



## Children’s Literacy Foundation (CLiF)

*Nurturing a love of reading and writing among children throughout New Hampshire and Vermont*

## CLiF Adds Creative New Literacy Activities



Stock car racer Troy Kingsbury helps CLiF grab the attention of young readers including our most challenging audience members, boys in Grades 4, 5, and 6

CLiF’s mission has always been to inspire and nurture a love of reading and writing among low-income, at-risk, and rural children throughout New Hampshire and Vermont. Back in 1998, we set out to accomplish our mission with lively storytelling presentations and donations of brand-new books to rural libraries and the children they serve.

Since then CLiF has added many new programs including: three-day Writer In Residence workshops to encourage students to write poetry and short stories for fun; Author/Illustrator visits to elementary schools, so students can meet an author or illustrator and hear about that person’s love of reading, writing, and making books; parent seminars; prison storybook programs; events for summer readers; and much, much more.

We’re always looking for more fun, creative ways to get kids excited about

literacy. Here are some cool new CLiF initiatives from just the past year:

Troy Kingsbury of Race to Read races stock cars at Thunder Road in Barre, VT. He drives a bright green Ford called the Green Lantern. When Troy gives presentations on behalf of CLiF, he arrives in the Green Lantern, engine roaring, usually to a very surprised — and delighted — group of children! Troy then explains that without reading, he wouldn’t be able to be a race car driver — or much else, for that matter. He goes over every aspect of racing that he has learned about through reading, which gets children thinking about reading in a whole new way, and then children get to select new books to keep.

Though CLiF doesn’t work with any lions, tigers, or bears — Oh my! — we have sponsored literacy activities that include school visits by lizards, dogs, and even snakes. Lunenburg Elementary School,

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in Lunenburg, VT, takes part in CLiF’s Community Literacy program and has invited both Reptiles on the Move and Muddy Paws to bring slithery and furry creatures to school. In advance of each visit children read non-fiction books about their favorite animals, and then meet them in person. There’s nothing like bringing a little nature into the classroom to get kids excited — especially when it’s an alligator!

Another new and unusual CLiF literacy activity took place at the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium in St. Johnsbury, VT. Meteorologist Mark Breen, known for his Vermont Public Radio’s “Eye on the Sky” weather updates, visited

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# CLiF Celebrates 15 Years of Inspiration

On March 4, 2013 CLiF celebrated our 15th birthday!

We've come a *very* long way over that decade and a half. CLiF's free programs have supported and inspired 140,000 low-income, at-risk, and rural young readers and writers in almost 400 towns across New Hampshire and Vermont. We've also donated more than \$2.5 million in new, high-quality children's books to children and families who need them the most.

It has taken a very large family of dedicated, energetic, creative, and generous individuals to help us get where we are today. Since our founding in 1998, CLiF has had the honor of working with a total of:

- > 17 staff members
- > 20 members of CLiF's Board of Advisors
- > 21 members of CLiF's Board of Directors
- > 60+ professional presenters including local children's book authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers
- > 750+ partner organizations, including schools, libraries, bookmobiles, shelters, prisons, childcare centers, Head Start programs, refugee organizations, summer food programs, foster child programs, and more
- > More than 1,000 donors including individuals, families, businesses, foundations, and social organizations

If you are *not yet* part of this ever-growing family, there is still plenty of room! If you are an active CLiF supporter, we (and 140,000 young readers and writers) send you our heartfelt thanks. Yes, we look back with pride on the past 15 years, but also we look forward with excitement and anticipation at what is yet to come!

  
Duncan McDougall  
CLiF Executive Director



Some of the tens of thousands of children CLiF has inspired over the past 15 years

## Connect with CLiF Online



Are you on Facebook?  
Please 'Like'  
our Page  
at [facebook.com/cliforg](http://facebook.com/cliforg).

Do you Tweet?  
Then please follow  
us @cliforg  
We'd love to stay in touch!



## Who's Who

### CLiF News Staff

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Duncan McDougall      Katie Titterton  
Julia Rogers

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## Summer Readers

Every June, July, and August, CLiF presenters visit dozens of children's summer programs in communities across New Hampshire and Vermont. They share great books, tell inspiring stories, and talk about the power of reading with children up to 12 years old. After every event, each child can choose two new books to keep.

