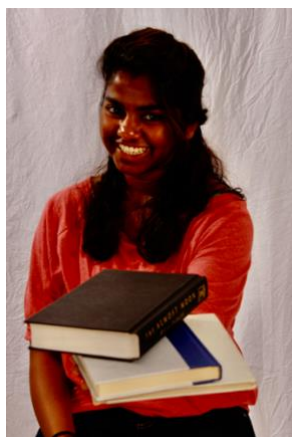




The Book **Love** Foundation Grants \$48,000 to Teachers in North America

North Conway, NH (September 26, 2024) –It’s a great day for reading! The Book **Love** Foundation awarded 58 teachers in the United States and Canada grants totaling \$48,000 this summer. The books, chosen to meet the needs and interests of students K-12, have been shipped, unpacked, and placed in students’ hands.



If you have any doubt about engaging today’s young people in reading, Book **Love** Foundation grant recipients 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 2024 grant winners are extraordinary teachers who work at local, state, and national levels to inspire both students and colleagues. Grant winners are consultants, poets, and authors, sharing their learning at conferences and in our Teacher to Teachers meetings in our online community. Every one of our 2024 grant recipients is creating a future generation of readers.



Since 2012, the Book **Love** Foundation has raised more than \$1M to provide more than 500 teachers (from 41 states and six Canadian provinces) with grants to build classroom libraries. And we do this with the sweat of incredible volunteers so we can ensure that **100% of donations** fund classroom libraries.


The Book **Love** Foundation provides ongoing professional learning opportunities to our more than 2100 members of the **Book Love Community** at <https://book-love-community.mn.co>. We have a monthly book study, regular author interviews, conversations about books we love, and often, the contagious, joyful energy all teachers need to continue this hard work. Join us!


The Book **Love** Foundation receives generous, ongoing support from hundreds of individual donors, authors, consultants, foundations dedicated to literacy, and from Bookelicious. You can find out more at booklovefoundation.org and read our monthly newsletter featuring book talks, links to interviews, and professional learning...**Book Love Buzz.**




Please help us celebrate our 2024 Book Love Foundation Grant Recipients:




 **Frederick Alvarez** is a special education teacher at P721R, The Hungerford School, a District 75 Special Education School for students with special needs in Staten Island, New York. During his six-year tenure, he has run the school's library cart program, teaching his students customer service skills and social interaction skills all while spreading the love of reading. Students have said that the library cart desperately needs an update, and though "Mr. Fred," as his students know him, has always worked to get the students the books they request, the Book Love Foundation grant will go a long way in assuring that the students get books that match their desires and needs.


 **Kelly Anderson** is a wife, mother, teacher, and learner who has a total of 12 years teaching English Language Arts. For the past seven years she has been teaching at North Mesquite High School, her alma mater. She realizes that students will rise to our expectations. The rising is much easier if a teacher can tempt them with a book that interests them, looks different from what she read in high school, and if she listens to them tell her about what they notice. Kelly looks for books that look like her students, sound like her students, and have the intelligence and tenacity of her students. Kelly believes books are our gateway to another world, to different viewpoints, and fill our minds with wonder. Books cause us to question our reality. Kelly says that conferring, suggesting, listening, and asking questions have enabled her students to become braver readers and for them to express why they like or dislike different books.




 **Sarah Anderson** is a second year high school teacher in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Her reading and writing journey began as a middle years student to two incredible educators who based their practice on choice, voice and agency. She credits her time in their class as having helped her gain the voice and confidence necessary to become a teenage author, advocate, motivational speaker, and eventually one of few wheelchair users serving on the frontlines of education in the province. Sarah's mission is to help her students find and strengthen their voices. Although it is early in her career, Sarah has already witnessed how quality literature can be windows and mirrors for her students, motivating them to make unique connections and find their own words. Sarah is grateful to be a recipient of the Book Love Foundation grant because it will help her expand book options and build a classroom library that ensures students feel represented, heard and inspired.


 **Christine Bell** teaches at Chilliwack Secondary School in BC, Canada. Her favorite courses are Humanities, English and Philosophy. She loves to read! She has been teaching for four years, and she finds that her students really connect with her classroom library. She is thrilled to be able to grow her collection and introduce new, exciting novels to students. She is a strong believer that anyone can become a reader if they have access to the right tools. She hopes to provide an inspiration for young people to connect with stories and build their literacy and communication skills.




 **Carly Black** is in her 21st year teaching. Most of her career has been in the middle grades, but she now teaches freshman English at Hillsdale High School in Jeromesville, OH. Any of her students will tell you that she is obsessed with books! Their classroom library is always growing. It's like Christmas anytime a box of books arrives! Book talks are a staple in the classroom. Students often comment about how much they love the classroom library. Her students are currently taking their book club conversations to the next level with podcasting.

 **Victoria Bourque** has just wrapped up her fifth year of teaching after a fulfilling fifteen-year career in community work. At St. Matthew's High School in Ottawa, ON, Canada, she brings her passion for English to life, inspiring her high school students every day. One of her most rewarding opportunities has been introducing grade 11 English courses that shine a spotlight on the voices of Indigenous peoples, featuring Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit literature. Additionally, she's championed innovative gradeless pedagogy in the grade 10 English program. Victoria's dedication goes beyond curriculum development; she has meticulously curated a vibrant classroom library that mirrors the diverse experiences of her students, ensuring they see themselves represented in the books they read. The Book Love Foundation grant will further support her mission to foster a love for reading by filling her library with high-interest books, keeping a strong reading foundation at the heart of teaching.





 **Sara Bratcher** remembers being in elementary school and reading way past her bedtime using the light from the hallway. She has not slowed down and has a sustained love for reading and a passion for sharing books with her high school students. After a 15-year career teaching reading in the elementary grades, she boldly moved to secondary and is now a Pre-AP English 1 teacher at Bentonville High School in Bentonville, Arkansas. Sharing books with students who can see themselves in the characters has been paramount to watching their personal growth, understanding of their peers, appreciation for the world around them, and appreciation for the written word. Many of her students this past year shared that her classroom was the first time that they felt that reading was a welcoming and warm experience. Many students had only seen books as a school requirement and found joy in

the many worlds and stories that they could be transported to through the pages. Students regularly add to the classroom wish list when they encounter a title or an author not currently on the classroom library shelf. This Book Love Foundation grant will help Sara build her classroom library to allow for more student choice allowing all readers to find characters and stories that they can connect with.

