



Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF)

Nurturing a love of reading and writing among low-income, at-risk and rural children throughout New Hampshire and Vermont

CLiF Poets Inspire Creative Expression



Poet Rajnii Eddins shares his work with JFK Elementary students in Winooski, VT

Thank You Ted Scheu the Poetry Guy

by Mrs. Johnson's 1st Grade Class
JFK Elementary School, Winooski, VT

We saw Ted Scheu today
His poems made us shout, "Hooray!"

His poems and songs were great
His poems made us hungry because
of the food he ate

Ted Scheu is an awful lot of fun
We were sad when his poems were done

Ted Scheu is not only the poetry guy
He is also a very funny guy.

This original poem was created by a first grade class in Winooski, VT after a visit from Ted Scheu (pronounced "shy") "That Poetry Guy" as part of their CLiF Year of the Book grant program. The Year of the Book brings many VT and NH authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers to selected schools in both states to give inspiring presentations and workshops. CLiF presenters share their work and processes, tell a story or poems, and inspire students' creativity. In addition to his visit to Winooski's JFK Elementary School, "That Poetry Guy" also visited schools in Berlin, NH and Milan, NH this year to

conduct multi-day poetry workshops. He encouraged students to write their own poems inspired by his silly style.

One student said, *"Dear Mr. Ted Scheu, Thank you for coming to our class and teaching us how to write poems. Now I can't stop writing poems."* Exactly the kind of passion for reading and writing that CLiF hopes to inspire!

CLiF poet Rajnii Eddins also visited JFK Elementary School this year to share his style of collaborative spoken-word poetry. JFK staff said, *"Rajnii's visit was amazing! He opened with a beautiful call and response song his mother [Randee Eddins, also a CLiF presenter] had written, and he did some freestyle rapping which the students went wild for."*

We love to see students going "wild for" poetry! This kind of enthusiasm is what we aim for with the Year of the Book, a \$25,000 literacy grant program awarded to five elementary schools in Vermont and five in New Hampshire each year. The program brings many of CLiF's 65+ talented presenters to the schools throughout the year to share their passion

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for reading and writing with students and ignite a love of literacy. The program also involves fun storytelling events for the whole family, discussions on ways to connect over books and stories, and special literacy programming tailored to the school's needs. In addition to the many opportunities to engage with literacy, the program also provides new, high-quality books for classrooms, the school library, and the local public library, along with ten new books for each child to choose. When students say they "can't stop writing poems," that's a success in our book!



Poet Ted Scheu helps students in Milan, NH write their own poems

CLiF's Ever-Expanding Reputation

Over the past 21 years CLiF has developed a reputation in New England as a respected, efficient, award-winning nonprofit that is a leader in serving young readers and writers with the greatest needs.

While our service territory is confined to New Hampshire and Vermont, word of CLiF's innovative programs has spread steadily across the U.S. and beyond.

Over the past decade organizations and individuals from 27 states and 6 countries have contacted CLiF to learn more about our unique organization. For example:

- A Florida social service organization inquired about CLiF's At-Risk programs so it could better serve local families in nearby shelters
- A New Jersey library organization was interested in CLiF's Rural Library program for its partners
- A prison in Colorado wanted to replicate some components of CLiF's Children of Prison Inmates program
- A man from Argentina asked for suggestions on starting a literacy organization in his home country

CLiF is always happy to offer advice and to invite anyone to witness our work in person. After all, the more children who grow up strong readers and writers, the better! We simply inform the individuals who contact us that they cannot use the CLiF name, and that none of our donations can be used outside of the Twin states.

Speaking of donations, CLiF is honored to receive gifts from individuals and organizations in 33 states and four countries.

While CLiF's admirers and supporters are increasingly national and international in scope, we have absolutely no plans to expand our service territory beyond New Hampshire and Vermont. We'll continue to offer the very best free programs here in our home states, and share what we've learned with others. Many thanks, as always, for your generous support of CLiF and the children, families, and organizations we serve!


Duncan McDougall
CLiF Executive Director



Duncan gets kids excited about reading and writing at a Summer Readers event in St. Albans, VT

Who's Who

CLiF Staff

Duncan McDougall • *Executive Director*
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Erika Nichols-Frazer • *Communications Manager*
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Visit Our New Website!