If your summer program serves low-income or at-risk children, we encourage you to apply for a free CLiF Summer Readers grant. Download an application at [www.clifonline.org](http://www.clifonline.org) or contact Julia Rogers at [julia@clifonline.org](mailto:julia@clifonline.org).

# It's a Wrap at CLiF Parent & Child Literacy Nights

CLiF knows two facts about parents of young children: 1) they have a huge influence on the likelihood their children will grow up as strong readers and writers; 2) during the holidays they inevitably scramble at the last minute to find and wrap gifts for their kids.

Using these two observations we created the very popular CLiF Parent & Child Literacy Night. Here's an example:



Duncan McDougall conducts a seminar with dozens of parents in Johnson, VT (pop. 1,452)

On a December evening in Johnson, VT, dozens of parents joined CLiF's Duncan McDougall in the elementary school library while their kids played in the gym. Duncan presented a 40-minute seminar on the importance of reading with children regularly, the impact reading has on a child's development, and ways to make reading with a child fun and easy even if a parent isn't a strong reader. The parents were enthusiastic and asked many questions.

When the seminar was over parents selected two new books for each of their children from hundreds of high-quality titles CLiF provided. Volunteers then wrapped the books in colorful paper on the spot, and parents got a jump-start on their holiday gift hunt!

When the book wrapping was complete, Duncan told the children a fun, interactive story, and everyone enjoyed a pleasant dinner together.

Johnson's principal David Manning commented: *"I could not be more pleased with the outcome of this event. I was very impressed with the level of engagement of the parents to the materials Duncan presented... They were thrilled to obtain new books for their children. We were truly able to reach members of the community who will benefit from the reading strategies and the free books."*

CLiF held similar events in several other towns. One mother in Berlin, NH told the school principal: *"This was the best event we've ever had at the school. Let's do it again!"*

## CLiF Conference Helps Towns Sustain Momentum

As CLiF develops longer-lasting and more in-depth initiatives such as our Year of the Book and Community Literacy programs, we are also helping towns and schools sustain their literacy efforts after their CLiF grant is over.

To that end, on May 1 we held our first annual CLiF Community Literacy Conference in St. Johnsbury, VT. Entitled *"Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Literacy One Community at a Time,"* the conference assisted principals, teachers, librarians, and reading specialists from 11 of our recipient towns to maintain momentum by sharing programming ideas, learning about other funding opportunities, and networking with colleagues.

Brigid Hubberman, executive director of the Family Reading Partnership in Ithaca, NY, was our special guest speaker. She has worked in community literacy for 16 years and she shared a wealth of programming



We received extremely positive feedback from attendees at the CLiF Community Literacy Conference in St. Johnsbury, VT

ideas, thoughts on starting literacy projects in your town, and ways to collaborate with local businesses and community members.

Said one conference attendee, *"Brigid was terrific — just a treasure-trove of information."* Commented another: *"This was a great opportunity to share ideas, tips, and challenges and have other community's members offer possible solutions. I now have so many ideas swirling around. I am so impressed with CLiF!"*

## New Literacy Activities

*(continued from page 1)*

students at Stratford Public School in Stratford, NH, to teach them about meteorology. Some days later, all the students who studied with Mark had a chance to spend time with him at the museum to see the tools he uses to predict the weather. These activities were part of an effort to engage children with science-based nonfiction in the classroom.

And there are many other new CLiF activities! A few include the holiday parent seminars that include free book giveaways and wrapping (page 3), the *Newbury Reads!* "book trailer" videos that were produced with students and professional actors and filmmakers (page 5), and Natalie Kinsey-Warnock's Story Keepers program (page 6).

CLiF keeps diversifying, and we're excited about what will come next!



Second graders in Newbury, VT (pop. 366) act in their book trailer for Juney B. Jones

## Newbury Students Create Awesome “Book Trailer” Videos

In a darkened library in Newbury, VT, dozens of elementary school children sat in quiet anticipation while a mysterious story played out on a small movie screen. In the video, children shined a flashlight around a dark room. They spoke in hushed, worried voices about something that had gotten out of a cage.

Then a huge rabbit jumped into the frame! All the children in the room in Newbury shrieked with delight — and just a tiny bit of fear.