 **Shelly Campbell** teaches AP Language, AP Literature, and American Literature at John Marshall High School in Oklahoma City. She also sponsors student council, NHS, and the senior class. Shelly began her career at John Marshall and is still there 30 years later. Her husband is also a teacher at John Marshall and teaches physical education. Always up for a thrift store or garage sale, Shelly is always purchasing books for her students to enjoy. Leaving little notes in each with a rating is her way of helping kids pick what they want to read and know that they will have someone to share their reading experience with once finished. Wanting students to read for the love of reading, Mrs. Campbell has made all different genres accessible to her students and encourages them to create book clubs with their friends. Shelly's goal for the Book Love Foundation Grant is to continue providing books for students, gather more books that interest her male students, and provide sequels for the books she already has made available.




 **Mary Cheslock** is an educator who believes in prioritizing reading in her classroom. She is in her 7th year of teaching and loves teaching her 3rd graders yearly. She believes reading is not just about learning and maintaining comprehension but is also a fun way to share creativity and explore new things. One of Mary's beliefs is that all students should be able to have access to books that they love and want to pick up and read. She believes in providing books to all students with different backgrounds, cultures, and course identities. She wants to thank the Book Love Foundation for this opportunity to include books that she never thought she would have a chance to get for her classroom.


 **Grant Creech** is entering his 10th year of teaching and his first year in a new grade. After spending the first chunk of his career teaching Grade 7, he is moving up with a whole cohort of students to the more mature world of Grade 8. He's bringing his teaching partner along with him, and both are super excited about the Book Love Foundation Grant, as they have BOTH won. Grant works at a brand new school in Kitchener, Oak Creek Public School, and while his partner works across the city at a different school, they are constantly in contact and sharing book recommendations for their students (and just as much for each other). Reading has always been a huge part of Grant's life. From an early age, he was devouring books, and that love of books is the driving force behind his teaching philosophy. It was in his first year that he really saw the power of books to engage students, not just in reading, but in social justice as well. As our classrooms grow increasingly diverse, and our world becomes seemingly more polarized by the day, books provide an easy

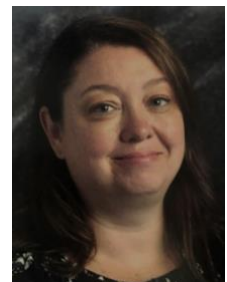



avenue into serious discussions. A classroom without overflowing bookshelves is not something he wants to imagine. Book clubs in the classroom are an integral part of Grant and Olivia's classrooms. Students are consistently discussing racism, poverty, and all forms of social justice movements in their classrooms, and even spilling those conversations over into other classes too. With the Teri Lesesne Book Club Grant, they are working to develop two new book clubs' sets, one focused on historical fiction and the other focused on books that feature mixed media formats. The money will go a long way to creating socially-conscious life-long readers.




 **Melissa Cruz** is a fourth year 10th and 12th grade English teacher at Early College High School in Orange County, California. A first generation college student and the daughter of immigrants, she knows first-hand the power and importance of literacy; it is a foundational skill to functioning, succeeding, and being seen in society. Teaching at a campus with a high population of students that reflect her upbringing, she knows that offering students' book choices is pivotal to creating an environment that cultivates agency in student learning and deepens the various literacy skills students will need to meet their college/career goals. One of her favorite things about teaching English is playing the matchmaking game and finding the perfect novel for a reluctant reader. Nothing is more satisfying to her than hearing the words, "Okay, but why is this book actually kind of good Ms. Cruz?" Without a library on her high school campus, students' reading choices are limited to class instruction; she is hoping to cultivate a desire to read for pleasure/fun in expanding her classroom library through her awarded Book Love Foundation grant.


 **Amy DePasquale** is beginning her 27th year at Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School, in Franklin, Massachusetts. Currently, she teaches a variety of college preparatory, honors and advanced placement courses in grades 9, 10 and 12. Additionally she serves as the English Department Facilitator, a SkillsUSA advisor, a Mentoring Program coordinator and the Book Club advisor. Amy's passion for reading was reignited during the pandemic when she recognized the profound social emotional benefits of reading beyond its academic and entertainment value. As a result, Amy set out to share her passion for reading with her students and change how some of her students viewed reading. To achieve this, she worked to create a book culture in her classroom by curating a collection and displaying young adult titles to peak her students' interest. She also began the daily practice of silent sustained reading in her classes in which students have a designated time to read each day. High-interest, diverse titles coupled with time for choice reading fosters a love of reading in her students, as well as affording them time to take a few minutes to take a breath and decompress in an otherwise busy high school day. Amy has witnessed the positive impact of regular, choice reading on her students. Often when she enters the classroom, she can hear students sharing the latest developments in their books and recommending them to classmates, as well as requesting the next book in a series that they have discovered and love. She will continue to curate her classroom library so that she can find "that" book for each of her students, the book which she hopes will ignite or sustain their passion for reading.

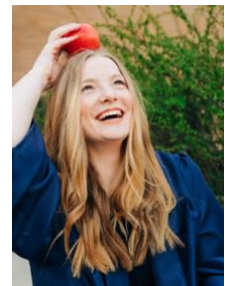


 **Amber Dues** has 18 years of dedicated teaching experience and is a seasoned educator with a profound commitment to nurturing a love of reading and learning in her classroom. Her classroom is a vibrant hub where students embark on exciting literary adventures. Students are able to find an escape into a different world in whichever way it speaks to them. By crafting engaging and immersive activities, she inspires students to become lifelong learners. Amber understands that the key to fostering a genuine passion for reading lies in creating positive associations with books. Therefore, she prioritizes building a diverse library that caters to a wide range of interests and reading levels. Amber's teaching philosophy revolves around the belief that every child can find a book that ignites their imagination and curiosity.





 **Bobbi Edwards** is entering her 20th year as an elementary school teacher, her 19th in 6th grade! She is heading into her 5th year teaching at Silver Lake Elementary in Eagle Mountain, Utah. She is passionate about teaching and trying to build connections with every child that she encounters. She wants to help them build confidence in themselves and their own abilities. Bobbi is an avid reader. She was raised by her grandparents who instilled a love of reading and learning, reading her to sleep every night and taking more books than clothes on vacations! Books have been what saved and steadied Bobbi in her own life. As a teacher, helping students find connections and safety in books is what she has aspired to do every year with each student that enters her classroom. Books are the way to find answers, escape difficulties and discover unknown joy. With the help of the Book Love Foundation Grant, Bobbi plans to more deeply root book clubs into her classroom especially to expose children to diverse perspectives and more nonfiction. She is excited and very grateful for the Book Love Foundation Grant!