CLiF's website got a makeover!
Learn more about our programs, open grant applications, and CLiF's latest news at www.clifonline.org



The CLiF Dog Team:
Yoshi, Fern, Delphi, Nala and Wilson

Summer Readers Sparks Imaginations



Young readers and writers listen to a CLiF Summer Readers presentation

Thousands of CLiF books travel far and wide each summer to eager young readers in all corners of Vermont and New Hampshire. CLiF presenters and book giveaways pop up in unexpected places each summer: a rustic camp lodge on the shores of Lake Champlain, a very hot auditorium filled with excited kids in Winooski, a small island in the middle of a NH lake, one rainy day in a locker room at a public pool in Barre, VT, as well as schools and libraries in towns and cities across the two states. We love to celebrate the diversity of programs and locations that we visit each summer and the thousands of kids and families served by CLiF's Summer Readers grant.

This summer CLiF presenters hosted 174 storytelling presentations and book giveaways for at-risk children at 143 different programs in VT and NH and gave away 20,000 free books to more than 10,000 eager young summer readers.

This summer CLiF kicked off our summer reading celebrations at the end of the school year to get kids excited about reading during the upcoming vacation. We visited seven schools during the last few weeks of the school year. At the Parker Varney School in Manchester, NH, Simon Brooks told stories, generated lots of laughs, and sent each of the nearly 600 students home with two new books to begin their summer adventures.

Welcoming All Library Patrons at CLiF's Rural Libraries Conference

In September, 75 librarians from small public libraries across New Hampshire and Vermont convened at CLiF's Rural Libraries Conference in White River Junction, VT. This year's theme was Welcoming All Library Patrons and panels covered topics such as creating inclusive spaces for all learners, multi-generational spaces, programming for kids ages 0-5, and strengthening connections with local schools and communities. Workshops included Slam Poetry with CLiF presenters Geof Hewitt and Rajnii Eddins, as well as Drag Queen Story

Hour. Participants said, *"I enjoy meeting librarians from other states and opportunities for networking,"* and *"Great energy, helpful ideas, practical ideas we can do."*



Panelists discuss issues facing libraries at CLiF's Rural Libraries Conference

Meanwhile in Vermont, poet and storyteller Marv Klassen-Landis was inspiring young readers from pre-K through sixth grade at the small, rural Chelsea Public School. His visit was met with enthusiasm by the students and staff: *"We all loved having Marv as a guest in our school! He led a great discussion with the kids about the importance of reading, and he was an engaging storyteller."* One boy spoke up during the visit and said, *"Reading opens your mind and your imagination. And then you can write from your imagination and open up other people's imaginations!"* A big thank you to that inspired young reader and writer; we couldn't have said it any better ourselves!

Welcome, New Directors!

The CLiF team is delighted to welcome three new members to our Board of Directors. **Sandy Kelsey**, **Rick Mills**, and **Posie Taylor** are the latest additions to our dynamic team.

Sandy is a board-certified Emergency Physician and Pediatrician who has practiced in varied locales in New England and participated in a number of International Medical trips to South America. *He has three children he read bedtime stories to as they grew up in Lyme NH, all of whom continue in their passion for life and reading.*

Rick is the Executive Vice President at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH. He previously held the positions of Executive Dean at Harvard Medical School and principal of a strategic consulting firm.

Posie has an extensive background in English, History, and Library Science, and has worked in libraries up and down the East Coast. She has also served as Director of The Aloha Foundation in Fairlee, VT, and has been a summer camp consultant. *Posie says she "looks forward to exploring this new way of serving children and families."*

Welcome to the CLiF team,
Sandy, Rick, and Posie!



Sandy Kelsey, Rick Mills, and Posie Taylor

Children of Prison Inmates Program Expands



Incarcerated parents attend a CLiF seminar on connecting with kids over books

CLiF's innovative Children of Prison Inmates program (COPI) is growing yet again. We recently began a new long-term partnership with the **New Hampshire State Prison for Women (NHSPW)** in **Concord, NH**. CLiF is now operating multi-year programs in five prisons across the Twin States.

