities as successful readers and how that, in turn, can transform their mindsets about other educational experiences, has been such a rewarding part of her career. She now looks forward to exploring how a classroom culture that builds a love of reading can specifically help her emergent English learners find success. Heather further fosters a love of reading outside of the classroom as the advisor of her high school's book club.

**Heather Lippert** has been teaching for 15 years. She teaches Kindergarten in the Edmonds School District in Washington state, on the ancestral homelands of the Snohomish people. Heather holds National Board certification and has been an Early Learning Fellow for Washington State for the last three years. Much of her work and research in the classroom is rooted in trauma-informed education and social justice. Heather loves helping her kindergarteners find the stories that spark their imaginations, teach them more about the topics they love and open doors to new learning and adventures. The Book Love Foundation's support of literacy in Heather's classroom will allow her to expand her classroom library to make sure that all readers have access to books they love. Her students will get to start their Kindergarten through 12th grade journey with a deep foundation rooted in love of reading.

**Carrie Lyons** has loved reading her whole life, so it is no surprise that she became a Language Arts teacher with a passion for sharing great literature with kids. Currently, she teaches grade six at Dr. George Stanley School in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. As a middle school student, Carrie spent her days holed up in her bedroom, reading well after bedtime and half the next day. She felt affirmed in her identity when she read stories that echoed her experiences. When she read books that exposed her to new ideas or ways of being, she was convinced she'd unlocked some sort of secret code. Today, there is little that excites her more than watching as her students find the book that they just can't put down. She's a teacher who understands that students come to her class with their own interests, needs, backgrounds and curiosities. She is thrilled to have received a Book Love grant that has enabled her to purchase books that will meet her learners where they are at, affirm that they are who they should be, and maybe even push their thinking beyond where they expected it to go.

**Jordan Magrath** is a high school teacher in Colfax, WA. He recently founded an educational non-profit, titled Hear Our Stories, focused on purchasing diverse/inclusive books for teachers and students. He's been teaching English Language Arts for seven years and has created a robust definition of literature with his students. "Good literature" is artistically-crafted, is about human nature, and has the power to make one think or feel deeply. Jordan believes in exploring human nature through literature by bringing inclusive and diverse voices into the classroom, in order to combat bias and dangerous stereotyping. With this grant, he is going to create a more diverse and representative classroom library. His ultimate goal is to amplify underrepresented groups. He believes in the power of choice reading and hopes to make his classroom library more relevant to engage both avid and reluctant readers.

**Bryan Mammel** is an avid learner who teaches kids at San Marcos High School in central Texas. The content area he teaches those kids is first year English, and he is passionate about showing his students how rich life is when they read, write, speak, and listen with purpose. He is in his 3rd year as a full-time educator. He models the impact of daily reading and writing in his classroom and believes that every writer begins as a reader. Bryan centers his teaching practice on offering a range of diverse stories and lenses through which students visualize the world and their place within it.

**Robynn McFadden** has taught Grades 9-12 English for 22 years and is currently the English Curriculum chair at St. Peters CSS in Peterborough, Ontario. Always at the heart of her English classes is fostering a love of literature and ensuring students are engaged with texts which both challenge their thinking and encourage a love of reading. Robynn is ecstatic to win the Book Love Foundation grant for her classroom library as she can continue to add diverse books which will encourage her students to find themselves and learn about the world and experience of others in literature. Robynn's goals with her library and literature circles are for students to understand their world and all the challenges and successes of others in order to instill compassion, kindness and empathy. Lastly, Robynn wants to help her students to find books which will encourage a lifelong love of reading.

**Robin McGarry** is a High School teacher at McHugh Education Centre in Ottawa, Canada. He is entering his 7th year guiding students with complex mental health needs. They are in his class for a year to gain personalized skills, risk-take and build upon success before re-entering their community school. During this time, he is their only teacher and is thrilled to be able to provide an ever-growing selection of high-interest books in a cross-curricular manner to engage students in their learning and support the development of a healthy life-long reading habit. He really enjoys using books to help his students feel more comfortable talking about relatable characters thus de-personalizing conversations, decreasing mental health stigmas and championing students to work towards doable personal healthy living goals. He has experienced how great literature helps students to open up, participate in tough conversations and grow! As well, Robin believes it is important to use literature to support the development of student's critical thinking skills and bolster their ability to communicate their learning and reflect through writing.