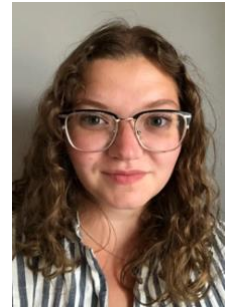
 **Emma Eversole** is a teacher of three years and has taught 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade. She currently teaches at Adams Elementary School in Logan, Utah. Emma has her bachelors in Elementary Education with a Teaching English to Second Language Learners minor and recently completed her masters in Curriculum and Instruction. Emma is currently working on her math and STEM teaching endorsements. Emma loves teaching and making learning for each of her students engaging and personalized. She loves helping students find books to help them fall in love with reading as well. She gives students books to help promote reading at home. She is always looking for new engaging and diverse books. She is so grateful for this grant as she will be able to get books that will represent more closely her diverse group of students.







 **Lorelei Fabro** was born in the Philippines and immigrated to the United States during elementary school. She grew up realizing that books around her didn't reflect herself or her culture. This is her 20th year of teaching within the Irvine Unified School District. Presently, she serves as a teacher at Woodbury Elementary School, where she passionately teaches a diverse group of 32 second-grade students. Throughout her teaching career, she has taught 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th grade students. She has also served as the school's TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) where she took on administrative roles and coached grade level teams in their Professional Learning Communities. She mentored new teachers as a Primary Literacy Mentor and Student Teacher Mentor. This past year, she was chosen by her professional peers and colleagues as the school's Teacher of the Year. This is her greatest honor to represent her fellow teachers at the district's annual Excellence in Teaching Awards Ceremony. Lorelei's hope for the Book Love Foundation grant is to have a classroom library to reflect her student population.

 **Sarah Fairfull** is beginning her fifth year of teaching overall this fall, and her fourth-year teaching grade 8 and 9 students at New Horizons School in Sherwood Park, Canada. She feels privileged to be able to work in an environment with creative colleagues and wonderful, curious students. She has a Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta and has written book reviews for her local teacher's union with the aim of promoting diverse novels. Sarah has been an avid reader her whole life and feels incredibly lucky to be able to share this love every day at work. Reading is, ultimately, a practice in empathy that is vitally important in this ever-changing world (and for the everyday perils of a junior high student). It is Sarah's goal to make reading accessible to her students, ensuring that her students have access to everything from traditional novels to graphic novels to novellas to audiobooks. She works hard to ensure her students also have access to books that reflect them as windows, mirrors, and doorways, and challenge them at an appropriate level.




 **Kathy Ferguson** is a 5th grade teacher at Pleasant Grove Public School in Shawnee, Oklahoma. This will be her 14th year teaching, and she has taught 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. Kathy never considered herself a reading teacher until she fell in love with reading children's literature during her 8th year of teaching. Now, she reads to her students daily, while also requiring the class to read alone, read with a partner, and read in small groups. Reading has come alive in her classroom and several former students have reached out to her saying her classroom was the best because of the books she read to them. Kathy is always looking for new content and applicable ways to push life lessons through books she reads to the class. Finding books that truly interest each individual student is a passion for her and she strives to make reading fun and relatable. She also strives to make a connection through all subjects, as her classroom is self-contained. Kathy feels that you can incorporate all levels of books within the classroom and shouldn't just focus on the child's reading level. Lower-level


books are great for 5th grade writing, 1/2 point books are great for holiday reading fun and bring back memories of students' past school years, and articles through the Renaissance system are great for bringing Social Studies and Science to the reader in a nonfiction format. As a Book Love grant recipient, she's excited to extend her classroom library with more nonfiction books that interest all readers

 **Olivia Cummings Galbraith** swore she would never teach middle school, but after her first day there nine years ago, she realized her mistake and has never looked back. She loves talking about great new books with her students, even if they tease her for never sticking to self-imposed book-buying bans. She's spent the past five years teaching grade 7 in Kitchener, Ontario, and is nervous-excited about moving up to grade 8. Joining her in this adventure is her teaching partner Grant, who deserves credit for not giving up hope of them both winning the Teri Lesesne Book Club grant. It's a good thing, too, because they have a lot of ideas about new book clubs to try with the same cohort of readers! Even though the students of her 130-year-old downtown school seem on the surface to be a totally different crowd than those at Grant's brand new school in the suburbs, they notice the same thing every year: diverse books provide powerful windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors for all students (per Rudine Sims Bishop), allowing them to feel seen, and to see others and the world in a new way. Participating in multiple book clubs over the course of the year allows Olivia and Grant's students to get into deep, real conversations about how our world works to uphold systems of power. Since the pandemic, they've noticed students have really been into mysteries, thrillers, and learning about other cultures (sparked by Ruta Sepetys' *I Must Betray You*). They're combining those passions to create a book club set of historical mysteries featuring non-Western perspectives. Another trend they've witnessed is mixed-media books (like Tommy Greenwald's *Game Changer* or Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*), so they want to build a set of books from diverse authors that play with structure in interesting ways. Over the past two years, Grant and Olivia have tried out thematic literary salons (per Rebekah O'Dell/Moving Writers), so they are excited for how the books they purchase with the grant funds can be used beyond solely book club!





 **Alex Grapp** once skipped nap time to read Calvin and Hobbes and has loved reading ever since. After going back to school for a career in teaching, he's been teaching at Ames High School in Iowa for the last three years. Alex believes in the power of books in young people's hands to give voice to their dreams and ideas. Students in his classroom make choices about which books to read, what to write, and what arguments to defend. Alex tries to be an active reader and writer to show students what those habits can look like, with all their challenges and benefits. Alex is openly gay and has a passion for supporting students in the LGBTQ+ community. He believes in the words of

James Baldwin, "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read."

 **Olivia Gundrum** is a 9th and 10th grade English teacher at Academy of the Americas in southwest Detroit. This is her 3rd year teaching, and her students fill her life with joy and passion! Academy of the Americas is a dual immersion school where students learn in both English and Spanish. Olivia's work is centered in ensuring that all students are learning the English language and developing a love of books. Her school does not have the space or funding for a school library, and so Olivia has strived to make her classroom library as expansive as possible. As a Book Love grant recipient, she is eager to grow her collection of graphic novels, bilingual books, and other texts that are accessible to English Language Learners!