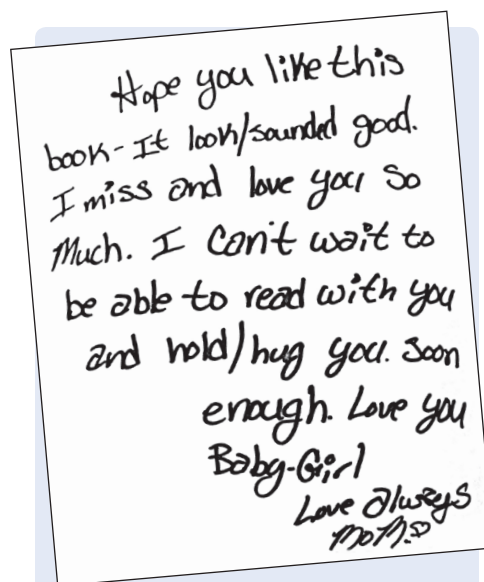
As a parent, it's difficult enough to connect and communicate with your child when you're under the same roof. Can you imagine trying to do that while separated by prison walls? Roughly one in 28 American children have an incarcerated parent.

CLiF's COPI program helps these families connect in a very positive and meaningful way—through books and stories.

In each of the five prisons we conduct literacy seminars with inmates to help them become more comfortable sharing books with their kids. We hold special family storytelling events, set up children's book libraries in family visiting rooms, and provide countless children's books for kids to keep. We also support the Storybook Program in which inmates record new books onto CD or MP3 and mail the books and recordings home to their children.

One of the NHSPW inmates commented: *"I love (CLiF's program) because we are able to choose books specially for our kids around their interests. It helps the connection. We get to talk about it later with our kids, and it helps us feel like good moms, even from in here."*

In a recent survey, 98% of inmates reported that the CLiF's COPI program helped strengthen the connection between them and their children, and 91% said the CLiF program helped their children become more interested in books and stories.



Inmates select new books, write special notes in them, and then CLiF mails the books home to the children

Toni Viola, Family Support Specialist at NHSPW, added: *"I am so thrilled CLiF has now come to the women's prison, and the women are excited as well. We are gearing up for the next CLiF seminar, and the (sign ups) are pouring in."*

The Year of the Book Connects Literacy to Hands-on Learning

University of Arkansas professor Jay Greene, who researches civic values, school choice, and high school graduation rates, recently released his findings on the educational value of field trips. **He found kids, especially rural and disadvantaged students, who went on field trips retained more historical and sociological information, better understood vocabulary and context, and increased tolerance and empathy.**

CLiF's Year of the Book has options for schools and teachers to use funding to support field trips. In 2018-2019, CLiF funded trips to the **Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum**, to see **Step Afrika** live, to **research beaver dams**, to stargaze at the **Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium**, and to study weather at the **Mount Washington Observatory**.

The Allenstown Elementary School (NH) fourth-grade teacher who lead the Boston trip described the outcome of the project and the culminating field trip: *"This project not only opened up a new world of learning for my students but made me a better teacher. I now have a collection of fabulous activities to deepen the depth of knowledge my students have on how to read literature about history. They can now look at more than one perspective and respect the fact that everyone thinks differently."*



JFK Elementary's English Language Learners Class Visits the Clemmons Family Farm in Charlotte, VT

At the Eden Central School (VT) a first-grade teacher wrote of their visit to the planetarium: *"Many students had never been to a museum before so they were all fascinated. At the end of the year, I asked students what they would like to do over the summer and one child told me, 'I'm going to bring my whole family to the museum!'. Another student wrote her opinion assessment on why you should go visit a planetarium."*

Projects funded by CLiF's Year of the Book and executed by creative teachers, librarians, and school staff support Professor Greene's research that field trips do spark interest, lead to important memories and further investigation, and connect kids with their teachers, community, and world.

DONOR PROFILE

Beth Healy: "CLiF Changes Lives!"

CLiF is blessed to have hundreds of loyal supporters who allow us to serve tens of thousands of children and families. Beth Healy is one such supporter. She and her husband Jack Calhoun made their first donation to CLiF in 2008. Beth served on CLiF's Board of Directors for six years, including as Board Chair.