It was *Bunnacula*!!!

*Bunnacula* is a beloved children’s picture book. The video was the work of Newbury Elementary School students and a team of actors and filmmakers led by Faith Catlin, John Griesemer, and Richard Waterhouse with director of photography Whittaker Ingbretson, project coordinator Laurie Storm, and art director Carol LeBarron.

The team collaborated with Newbury students to produce five “book trailers” — videos that are meant to excite readers about books the same way traditional movie trailers get potential viewers excited about upcoming movies.

The project was called *Newbury Reads!* and was sponsored by CLiF as part of our Year of the Book at Newbury Elementary School.

In addition to *Bunnacula*, students acted in and helped produce four other trailers: *Frindle*, *Touching Spirit Bear*, *Junie B. Jones*, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

Dan Lynch of Lyme, NH, is on the CLiF Board of Directors and attended the event. “This is CLiF at its very best — innovation, creativity, and community involvement — all leading to our goal of creating a love of literacy amongst our youngest readers and writers.”

You can watch all five *Newbury Reads!* book trailers on CLiF’s blog: [www.clifonline.org/blog](http://www.clifonline.org/blog)

Don’t forget the popcorn!

## A New Year of the Book Kicks Off in Barre

At Highgate Apartments in Barre, VT, a quiet Saturday morning ended abruptly as the roar of a race car engine announced to all children within earshot it was time to meet Thunder Road driver Troy Kingsbury, check out his awesome car, enjoy a barbecue lunch, and get some cool new books to read.

CLiF has just begun a Year of the Book program at Highgate, an affordable housing facility that is home to more than 100 children. Over the next year, CLiF will return to Highgate with a range of inspiring literacy-related activities and hundreds of new books from which the children will choose to create their own small personal library.

Upon Troy’s arrival, the kids quickly crowded around his sleek, bright-green Ford stock car. Troy explained that an important skill needed for someone to be a successful race car driver is the ability to read and write. He shares this message with local schools and community groups through his organization, Race to Read ([www.racetoread.org](http://www.racetoread.org)).

Troy and Julia Rogers, CLiF’s program coordinator, gave an entertaining presentation to the assembled crowd about the power of reading. Then they highlighted the 120 new, hardcover books that CLiF had donated to create an on-site library for all Highgate families to use for years to come.

Finally, each child was able to come up and select two new books of their choice to keep and begin to create their home library. As CLiF departed the children were digging into the hot burgers and the cool books with equal relish!



Troy Kingsbury and Julia Rogers talk with kids at the Year of the Book Kickoff in Barre, VT (pop. 9,066)

# Kids Tell Parents, “Read to Me!”

CLiF is constantly brainstorming new ways to engage students and parents as part of our Community Literacy and Year of the Book programs. **Over the past year, we’ve had great success with CLiF Read to Me contracts. The contract asks parents to spend 15–20 minutes reading with their children at least two times per week.** Regardless of whether parents read aloud or quietly peruse a magazine while their children independently read a book, the task is for parents to commit to helping their children shape healthy and regular reading habits.

For more incentive, CLiF offers to sponsor a family literacy night and ice cream social for each Community Literacy or Year of the Book school that receives signed contracts from at least 80 percent of their students’ families.



*Pittsburg School kindergarten teacher Jessica Haynes serves ice cream sundaes to students.*

**Over half the participating towns have reached 80 percent participation, with some stretching as far as 90 percent!** Pittsburg, NH hosted their triumphant family literacy night in December 2012. It included an ice cream social, book

giveaway, and a special visit from author and CLiF presenter Lynda Graham Barber.

*“Our family literacy night was a huge success with all but about five of our K-6 students and their families attending the ice cream social,”* said Library Media Specialist Ann Gray of Pittsburg School.

**Literacy begins at home, and the Read to Me contracts stand to be a strong positive influence for parents to play their part.** What’s more, parents and kids alike will enjoy a sweet treat for engaging in a potentially life-altering commitment.

Keep an eye on CLiF’s blog and Facebook page for photos of upcoming family literacy events in other literacy-loving communities!

## Heartwarming Feedback from Colebrook

One of the great joys of our work at CLiF is hearing feedback from the children and organizations that we serve. Packets of happy hand-written thank-you notes from students, letters of praise from program coordinators, and excited emails from librarians and teachers all remind us that CLiF’s literacy programs and giveaways of free books make a real difference to the people we serve throughout New Hampshire and Vermont.