 **Dawn Herbert** teaches freshmen at Farmington High School. She has been in the school district for 13 years, teaching ELA for only two. Her passion for reading began very early. She was reading at the age of four, and her fondest memory of elementary school was being allowed to read to the class while her teacher graded papers. She even started a book club in first grade. Dawn loves that through reading, we can gain perspective and live a thousand lives. Dawn was weary from dragging kids through standards using novels she read to them. She was spoon feeding kids who were capable of great thoughts. She teaches high school because their minds fascinate her, but she hadn't seen many kids using theirs. They were parasitically getting through school on Dawn's thinking. Dawn is looking forward to using the Book Love grant to put great literature at the fingertips of her students. So many skills we need for life can and will be acquired through reading. Social empathy, which we often lament is disappearing, is a book away from any of our students. If we can turn students into avid readers, we have enriched their lives in so many ways, and hopefully steered them toward greatness and away from lifestyles that steal their futures. Dawn believes unequivocally in the power of a story told. She loves the power of words on a page. She loves the community reading offers students and teachers. The unity within our reach is just a shared book away.

 **Kerry Herlihy** teaches 9th-grade English on a humanities team at Casco Bay High School, a public expeditionary high school in Portland, Maine. This will be her 32nd year of teaching and she still finds great joy in connecting students to their undiscovered passion for reading. In addition to her work in public schools in Maine, Kerry has taught in Boston, New York City, Louisiana, and began her teaching career in Los Angeles. She has taught almost all grade levels from pre-kindergarten through college and has also taught adult learners. She believes deeply in the power of reading to transform lives at any age. When she is not teaching or reading, you can find her swimming in the coldest water she can find.







 **Courtenay Hnatiw** is a grade 7 teacher in Winnipeg Manitoba. She just transferred schools to Edmund Partridge school and was at James Nisbet Community school prior. She is in her second full year teaching all subjects, but ELA is her favorite! Courtenay loves helping kids find what they enjoy reading while creating an atmosphere that encouraged sharing what her students are reading. Through personal goal setting her students have a goal to work towards those changes throughout the year, with every goal met being celebrated. During read aloud time students are encouraged to sketch the images that go through their mind as they're listening, helping to strengthen their imagery when they are reading by themselves. Reading is a part of our everyday routine and students always know what they are reading currently and what they are going to read next. This helps to lessen time spent looking for books when it is time for reading. Courtenay also loves implementing book clubs and seeing students take initiative to keep these going as they finish their guided book clubs. This grant from Book Love Foundation will allow her to start to build a classroom library that will contain diverse cultural representation that will directly reflect the diverse students that she teaches and that will have kids excited to get books in their hands. It will also help students have the opportunity to have choice in what they are reading by being able to offer them more than she would be able to without the extra support.


 **Heidi Isenbarger** teaches English as a foreign language at the elementary level, from kindergarten to 5th grade. One of the most exciting projects she has worked on is the bilingual book check-out systems, which lets students borrow books in both English and their home language. Heidi's students love reading in both their native language and English. She knows it's really important that families feel their native language is valued. Students enjoy reading at home with their families, which helps them learn and grow. She is looking forward to stocking her classroom bookshelves with more bilingual and diverse books. These books will represent the students' home languages and have diverse characters that reflect the amazing diversity in her classroom.




 **Marni Jacobs** is about to begin her fourth year teaching ELA to 12th graders at Coweta High School in Coweta, Oklahoma. Her love of reading began in elementary school with the Berenstain Bears. Marni's passion for offering students choice and time for reading in her classroom came from conversations she had with students while completing her student teaching. Students told Marni they had stopped reading for themselves in junior high school when books were chosen for them by their teachers. Many told her they had loved reading at school until then. These conversations inspired her to create time and choice in her classroom for students to discover a love of books that had been lost or maybe never found. Marni is grateful for the Book Love Foundation grant which will help her offer choices to her students.

 **Aryana Angel Jharia** is an artist, healer, and educator from Canton, Michigan. She is currently student-teaching at Washtenaw International High School and graduating from Eastern Michigan University in December of 2024 with a Bachelor's degree in English/Language Arts Teacher Education. She is involved in union work and currently serves as President of Aspiring Educators of Michigan, the student affiliate of the Michigan Education Association. She is also a Vedic Astrology and Tarot and Oracle reader. Aryana is an advocate for human rights, accessible sexual education, and racial social transformation. Her goal is to bring healing to marginalized communities by spreading truth through storytelling and books. When truthful education is taught in schools, restoration occurs and intergenerational traumas are healed. Her history classes were often filled with reading secondary sources and summaries. In her ELA classes, she was given the opportunity to read primary texts that told a firsthand account of His-story, Her-story, and Their-story. She is excited to receive this grant from the Book Love Foundation and to use a majority of the funds to purchase banned books in America and other impactful inclusive literature. Aryana has self-published two books of poetry to amplify her own voice and to inspire her students to utilize their own. Aryana believes that through writing and storytelling, the societal pre-written narrative can be rewritten.





 **Ari Kaiser** is a dedicated educator at Jeffco Open in Lakewood, Colorado, where she teaches 1st and 2nd grade. With six years of teaching experience, Ari's enthusiasm for education shines through in her commitment to creating enjoyable and interactive learning experiences. She is particularly passionate about helping students discover books that resonate with their interests. Ari fosters strong connections with each student, ensuring they find both familiar reflections and new perspectives in their reading materials. Her excitement matches that of her students when discovering new books, and she actively seeks out diverse authors and stories that celebrate varied backgrounds.

 **Jane Kim** has been teaching for 23 years. She has always loved reading and wants to be able to spark that love of reading in her students as well. With a small classroom library, some book tastings, and time for independent reading in the classroom, she has been able to see growth in students' interest in reading as well as improvement in their reading scores. It's always exciting to see students proud of their achievement as well when they finish a series, have read more than one book a semester, things they didn't think were possible. Books have also been a great way for her to connect with students in the classroom. She can learn about their interests, their thoughts and feelings, and even get book recommendations for herself. It shows that she cares about them and allows for their voice to be heard as well. Through the Book Love Foundation grant, she hopes to expand her classroom library to reach more students. Students are always making requests for new books, and she can't keep up. She is excited to share her newly updated library and hopes to engage more students and their interests. Her future students are so thankful for this generous gift.