Why do you care so strongly about children's literacy?

From a young age I travelled to far off places through books. Learning from CLiF how many children do not have books of their own at home, **I felt the need to help other children have the transformative power and enjoyment of reading and books in their lives.**

What makes CLiF different?

Each year I've seen CLiF grow to serve more children, families, and groups. This growth has been guided by an excellent Strategic Plan developed by a strong, energetic, creative Board and staff with a dedication to and passion for children's literacy.

You've seen CLiF's work in action. What are your impressions?

I've attended many CLiF events for children and families. **Even those children who may arrive uninterested are enthusiastic and engaged after a CLiF presenter shares their passion for literacy!** At most events children get to select two new books to keep from hundreds of titles. These may be the only books they own. At one event I attended, a local poet had elementary school children write their own poems. At another, a local children's author showed children how a book was written, illustrated, and published.

What would you say to anyone considering becoming a CLiF supporter?

If you care about the future of our community, our state, our world, there is no better investment than supporting children ages 0-12, our future, in learning to read and write. CLiF helps children to learn, grow, and be inspired by reading for both knowledge and enjoyment.

CLiF changes lives!



CLiF Supporter Beth Healy

Consider an IRA Rollover

Did you know that individuals 70½ years or older can take advantage of the Charitable IRA Rollover option to transfer up to \$100,000 annually from their IRA to CLiF without incurring federal income taxes today, or estate or income taxes in the future?

It's an easy way to support CLiF and the thousands of children we serve.

For more information speak to your financial advisor or contact Duncan at 802-244-0944 or clif@clifonline.org.

Many thanks!

Books and Museums Inspire Kids



CLiF Presenter Elizabeth Bluemle shares stories with families at the Shelburne Museum

This fall CLiF seeks to combine the power of books and museums through two exciting partnerships with the Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, VT

and the Wonderfeet Kids' Museum in Rutland, VT. **Both museums have been awarded one of CLiF's At-Risk Children grants, which will provide a professional storytelling presentation and free books for all the kids attending the CLiF event!** By partnering with these two great museums we hope to inspire a love of reading and also introduce children to the magic of visiting a local museum. Shelburne Museum will be inviting children from local Head Start classrooms to visit the museum for a morning of storytelling, book selection, and exploring the museum grounds, including the carousel! This is an excellent opportunity to bring children and families to the museum and to eliminate common barriers to a visit, such as transportation and financial challenges.

The Wonderfeet Kids' Museum also has a strong commitment to literacy and they partner with local schools, home school families, and the Rutland Free Library.

Through their fall partnership with CLiF, they will add new books to an onsite library at the museum and host a family literacy celebration, which will also contain a special literacy discussion for parents focused on developing strong early literacy skills and a love of reading. These two museum partnerships are a fantastic way for CLiF to promote experiential learning and a love of literacy as well as highlight these museums as tremendous community resources and learning partners.



Boscawen, NH students show off their new books from the CLiF Year of the Book

News from CLiF's Presenters

Jim Arnosky's book *Little Champ* was published by Maple Tree Editions and tells the story of the legendary monster of Lake Champlain.

Glenn Currie has a new collection of poems and photographs called *Ball of String*.

Rajnii Eddins' collection of poems, *Their Names Are Mine*, was published this year. For a copy of the book, to arrange a visit, or for implicit bias training or culturally responsive education facilitation, contact Rajnii at theirnamesaremine@gmail.com.

Matt Forest Esenwine's poem "The One" was included in the children's poetry anthology, *I Am Someone Else*. His poem "Stone-Kicking" was selected for inclusion in the book, *Except for Love: New England Poets Inspired by Donald Hall*. His poem "Stumpfield Pond, 1975" won the MacGregor Poetry Prize, coordinated by the Robert Frost Farm board of trustees and Derry (NH) Public Library.

Lynda Graham-Barber's book *Say Boo!* has been chosen as a Scholastic Book Club Selection. Her book *Cookie's Fortune* was selected as one of the books to highlight the Dog Days of Summer celebration at Books of Wonder in July in New York City.

Terry Farish's new book, *Aii Yee, Joseph!*, the sequel to *Joseph's Big Ride*, was written in collaboration with South Sudanese rapper, OD Bonny, and published by Groundwood Books.