**Over the past year, one of the towns from which we’ve received inspiring and heartwarming feedback is Colebrook, NH. It is one of three towns awarded our three-year, \$50,000 Community Literacy grant in 2011.**

Here is a sampling of the feedback that Becky Hodge, our community coordinator in Colebrook, has sent us from parents, teachers, and Head Start coordinators who have taken part in CLiF activities:

*“One whole class gave a collective gasp as heads swiveled to find the [writing contest] winner, who looked just like a deer in headlights before pumping his arms up and down in excitement.”*

*“My kid — the one who usually won’t talk — won’t stop talking about [author] Steve Cotler and Cheesie Mack.”*

*“[My son] was so excited when he was picked to read his baseball poem in front of everyone at school. I took the poem and put it in a frame on the wall, and even now, he makes comments like, ‘I can’t believe you put that on the WALL,’ but I know he’s actually proud.”*

*“One of my parents [a Head Start mother] who graduated from high school went to one of the literacy workshops last year and heard the speaker say that you don’t need to read the words to read with your children. It took so much courage for her, but she confessed to me that she can’t read — even though she went through school and now has a job that requires reading. But hearing that speaker say that she didn’t need to be reading the words of a story to help her own kids prepare for learning to read was a real eye-opener to her... now every week we read a chapter of a Magic Tree House book at our visits, and she reads with her children.”*



*Parents in Colebrook, NH (pop. 2,321) help their children choose new books at a CLiF event in 2012*

# Natalie Kinsey-Warnock Keeps Family Stories Alive

CLiF presenter Natalie Kinsey-Warnock is best known as a prolific author of more than 25 children's books such as *The Bear Who Heard Crying* and *Gifts from the Sea*. But she is also an avid preserver of family stories.

Natalie bases many of her books on her own Vermont family stories that go back to the 1800s. Though many of these tales have been passed down over the generations, Natalie also digs into her own family history through research.

Last year, Natalie was teaching a course on researching and telling family stories in Glover, VT, when she and her students discovered evidence that a Civil War nurse named Amanda Coburn grew up on the same plot of land as Natalie. Now the author is planning to write about Coburn in several upcoming books.

Learning about Amanda Coburn – and deciding to tell her story – is a perfect example of why Natalie has created Story Keepers, a curriculum that teaches elementary school students to research and write the story of a local historical figure or family member.

Natalie has presented her multi-week Story Keepers curriculum as part of CLiF's Year of the Book and Community Literacy programs in Gilman, Lunenburg, Brownington, and Newbury, VT.



Natalie Kinsey Warnock shows students in Gilman, VT (pop. 267) how to research local history using primary sources from the town office and public library

*"Students love her stories and she is encouraging them to reach back into their own families to discover their own wild and wonderful stories,"* said Gilman/Lunenburg Community Literacy Coordinator Katrin Colby. *"With collaboration from Lunenburg's Historical Society, students have been learning from old photographs, primary and secondary sources for research, town and land records, and how to generally go about poking into the past to unearth interesting stories and fascinating facts. Teachers have reported that students find historical and genealogical research fun and exciting and helps to make history real."*

## How Will You Be Remembered?

At CLiF, we do everything we can to open the doors of imagination and opportunity through literacy. If you share our desire to inspire the next generation of young readers and writers, please support CLiF through a **bequest** or **planned gift**.

You'll allow CLiF's work with children to continue for decades to come.

Please contact us if you'd like to learn more about how to include CLiF in your planned giving. If you've already taken this step, kindly let us know so we can share our thanks. For more information contact Duncan at [clif@clifonline.org](mailto:clif@clifonline.org) or

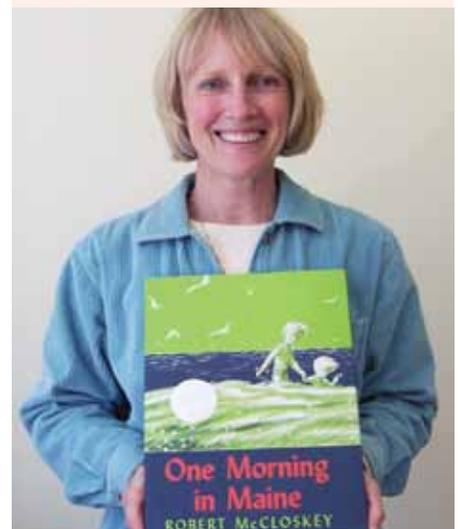
802-244-0944. **Thank you!**

# In Memory of CLiF Advisor Peg Downing

Everyone at CLiF was extremely sad to learn of the recent loss of long-time CLiF Advisor Margaret "Peg" Downing at 63 from cancer.