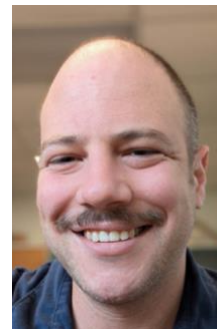
 **Danielle Kohlmeyer** is a 7-12 English teacher in Woonsocket, SD, and an avid book lover. She recently earned her master's degree in teaching and learning. While she is the sole English teacher in her middle and high school, she prides herself on being a member of the South Dakota Council of Teachers of English (SDCTE), where she gains insight from English teachers all over the state. Danielle fully believes in the value of education as she also serves as her school's college and career advisor. She strives to ensure her students are well-prepared for life after high school. Recently, she implemented independent reading time in her classes where the students utilize her classroom library to find books that interest them. Danielle is overjoyed to have received this Book Love Foundation grant. She knows books have ignited a passion within herself and wants to do the same for her students.


 **Madeline Langell** is a sixth-year high school English teacher at Caledonia High School in Caledonia, MI. She currently teaches a variety of courses, from 10th grade to Contemporary Literature. Madeline loves to build her classroom library and see her students finding joy in choice reading. Her favorite thing is when former students come back and borrow books from the classroom library, continuing their reading journey. When she's not teaching, Madeline enjoys playing tennis, live music, and walking her dog while listening to a good audiobook.




 **Denine Laberge** is from Winnipeg, Canada where she has always been an avid reader, a trait she inherited from her mother. As a child, she could not get enough of adventures and other worlds, some that were only available through reading. When her mother caught her reading with a flashlight under her covers one night, she told Denine that she had no bedtime if she was reading. This taught Denine at a very young age how important reading was. As she got older, reading changed. Adventure was replaced by stories of self-discovery and dystopic societies that made her notice and question her own. She became more critical and curious about her world and her place in it. As an adult, she continues to feed this need. Students not only know that she is a reader, they see it. Denine is never without a book and she is always in search of the next one, regardless of the fact that a reread is just as valuable. A mentor once told her of a student who asked her why on earth she would reread a book she'd already read, to which she answered, "Have you ever had pizza more than once?" Denine has taught at the junior high and high school level for nearly 30 years. She has learned that a rich and healthy classroom library is crucial to her and to her students. She has seen a good classroom library create readers in students who did not know they had it in them. She loves to help a student find their next book. Knowing her students is as important as knowing her library if she is to be an effective matchmaker. Denine is grateful for the Book Love Foundation grant as she is rebuilding her classroom library after years specializing in Math. She feels she has returned home.

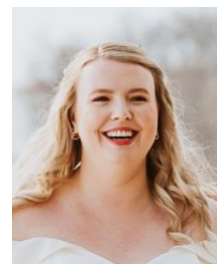
 **Justin Levy** is excited to begin his fifth year teaching at Tucker Maxon School and for the opportunity provided by the Book Love Foundation to help students elevate their literacy. Between reading competitions like the Oregon Battle of Books and making time in class for pressure-free silent reading, it is fair to say that books are important in Mr. Levy's classroom. Books may provide either a window into new experiences or a mirror to better understand one's own experience. Justin is eager to revamp his classroom library to better meet the needs and interests of all sorts of students. Justin earned his MAT from Lewis and Clark College in 2018 and lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife and two dachshunds. In addition to teaching and reading, Justin likes to spend his time *playing Magic: The Gathering*, skateboarding and playing and listening to music.




 **Mirta Lin** is a Spanish teacher at St. Charles East High School. She currently teaches Spanish to advanced and heritage speakers. She has a passion for reading and loves to incorporate this into her curriculum as much as possible, especially with Spanish heritage speakers who have the foundation of the language but want to improve their literacy skills. In Mirta's classroom, she implements a daily practice of free voluntary reading, where students spend the first ten minutes of each class immersed in a book of their choice. This routine not only cultivates a passion for reading but also plays a crucial role in enhancing their overall literacy skills. Through consistent exposure to a variety of texts, students develop a deeper connection to their heritage language, which reinforces their cultural identity and linguistic proficiency. Mirta truly believes that reading is the most valuable tool to foster academic success and personal growth. Using this grant money, she will provide students with access to a diverse array of books and empower them to explore new worlds, ideas and perspectives.




 **Kathryn Lischynski** is a fourth-year Canadian teacher who seeks to inspire students to find the magic in books. Student agency and choice is essential to her reading program, and thanks to the Book Love Foundation, she will be able to offer up more choices that are reflective of her student community. Kathryn is an advocate for social justice and acceptance for all. She believes that through the power of story, everyone can learn about people who are different than them, engage in different experiences, and become better humans.

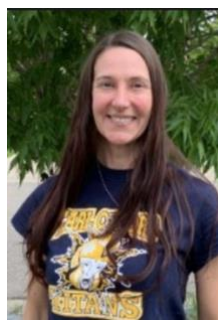



 **Robin Maag-Blanding** is entering her eighth year of teaching at Westran Middle School. As a bibliophile herself, she strives to share that love of literature with her students every day. Her biggest challenge? Creating daily reading habits with her middle school students. Exposure and choice are the two biggest factors for her students. Frequently, Robyn conducts reading surveys, book tastings, and creates book lists to expose students to as many works as possible. Her students are heavily involved in their school,




community, and homes. We make daily reading a priority and discuss how to fit it into our daily routines. Robyn takes time every day to check in on each student's progress in their choice books and makes it a point to ask them to share about their reading! She wants her students to escape their chaotic life, explore new worlds, characters, challenges, and enjoy reading every day. The school library is tiny but mighty; her classroom library is a small smorgasbord of books; and the local library is dedicated to helping all students read by supplying them with online resources like Hoopla. Students are genre loyal and often after a year or two at the middle school, they have read everything in that genre that they have to offer. She is honored and blessed to be a recipient of The Book Love Foundation Grant. This is going to help her show her students there is so much more to the world than their small town and books can take them anywhere. This is going to be a leap into building a well-loved, widely-diversified, and high-interest classroom library that her students can truly see themselves in.