**Lorrie McNeill** teaches seventh grade literature at Woodward Academy in Atlanta, Georgia. She has been in the classroom for 27 years. After many years of teaching, she completed an internship in 2008 at *The Center for Teaching and Learning* in Edgecomb, Maine, under the tutelage of Nancie Atwell. This experience not only changed her teaching style, but it changed her life. She returned to her classroom determined to give students a choice in reading. Her passion was featured by Motoko Rich in *The New York Times* in 2009. Since that time, she has changed schools, and introduced Woodward Academy to the reading workshop approach. Her middle school does not have a library in the physical building, it is across campus in the upper school, but she is diligently working toward building her own classroom library, filling it with the most current and compelling titles. She adheres to the "windows, mirrors, and sliding

glass doors" philosophy of Dr. Rudine Sims-Bishop and hopes to help students see not only themselves in books but also look into the various lives and experiences of others. Lorrie knows that her calling is to turn kids into lifelong readers, and this grant will continue to help her reach this goal.

**Thea Mills** is a 20+ year veteran literacy educator, whose experience ranges from elementary to secondary school teaching. She has earned a BFA in Theatre and a MEd in Literacy from East Carolina University, and pursued her doctoral studies at Vanderbilt University. Ms. Mills enjoys teaching humanities and languages, and her research interests include adolescent literacy practices and how adolescents develop identities as readers, writers and intellectuals. Ms. Mills is fortunate to work in Edgecombe County, NC where student literacy is well-supported, and daring leadership is modeled and embraced.

**Sarah Moulden** is beginning her 17th year of teaching at Wheat Middle School in Cleburne, Texas. She read *Book Love* the summer before her first year of teaching Reading/Language Arts for seventh graders, and she was incredibly excited to provide students with independent choice in their reading, focusing on growth and individual success. Moulden's strongest influence in love for reading and books comes from her mom. Moulden knows, however, that not everyone has experienced this legacy. She strives to be a reading advocate for students, bubbling up to overflowing with her passion for books and reading. She also endeavors to put as many books as possible into the hands of children over the course of the school year, helping them to see themselves and understand others.

**Laura Noble** is an English and Writing teacher at Leo Hayes High School in the small city of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. Laura's passion for feminism, world issues, and LGBTQ+ rights was manifested during her Master's degree in Education which focused on Inclusive and Comprehensive Sexual Education. Laura also is the Chairperson of "Speak Out!" – a provincial event held for students with a keen interest in debate, poetry, and the art of speechwriting. In her lessons, Laura loves connecting current real-world issues to popular non-fiction and fictional texts. Soon entering her eighth year of teaching, Laura is thrilled to be able to put new and exciting books in the hands of many young people to help them make connections to other texts, to the world around them, and to themselves.

**Melissa Pepper** is entering her third year of teaching English at Klein Forest High School in Houston, TX. She believes every student should have the opportunity to read books of their choice versus teacher selected novels. This is in part due to reading teacher selected novels in high school that she could not relate to or in some instances understand. Melissa plans to fill her room with books that are as diverse as her students. Over the course of her first two years, she was able to witness reluctant readers begin to enjoy Independent Reading Fridays. This grant will add the much needed diverse books that her classroom library is lacking. Melissa is excited to see her students transform into the readers she knows they can be. Thank you, Book Love Foundation, for giving her students this opportunity!



**Dalen Pointer** is an 8th grade ELA teacher at Warren T. Eich Middle School, an IB World School, in Northern California. She has been teaching for 22 years and is passionate about social justice, literacy and her students. She strongly believes in the power of books to change lives and to empower children and adults alike to live as the best versions of themselves. Dalen believes that every life can be changed and enhanced by the right book and works hard to connect her students with books that they will enjoy and relate to. Dalen has started a ProjectLit Book Club chapter at her school and is grateful for these books that serve, as Dr. Bishop coined, 'windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors' for the diverse students at Eich Middle School.

**Annie Preziosi** started teaching technology to students with emotional disabilities 12 years ago in Brooklyn, New York. Since then, she has taught special education for students in grades K-8, taken a four-year detour as a criminal defense investigator, and worked as an RTI coordinator. She has finally landed back in the classroom as a 4th/5th grade ELA teacher in New Orleans, LA, where she lives with her daughter. Annie has a bachelor's degree from NYU and a master's degree in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. In 2016, Annie was part of the first class of Personalized Learning Teaching Fellows through New Schools for New Orleans. She loves gardening, poetry, hip hop, comic books, drawing, and teaching high quality literature to kids.