Peg was an active member of CLiF's Board of Advisors from 2000 to 2011. She had a master's degree in child literacy from the University of New Hampshire, directed an Even Start family literacy program in Franklin, NH, and eventually became the director of New Hampshire Reads until 2008. Over the eleven years she served as a CLiF advisor she contributed a great deal to CLiF's programs thanks to her considerable experience and energy.

Peg was always upbeat and warm, and she made the room brighter when she entered. We will all miss her very much. Peg's husband Kevin asked that any gifts in her memory be made to CLiF. We will use those funds to conduct special events for New Hampshire children in Peg's memory.



Peg's favorite book reflected her equal love for children's literacy and Maine.

# CLiF Sponsorships (July 2012 – June 2013)

Since 1998 CLiF has served almost 140,000 children in almost 400 towns across New Hampshire and Vermont. CLiF provides sponsorships to rural public libraries as well as to children served by homeless shelters, women's shelters, low-income housing, and bookmobiles. CLiF works with children's book authors and illustrators to provide presentations to children in rural areas. We send writers-in-residence to elementary schools, support towns facing severe economic challenges, and provide new books and literacy support to children of prison inmates, migrant children, refugee children, children in poverty, Head Start children, children in childcare, families with newborns, and many more.

## Legend

	Rural Public Libraries		Children of Prison Inmates		Childcare
	Author / Illustrator Visits		Migrant Children		CLiF Choice
	Writer-in-Residence		Families with Newborns		Book Giveaway
	Shelters		Bookmobiles		Community Literacy
	Refugee Children		Low-Income Housing		Year of the Book
	Summer Readers		Head Start		

Here are some of the exciting programs that take place this school year in our new Community Literacy and Year of the Book Towns:

## Community Literacy Towns

**Lunenburg-Gilman, VT:** Storytelling, Book Giveaway (3), Yoga Storytime, Author/Illustrator (5), Family Literacy Night, Summer Readers, Magazine subscription for each child, Storykeepers, Library

**Colebrook, NH:** Storytelling, Author/Illustrator (2), Writing Workshop (3), Essay Contest, Parent Literacy Workshop, Teacher Mini-Grant, Summer Readers, Winter Reading Program, Book Giveaway (2), magazine subscription for each child, Puppeteer Workshop, Battle of the Books, Booktalk Series, Storywalk

**Stratford, NH:** Storytelling, Author/Illustrator (2), Teacher mini-grants, Traveling Theatre Group, Book Giveaway (3), magazine subscription for each child, Writing Workshop (2), Fairbanks Museum Weather Program, Storywalk, Summer Bookmobile

## Year of the Book Towns

**Berlin, NH:** Storytelling, Book Giveaway (4), Teacher mini-grants, Library, Daycare, Parent Literacy Workshop, Family Literacy Night, Author Visit, Storytelling