 **Olivia Massarello** is a second-year writing tutor in Michigan. She teaches college-level students at Oakland University, and her favorite part of her job is seeing her students grow throughout the year. She is passionate about independent reading, as she firmly believes that exploring interesting and new genres is what helps students find their own passion in Literature and learning itself. In this way, she encourages choice reading so that students can reshape their love for learning in new and exciting ways. When not in the classroom, you can probably find her on a walk outside or in the comfort of her home, racing through science fiction or mystery novels one page at a time.




 **Deana Matheson** has taught 3rd Grade for seven years at Earl Oxford School in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. With a focus on authentic positive representation of children in literature she recently received her master's degree in education. She loves doing class read alouds with exaggerated expressions and fun personalities. Every child becomes captivated when a great book is read with passion. Deana has been on an adventure in strengthening her ability to teach writing better. When students see and hear quality literature, they become more engaged and motivated in becoming authors. She is so excited to create a classroom library with new books for children to explore!


 **Alexandria Mooney** teaches English 11/12, AP Literature, AP Language, and Sports Literature at Penobscot Valley High School in Howland, ME. Approaching her seventh year in the classroom, Alexandria's primary goal is to help students "increase the magic" or, in other words, experience what it means to read for enjoyment, entertainment, and enlightenment. All of Alexandria's favorite teaching memories revolve around books: the general buzz of excitement on book club day, traveling with students to the local movie theater for the latest book adaptation, viewing students beautiful/powerful/captivating book responses, students emailing at all hours of the night to talk



about “that ending” or rushing into the classroom at 7:45 sharp to grab a sequel, swapping book recommendations with people throughout the school and community, and, of course, watching self-described “non-readers” blossom into readers. Walking into Alexandria’s classroom, you will find warm lighting, class mascots, photographs of book stacks, excerpts of student writing and project creations, rotating book displays, and cozy reading spaces that everyone wishes they could curl up in (staff members included!). Her love for literature is reflected in her desire to help all of her students become readers and writers. Alexandria hopes to not only prepare students for “what’s next” in their academic and professional careers, but also to provide students with healthy hobbies, such as free reading and journaling that will follow them for a lifetime. With the Book Love Foundation grant Alexandria looks forward to refreshing her classroom library with a diversity of new and high interest books. She has a long list of titles from previous students but is also excited to meet and work with her new group of students to find “just the right” books for them.





 **Allyson Nagel** is entering her fifth year at Triad Middle School in St. Jacob, Illinois. Her passion is reading and she spends her free time enjoying new books and book recommendations from her students. She never passes up the chance to find new young adult literature for her classroom library. Allyson recently graduated with a Master of Arts in Literature, where her final project researched engaging practices related to book clubs. The focus of her book clubs is to encourage independence, cooperation, and a positive outlook on reading. Students enjoy this end-of-the-year unit (and many call it their favorite) because they make their own choices on books assessments, and discussions. Students use the skills and interests they’ve learned throughout the year and take charge of their learning. Through the Book Love Foundation, Allyson’s eighth graders are receiving the gift of new book club books, which will provide more engaging, diverse, and current authors, titles, and issues—and Allyson hopes they enjoy a lifelong love of reading because of it.

 **Michelle Nehrig** is entering her eighth year as an eighth grade English Language Arts teacher. She has taught for the last seven years at Clinton Prairie Jr./Sr. High School, a rural school near Frankfort, Indiana, which is also where she attended much of her K-12 school years. For as long as she can remember, books have enthralled, captivated, engaged, charmed, distressed, affected, and intimidated her. Her focus as a teacher is to make a variety of books accessible to her students. What she loves most, however, is when a student finds ‘just the right book’ for them. She is ecstatic when a student leaves her classroom having discovered a love of reading. She is over-the-moon excited about being a 2024 Book Love Foundation Grant recipient. She hopes to bring a more diverse selection of books to her classroom. She believes it is only when we realize books are windows into another person’s existence and perspective will we realize there are not over eight billion people in the world, but rather over eight billion perspectives of it.






 **Adrienne O'Connor** is entering her 11th year in the classroom and 7th year in middle school. Having spent most of her career in public charter schools, there has not been much flexibility to incorporate choice reading into the classroom. Last year, Adrienne made it her mission to instill a love of reading in all her students in 7th grade. She was able to move kids from “I hate reading” to “What should I read next?” by including book talks, conferences, and book recommendation stations in her classroom. Although the pressures of teaching to the test are ever present, Adrienne is committed to prioritizing a love of reading for all her students as she strives to move education toward equity in her classroom. Adrienne is excited to continue building her classroom library so that all students can understand that reading is incredibly powerful. Having books on display and changing the displays frequently, is another way students find the books they love to read and start feeling invested and excited. Adding new and exciting titles to the classroom library will help students stay engaged in their reading and always have something to read next. One of Adrienne’s most memorable moments this year was when students asked to check-out three or four books for summer vacation, so they had enough to read!

 **Vanessa O’Neil-White** is a High School English teacher at Amherst Central High School in Buffalo, New York. She just finished her 9th year in education. Vanessa has been an active member of the Western New York Network of English Teachers where she serves as President helping provided communities of practice and teacher led professional development to English teachers in Western New York. At the core of her work, giving her students time and space to have choice in their books is nonnegotiable! She is incredibly passionate about getting students to read books about kids who look like them and who experience the world like them. The Book Love Foundation Grant is giving her the opportunity to get books in the hands of kids and opening up new worlds for them. She would like to thank her students for helping motivate her to apply and for helping her write, film, and direct her video.

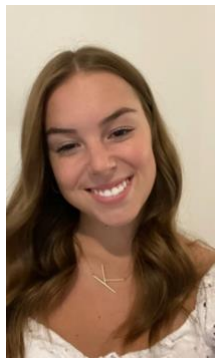


 **Artie Parkes** recently graduated with a Master of Education from DePaul University. As he heads into his first-year teaching 7th grade ELA in the Chicago area, he is so grateful to have the Book Love Foundation’s support in beginning his classroom library. An avid reader and creative writer, Artie is passionate about igniting a love of reading in students that will translate outside of the classroom. He firmly believes books are powerful tools for self-discovery and developing empathy. During his time as a student teacher, Artie observed just how crucial a classroom library is for establishing a culture of reading and giving students agency over their reading endeavors. He hopes to provide all students the opportunity to explore something new and experience the excitement of seeing themselves reflected in a protagonist. Daily choice reading and classroom libraries encourage autonomy, build confidence, champion curiosity, and foster life-long readers. Artie knows that this opportunity to curate a diverse set of books will help him succeed in pairing


students with stories that will truly make an impact. He is looking forward to his first year of empowering students through meaningful experiences with reading and writing!