**Suzanne Pruden** is an experienced high school educator dedicated to supporting her students and her colleagues at Godinez Fundamental High School in Santa Ana, California. As a teacher, Suzanne curates her own classroom library filled with diverse and contemporary books in order to help students reawaken their joy of reading and continue to explore the world and investigate their humanity. In her advanced junior English class, she centers books of choice and uses independent reading to extend the curriculum, to use for mini-lessons, and to have a commonality with students as part of a room of readers. As an instructional leader on campus, Suzanne guides the successful school-wide portfolio/senior interview program and the school-wide community reading initiative, both which contribute to her school's vision of academic success through student voice and choice.

**Kesha Rashed**, a learning specialist for 10th and 11th grade ELA in the Bronx, NY, is in her fourth year of teaching, and working on her EdD in Reading and Literacy. This will be her second year as the IEP teacher/ reading interventionist role in which she engages in assessments grounded in the science of reading to diagnose students' reading deficits. Once the core issue is determined, she fearlessly gets to work on interventions that are aligned to combat the reader's difficulty in being able to comprehend the text. She is an avid believer in students being given books that are complex in nature as well as aligned with student's interest as this is how we push the envelope to ensure literacy success for all. Reading is the key to opening doors for so many opportunities within one's lifetime. Her learning philosophy is that all children can and deserve to become literate members of society by being enabled to think independently and critically, learn about themselves as well as others while not being



subjected to teaching to the test instructional practices. With the grant, she plans to invest in books that will unlock students' mindset of resisting reading and opening them up to a world of unlimited possibilities that are found within books.

**Carina Romagnoli** is a grade 8 ELA teacher in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She holds her Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Administration and serves as Secretary on the Manitoba Reading Association executive. Carina is passionate about building the reading lives of students in her school and works to connect each student with a book they will love. Carina is continually building her classroom library to meet the needs and interests of her students and is thrilled to be a recipient of the Book Love Foundation grant which will help to further diversify her shelves. Through her love of literacy, Carina's goal is to help her students become curious and empowered readers, writers, and thinkers. One of her greatest joys is watching her one-year-old daughter develop a genuine love for books and reading.

**Kristina Rovison** is entering her second year of teaching at an alternative education high school in rural Western New York. She is a voracious reader with a passion for storytelling and creative self-expression. Kristina strives to make her classroom a place of inclusivity and criticality, challenging her students to reflect on their stories, identities and biases while voyaging to discover more about themselves and the world. Her classroom library is the only source of modern, culturally sustaining books in the school, and she is eager to expand her titles to include more BIPOC authors. Kristina's goal is to use independent reading practices to encourage each student to find a story that both reflects their identities while also pushing them to think about their role in larger critical social spaces.

**Yancy Sanes** teaches at Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in the South Bronx. The same school he graduated from in 2014. He finds it important and rewarding to be teaching in the same school he graduated from because he's able to give back to his community, but more importantly kids can see people who look like them in these types of fields. Him and his co-teacher recently published a book, *South Bronx Adventures: Teaching During a Pandemic*. The book goes into detail about their successes and failures while teaching during a long and grueling year.

**Kerri Shimek** is a sixth grade ELA teacher at Brillion Middle School in Brillion, WI. She is in her 24th year of teaching. She earned her Master's in Reading, and is a Kohl Teacher Fellowship winner. She is a literacy leader on her staff and committed to building a culture of reading school wide. The heart of her curriculum is her approach to nurturing each student's reading identity and focusing on developing lifelong readers. An avid reader herself, she believes the value of reading is immeasurable -- fostering empathy, providing safe spaces to explore ideas, validating identity and experiences, and granting an escape from everyday life when needed. Kerri's Book Love Foundation grant money will be spent on diverse titles that help her rural students reflect on their world and the world waiting for them.

**Dara Sliva** is in her 10th year of teaching elementary school with Waco Independent School District in Waco, TX. She is a certified Master Reading Teacher, Apple Educator and Bilingual Educator. Her teaching experience has been in 3rd-5th grade and she is currently a 4th grade Reading Language Arts teacher at Bell's Hill Elementary. She is passionate about developing lifelong readers and writers in her classroom community. This grant will allow her to expand a small classroom library with more diverse and fresh book choices for her students. Her goal this school year is to be a model in prioritizing a love of reading in students over testing.