Karen Gross' new children's book *We See You/Te Vemos* is written in both English and Spanish. *Lady Lucy's Ghost Quest*, the latest in her *Lady Lucy* series, was also published this fall.

Geof Hewitt has a new chapbook out, *Affordable Poems, Alternative Facts*, published by Brown Fedora Books. You can contact him at geofhewitt@gmail.com.

Gina Perry's *TOO MUCH! NOT ENOUGH!* was selected for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in Canada for 2019.

Doug Wilhelm's 16th book, *Street of Storytellers*, was published by Rootstock Publishing of Montpelier.

S. S. Taylor's third Expeditioners adventure, *The Expeditioners and the Lost City of Maps*, came out this fall.

Liza Woodruff's new book, *A Quieter Story*, was published by Margaret Ferguson Books/Holiday House.

You Like Us, You Really Like Us!

This summer we circulated a survey asking CLiF supporters to tell us about themselves and how we might enhance their CLiF experiences. We're reviewing responses and working to respond to individual questions, but we'd like to share some early findings.

Roughly 40% of respondents were first introduced to CLiF by a friend, or through our Executive Director, Duncan, directly. Many described personal experiences that motivate their involvement with CLiF: from childhoods enriched by books and reading (or an absence thereof) to honoring loved ones. CLiF supporters believe reading is vital, transformative, and door-opening. Many are educators, librarians, and community literacy advocates. All are readers and writers who want to share the joys and benefits of literacy.

A number of respondents are interested in learning more about the CLiF team, CLiF presenters, and programs. The team continues to discuss ways to highlight our programs and the authors, illustrators, and storytellers with whom we work. You can find all this and more on CLiF's new website at www.clifonline.org.

Asked what makes CLiF different from other nonprofits, respondents noted the personal involvement of CLiF staff, and the "direct, visible, immediate" impact of CLiF's "focused, tangible mission."

Thank you to everyone who has participated. There's still time to take the survey; access it via SurveyMonkey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7TBYN5E>.

We are grateful for your feedback. Please feel welcome to contact us any time with comments of any kind. We hope each of you feels valued; you are. **We really, really like you, too!**

Sandra Neil Wallace was awarded The Keene Sentinel's Extraordinary Women Award. Her book, *Between the Lines: How Ernie Barnes Went from the Football Field to the Art Gallery*, won the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Golden Kite Honor Award for Nonfiction for Young Readers. It's also been nominated to four state Children's Book Awards lists, including Oklahoma's Sequoyah Children's Book Award.

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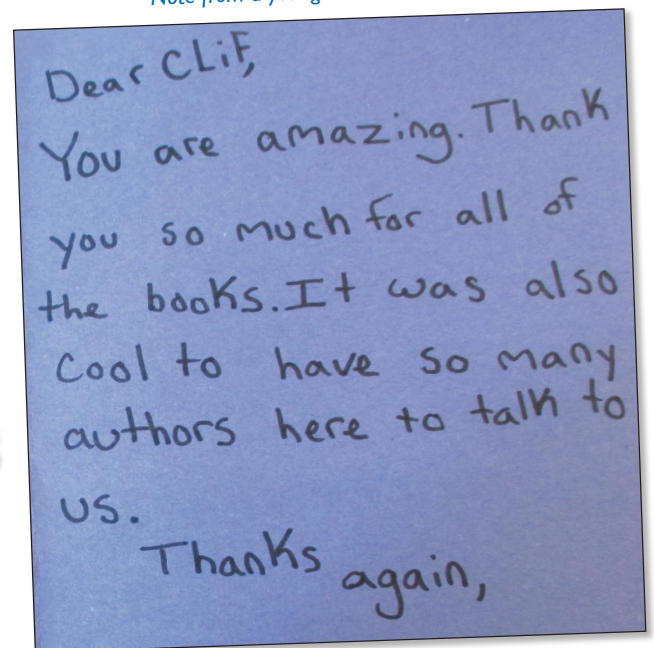
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Please remember to make
your year-end gift to CLIF!

Note from a young reader and writer

*Young readers
with their new books*



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