Holly Painter is from London, Ontario in Canada. After graduating in 2009, Holly ‘detoured’ from teaching into the world of spoken word and poetry slams; eight years as an artist educator and hundreds of stages later, she undoubtedly learned the power of story and the complex narratives we all hold within us. Returning to the classroom after helping thousands of young people find their voice through poetry, Holly began channeling her passion for story into the realm of student reading. Intensely empathetic to the often unseen sides of students’ lives, and immediately critical of ‘the way it’s always been’ in English class, Holly ditched standard novel studies in favor of making weekly treks to the local library to get any and every book of interest into the hands of her students. Now with a number of her classes reaching over 50 books collectively read in one semester (at a school filled with students experiencing barriers that often keep them from prioritizing school work), Holly knows that what some may assume are disinterested students are actually teens seeking stories that reflect their identities and craving books they can escape into. Holly’s persistence in getting students reading material of interest is now well known (and lovingly mocked), with many students returning beyond enrollment in her classes to get new books and recommendations. Holly’s emphatic encouragement and celebration of student achievement is no bigger than when a student proclaims they are ‘not a reader’ yet finishes a book they have chosen. Beyond the classroom, Holly enjoys family time with her wife and two young sons, playing rec-league sports and video games, and of course, reading as much as possible.




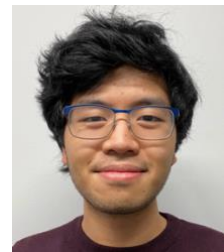
Kaitlyn Perrett is going into her fifth and final year of the Integrated Bachelor of Arts and Education program at Brandon University, located in Manitoba, Canada. Growing up in a family full of educators allowed her to have many experiences in the classroom at a very young age. Hearing how her family members talk about their jobs, inspired Kaitlyn to explore the education field as well. She is excited to carry on what seems to be the family tradition. She has always been passionate about making a difference in a student’s life. She strives to allow children to reach their full potential while in her classroom by giving them a safe and supportive environment. Teaching intrigues Kaitlyn. She loves learning from students, continuing her learning to better her students, and ensuring all of her students have equal access to their education. With the help of the Book Love Foundation, Kaitlyn will establish a diverse library comprising a wide range of genres, reading levels, mentor texts, and texts of inspiration. Her aim is to curate books that showcase the distinct craft moves that authors use. Schools are continually changing; Kaitlyn’s classroom library will meet all students’ needs at all times.


 **Kenidee Peterson** is a 4th grade teacher at Oak Leaf Elementary School in Herriman, Utah. This is her 2nd year teaching. Kenidee loves teaching and is passionate about helping every child discover a love for reading. She believes that if a child doesn't love reading yet, it simply means they haven't found the right genre or book. Her goal is to pair each student with a text that opens up the world of reading to them, creating lifelong readers. Kenidee is also passionate about using reading to introduce students to diverse perspectives. She seeks to include diverse authors and books, allowing students to see both mirror and window texts and find joy in each.



 **Katie Pierceall** will step into a classroom as a first-year teacher this semester. She has a BA in Secondary Communication and Theatre Arts Education. She is working towards a post-baccalaureate endorsement in Secondary English Education. Katie is thankful to have the opportunity to build her classroom library with a Book Love Foundation grant. Some books that she loves are *Zombie Prom*, *A Court of Thorns and Roses*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *The Love Hypothesis*

 **Jeremy Quach** is a high school English teacher at Jones College Prep in Chicago, IL. He is entering his sixth year of teaching, and he's always believed in the power of free-choice reading. He begins every class with time for sustained silent reading, and for the students who don't know what to read or forget their books at home, Jeremy created a classroom library that students can choose from. He initially stocked his library with his own personal books, and this included a variety of manga volumes. Jeremy noticed that the manga were easily the most popular books in his library and given that he is a huge manga fan himself, he loved chatting with students about the manga volumes they were reading, and this shared love of manga really helped him build relationships with students. Jeremy noticed that students who claimed that they "disliked reading" were drawn to the manga the most, and it was thanks to manga that Jeremy was able to engage these students in reading. Jeremy is ecstatic to receive the Book Love Library Grant and plans to use the funds to further build his manga collection.



 **Julianne Ramirez** has been a teacher for 37 years, and most of those years have been in 4th grade, but she is excited to be moving to 2nd grade next year! She works at Cielo Vista Charter School in Palm Springs, California, and her classroom library is the first thing you see when you walk in the room. It sends a clear message that "books are important, and we read in this classroom!" Ms. Ramirez reads aloud every day, and most of the books come from her own classroom library. The reading culture in her classroom is a direct result of reading *The Book Whisperer* by Donalyn Miller. It turned her attitudes about education upside down, changed the way she teaches all literacy subjects, and it has had an impact on how she tracks data in her classroom to inform her teaching

practice. Ms. Ramirez teaches the signposts and the Big 3 from Beers & Probst, and kids self-select their own books. Her students write to her weekly about their reading. They do book talks, book projects, and book commercials. All the writing her students do, is real-world and useful. They learn about poetry for expressing emotion, learn to write correctly to express their opinions and discuss the books they read, and they learn to write narratives to create their own books (which they read—hahahahaha more reading). The philosophy of teaching in a “workshop” approach has spilled over into all her instruction. Julianne has noticed that kids take ownership of their own reading life and learning this way. It’s a wonderful thing! This whole process has helped her go back to reading herself and keep track of her own reading life. She believes in the power of teachers as readers who model what readers do. Everything that she does is motivated by the question: “How will this lead kids to read more books?” When she is not encouraging kids to read, she is lighting the fire for Book Love and fanning the flame of reading culture at her school.



Erin Richard has been teaching for almost 20 years. She has strived to foster a love reading and encourage students to connect with books. She loves books that inspire and guide her teaching practice. She believes every book can spark curiosity and imagination. Erin believes in the transformative power of literature to inspire, educate, and empower young minds. She aims to curate a collection of high-quality, diverse books that reflect her students’ varied interests, backgrounds, and experiences. From captivating stories that ignite imagination to informative texts that foster curiosity and empathy, these books will serve as windows into new worlds and mirrors reflecting the rich diversity of her school community. In addition to promoting a love for reading, Erin’s classroom library plays a vital role in supporting their curriculum, particularly in sustainable development goals and STEM education. By incorporating literature that aligns with these important education initiatives, Erin provides students with engaging and interdisciplinary learning experiences that inspire them to become active global citizens and critical thinkers.