**Glorimar Quinones Skipps** is entering her 8th year as a reading teacher in Memphis, TN, and has never been more convinced of her ability to cultivate a love for reading in her students. After reading *The Book Whisperer* by Donalyn Miller, Glorimar decided to launch an in-class 30-book challenge with her 6th graders at the Collegiate School of Memphis. She joins her students in the challenge and adjusts curriculum to ensure this challenge occurs every year. "At Collegiate, all faculty, staff, and students pause for 15 minutes of pleasure reading every day. Teachers and students are always chatting about their current reads and what's next on their list! I decide to take it up a notch by ensuring my students keep track of their reading and begin to see themselves as lifelong readers."

**Hayley Sullivan** is a first-grade teacher at A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, NC. During her undergraduate career, Hayley worked as a research assistant for 2 years on a large College of Education literacy grant. This grant provided literacy-specific, intensive induction support to first year and second year teachers in grades K-2 who work in about 15 high-need school districts in North Carolina. Hayley is now going into her second-year teaching at a diverse school with a vision of every student becoming a leader. Hayley has a passion for providing students "windows and mirrors" through the literacy in her classroom; mirrors being books that provide students with the opportunities to see themselves in what they read and feel valued and represented in the classroom - windows providing students with perspectives and experiences outside of their own. She is committed to maintaining an inclusive and relevant classroom library.

**Brendaly Torres** is a Bronxite who has been serving her community as an educator supporting multilingual learners' literacy acquisition as an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher for over a decade. She currently teaches at International Community High School, a progressive project-based public school, situated in the vibrant South Bronx that has been dedicated to educating newly arrived immigrants. As an ENL and Literacy teacher, she focuses on using culturally responsive pedagogical practices and strategies, focused around diverse voices, experiences and perspectives. As an avid reader herself, her goal is to inspire a love of literacy in all students and teachers she works with.

**Kelli Traber** has been teaching for 23 years in Columbus, Ohio, currently at Daniel Wright Elementary in the Dublin City Schools. Teaching first grade for the past five years, Kelli is returning to a fourth grade classroom and cannot wait to immerse her

students in a classroom filled with rich and diverse books. She deeply believes that all students can develop a passion for reading through access to quality titles and models—people who know them and can help match them with books to help them fall in love with reading. Her love for reading originates from teachers throughout her own life that helped carve out her own reading identity. Kelli is eager to place the right books into the hands of her students to encourage them as readers and writers. She sees the shared experiences of literacy as the vehicle to creating young change makers in Room 226, and she has no doubt that books will help inspire her students to find and use their power to make our world a better place.

**Brett Walker** is an 18-year veteran English teacher in Ontario, Canada. He is also the Department Head of English at St. Pius X Catholic High School in Ottawa. Literacy development has always been a focus in his various roles in the schools where he has taught. His other passions include video games, football, and obscure trivia. Brett believes that it only takes one book to hook a reader for life. For him that book was *The Jordan Rules* by Sam Smith. He is also a big fan of Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time*. With this grant he hopes to add books that will resonate with students and spark that love of reading that stays with a person for a lifetime.

**Destiney Warren** is a fourth year teacher at Porterville Military Academy in Porterville, California. She is passionate about reading herself and loves to encourage students to develop rich reading lives. This grant is going to help her develop her classroom library to include diverse texts for all grade levels (since she teaches 7-12). She is so grateful for the opportunity and gives a special thanks to her former Orosi High School colleagues for supporting her and her students and helping her integrate choice reading in all kinds of curriculum.

**Rachel White** is a high school reading teacher at Washington Technology Magnet School in St. Paul, MN. She is entering her 18<sup>th</sup> year of teaching and her second in high school. She has her K-12 reading license and her MS in Education Innovation and Technology. She is building a workshop model in her reading classes of 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Students will be independent reading, participating in books clubs, and working to build their vocabulary. One of Rachel's top priorities is book choice and having a wide selection of books that represent the lives the students she teaches. She is working to build confident readers. She spent years building her elementary classroom library with diverse texts and is now building her high school classroom library. Rachel is an emerging leader who wants to impact teachers of all content areas to build strong readers.

**Rachel Woolley** has been teaching in Dual Language programs in elementary and middle school for 18 years. She has always chosen to teach in Title I schools in Brooklyn, New York, where she lives and is passionate about sharing her love of reading in both Spanish and English with her students; she believes that this is a wonderful way to explore ideas and to build empathy for others and understanding of the world around us. Rachel has presented at national and international education

conferences, including the National Association for Bilingual Education, the New York University Dual Language Symposium, and Bank Street College of Education.