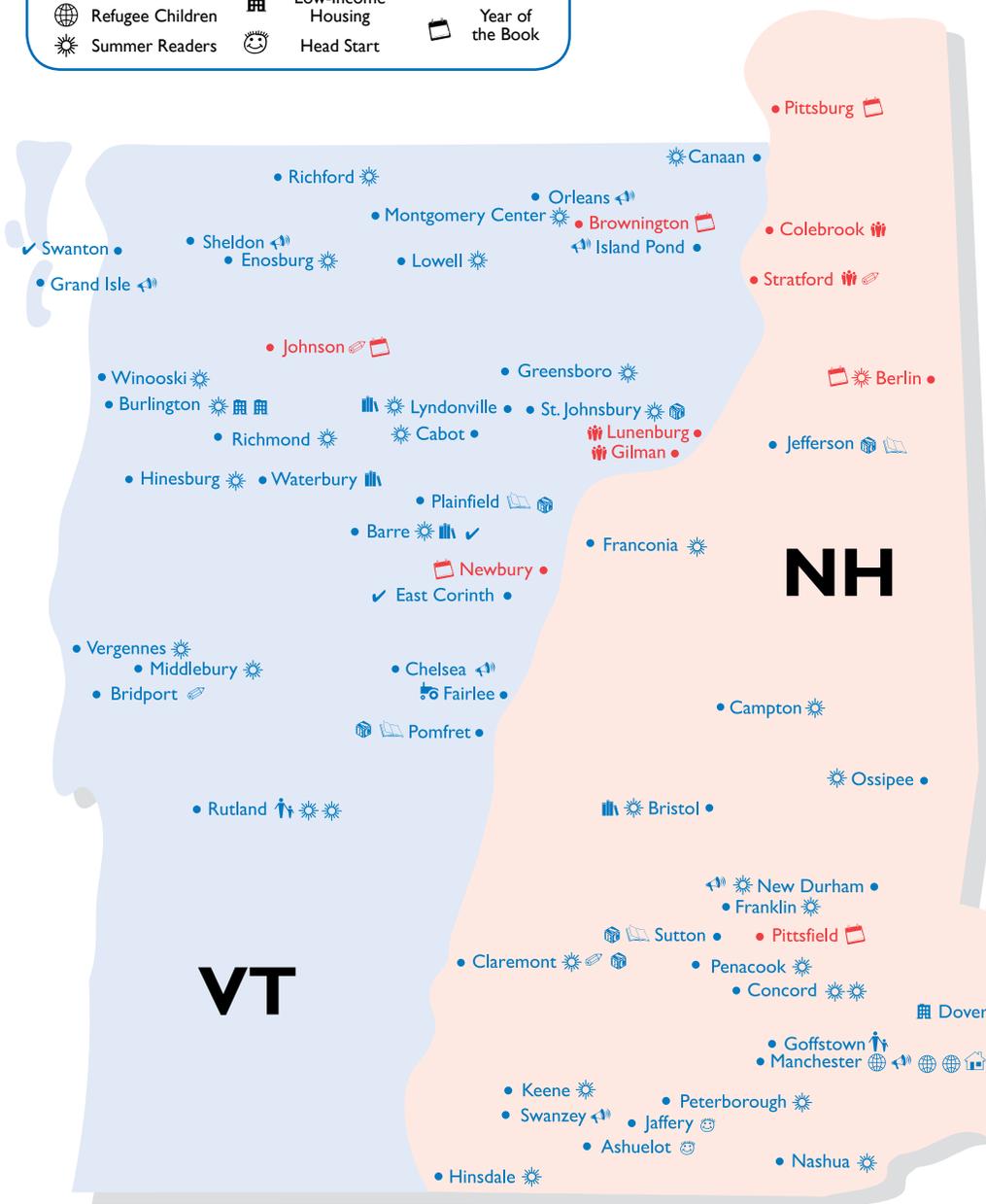
**Pittsburg, NH:** Storytelling, Book Giveaway (5), Teacher mini-grants, Library, Author Visit (2), Writing Workshop

**Pittsfield, NH:** Storytelling, Book Giveaway (4), Teacher mini-grants, Library, Head Start, Parent Literacy Workshop, Author Visit

**Brownington, VT:** Storytelling, Library Event, Book Giveaways, Teacher mini-grants, Storykeepers, Author Visit (2)

**Johnson, VT:** Storytelling, Library Event, Parent Seminar, Book Giveaways, Teacher mini-grants, Author Visit

**Newbury, VT:** Storytelling, Book Giveaway (5), Teacher mini-grants, Writing Workshop, Video Book Trailer, Storykeepers, Author Visit (2), Library





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When you're done,  
please share this  
newsletter with a friend!



Five refugee students share their new books at a CLiF event in Manchester, NH (pop. 109,830).

Thank you for the books. I can't wait to read them. They look really good. I like nonfiction books. I like learning about sharks, frogs, and birds. They are all interesting things, don't you think? I love to read. It's really fun. I'm reading a really good book. It's fun to draw in to the story. I really appreciate your donation.

Note from a young CLiF reader