Alanna Shivers is a 1st year World Literature English teacher at Hamilton High School in Hamilton, Michigan. She has an immense passion for reading and cannot wait to share that passion with her students. Her goal is to have an entire class wall lined with books for her students choosing. She is incredibly excited about being awarded a Book Love Foundation grant, as it will allow her to provide her students with a wide variety of texts from around the world. Additionally, Alanna is incredibly passionate about ensuring that her students find books that interest them. The books Alanna desires to have in her classroom are stories that feature exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives. Furthermore, Alanna emphasizes ensuring that all students feel connected to a book, whether it is through the setting, characters, or plot.



Lindsay Stappert is entering her 10th year of teaching English in Nebraska. She has taught all grade levels between 7th and 12th in her rural, public school. Lindsay holds a master's degree in Education and Curriculum with an emphasis in English. As a passionate reader and teacher, Lindsay loves to get diverse books into the hands of all of her students. She works tirelessly to continue to add to her classroom library with new titles that will appeal to all of her students, and to show each student that anyone can appreciate and love reading. Lindsay gives students choice reading opportunities, whether that is through book clubs or independent reading, while also sharing book talks throughout the week. Lindsay also shows up ready to read with her students and displays what she is currently reading to her students daily, as well as giving personal recommendations to students throughout the school year. She is grateful to receive this grant and knows that with this grant she will be able to bring in even more books to her classroom and to continue to create more empathetic readers.




Emily Strafelda has been teaching upper elementary in Montessori schools for just over a decade. She is currently teaching in St. Paul, Minnesota. Emily loves reading books aloud to her students and having a selection of books in the classroom for students to choose from. Emily's goal with the Book Love Foundation Grant is to enrich the classroom library by adding a diverse selection of books that cater to the varied interests and reading levels of her upper elementary students. By incorporating these new books she hopes to foster a lifelong love of reading.




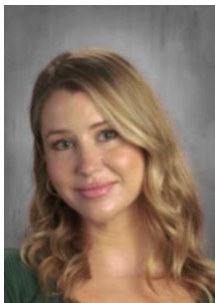
Karissa Sullivan is an avid reader and a high school English and Special Education teacher at W.T. Clarke High School in East Meadow, NY. She believes in stories. She believes that you should never leave the house without a book. She believes that adding books to your To Be Read List is the best way to decorate. She believes that every student deserves the opportunity to browse books of different genres until they serendipitously find one they love. She believes that English teachers have the power to create life-long readers within the walls of their classrooms. Each year Karissa strives to create more meaningful practices for her students. A short list of her goals includes creating a space for young readers and writers that provides the opportunity to learn in a comfortable and creative environment, promoting unlimited license to choose books for independent practice, motivate students to think independently, and to champion students to become life-long readers. Karissa loves teaching, and with the help of the Book Love Foundation (thank you, thank you, thank you!) she can add titles to her classroom to continuously motivate students. Karissa is committed to continuing her practice of *Free Read Fridays* and, with a little book love *magic*, encourage students to find a love of books and reading that exceeds their time within the walls of her classroom.







 **Tiffanee Sundberg** is the second youngest of seven children in an Italian family. As a recent transplant to the vibrant and culturally rich region of Charleston, SC, she is inspired by its diversity and the unique stories it holds. The Lowcountry has invigorated her passion for teaching, particularly in fostering a love of reading among her 10th grade students. She believes that in this digital age, where distractions are plentiful, reigniting the spark of literacy is more crucial than ever. For Tiffanee's students, literacy is more than just a skill; it's a gateway to their future selves. Through reading, they can develop critical thinking abilities, enhance their empathy, and expand their horizons beyond the confines of their immediate surroundings. Whether they aspire to be scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, or leaders, strong reading skills will equip them with the tools needed to navigate and succeed in any field. Tiffanee's goal is to create a classroom environment that celebrates stories, encourages exploration through books, and builds a foundation of lifelong learning that will benefit them throughout their lives.

 **Jeffery "Pierce" Velderman** is a 6th grade Reading Lab and 8th grade ELA teacher at Cityside Middle School in Zeeland, Michigan. With eight years of teaching experience, he has dedicated himself to understanding the struggles and benefits of reading. In 2021 he earned his Reading Specialist certification. This has given him the tools to help readers overcome their challenges. He is excited to enrich his classroom library with diverse and engaging materials to inspire a love of reading in his students.



 **Jessica Walter** is entering her 17th year of teaching. She has spent eight years of her career as an educator teaching secondary English at Westgate Collegiate Vocational Institute in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Jessica loves to engage her students and create an environment where they feel connected to what they are reading and learning. If you peek inside her classroom, you will see a bright, beautiful space with twinkle lights, greenery and loads of wonderful books! Over the past few years, she has focused on inspiring a love of reading in her classroom by providing a range of contemporary works written by authors with diverse backgrounds to allow students the opportunity to connect and learn through stories that are beyond their own experiences. Jessica is honored and thrilled to accept the Book Love Foundation grant in hope of continuing to spark a joy of reading in her students by increasing the options of books in her classroom library.

 **Jenna Wilson** is fired up. About literacy. About libraries and librarians. About reading. About books. About getting books in the hands of kids who want and *need* them but cannot access them.

But Jenna Wilson will not be defeated. Not by decreased funding. Not by book challenges and bans. Not by dangerous and uninformed legislation



extinguishing the curious and colorful minds of students sitting in classrooms across the nation.

So, she studies literacy. She researches. She reads. She buys books for her classroom library. She carefully curates *book stacks* based on student interests. She fights for students and their right to read and discover and learn. The more students enjoy reading and enrich their lives, the less defeated Jenna is.

But either way, she'll still be fired up.

About turning nonreaders into lifelong readers.

About inspiring a love for reading.

About the ability of books to empower young people to make the world a better place.

Other things that light Jenna's fire: buying books and adding them to her never-ending TBR, listening to people and their stories, shopping at the ever-efficient Costco, using Chat-GPT generated itineraries to explore new places, cheering on the San Diego Padres and Green Bay Packers, and loving on her "dog"ter, Shelby.

A high school English and English Language Development teacher for the first six years of her career, Jenna transitioning to middle school Language Arts in a rural community in North San Diego County. Jenna lives with her family in Southern California.