



## 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 Continues to Give Kids New Books and Literacy Programming During COVID



Boscawen, NH students pick up their new book curb-side

As schools navigate a strange new school year, we continue to support our hardworking partners in our CLiF Year of the Book and Rural Libraries programs as they creatively plan literacy activities.

We anticipate 7-10 in-person CLiF Year of the Book presentations in each school by our talented, diverse presenters. The Rural Library grant places the public librarian at two in-person school events and two events for preschoolers while a CLiF presenter entertains and educates the school population. **Students in Year of the Book schools pick ten new books over the course of the school year; students in Rural Library schools pick two to four books.**

The main aspects of these collaborations will look very different this year. **Schools are requesting a combination of recorded and live virtual events, and plan to offer three-day writing workshops with recorded lessons and live critiques.**

Libraries are ordering books that will be book-talked virtually. Many libraries ran successful virtual summer reading programs and have developed ways to maintain relationships with kids and families through outside book groups and story times, virtual book groups and author talks, and sharing resources with the school libraries.

Both the Year of the Book and Rural Libraries programs provide "mini grants," small amounts of funds designated for wish list projects. **We anticipate a whole new level of creativity as teachers and librarians purchase online subscriptions, books for every student to participate in whole school reads, themed book collections to support lessons that may be delivered virtually, and science journals for recording observations.**

**Our loyal volunteers deserve a huge shout-out as they come in for solo shifts in the library to pack books and get them into kids' hands.** Last spring, dedicated staff made selections for kids and sent books on the bus, left them outside for pick-up, and got them ready before school closed. Some even had drive-thru book selections! While this fall, some schools hosted modified CLiF book giveaways with tables filled with books for kids to choose, many have had to adjust. Other schools created order forms so kids can choose books from CLiF's giveaway library, and some plan to have teachers pre-select books for their classrooms. **Thank you to all our partners for getting books to kids!**

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With time in school decreased, we recognize the need to get books, materials, and inspiration to kids. School-based programs will look different this year, but at their core remain the same, with exciting programming and dedicated educators looking for the "just-right" books for all their students.



A Conway, NH student listens to outdoor storytelling

# A Safe Harbor for At-Risk Children

In this scary time, books can be a safe harbor for kids, and a friend when they're alone. Unfortunately, due to library closures, and a very challenging economy for the most vulnerable, many of the low-income, at-risk, and rural kids we serve find themselves in a 'book desert'.

CLiF is doing everything we can to fill that void in New Hampshire and Vermont. Since COVID hit, we've donated more than \$600,000 worth of new books to those kids who need them the most.

We've distributed our inspiring titles to children and families through soup kitchens and food programs, homeless shelters, affordable housing developments, schools, childcare centers, migrant education programs, afterschool programs, special education groups, English language learner groups, and many other venues.

Even though all the prisons CLiF serves are on lockdown, we've continued book distributions to the children and grandchildren of inmates, and we recorded a CLiF literacy seminar that inmates are able to watch on the prisons' closed circuit TV.

And, as always, CLiF continues to provide dynamic, exciting presentations by professional authors, illustrators, poets, storytellers, and graphic novelists. These take place in person when possible, and virtually when necessary. Either way, our presenters are able to share their love of literacy face-to-face.

After most CLiF presentations are over, young readers are able to select a couple of new books of their choice to keep. Then they head home, curl up with an enthralling tale, and leave this crazy COVID world behind. To quote Emily Dickinson, "There is no frigate like a book to take us lands away."

Thank you so much for enabling CLiF to continue helping tens of thousands of deserving children. We simply could not do it without you!

  
Duncan McDougall  
CLiF Executive Director



Duncan tells stories to Bridgewater, NH students pre-COVID-19

## Who's Who

### CLiF Staff

Duncan McDougall • Executive Director  
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Erika Nichols-Frazer • Communications Manager  
Kat Lane • Data/Office Manager

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## Let's Stay In Touch!

Love getting updates from CLiF and seeing our happy young readers and writers?

Subscribe to our e-newsletter for great stories and pictures. You'll hear from us once a month, and we'll never share your e-mail address.

And check out our blog for up-to-the-minute stories, news, trends in literacy, parenting topics, book recommendations, and more, posted by a roster of staff and guest bloggers.

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# Messages in a Book: Incarcerated Parents Connect with their Kids During COVID



Inmates select new books to send home to their kids

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges in the way correctional facilities provide programming and facilitate family visits. Across Vermont and New Hampshire, many children of incarcerated parents are unable to attend in-person visits due to health and safety restrictions. Inside the prisons, many programs have been put on hold. But fostering a sense of family connection during this difficult time of physical separation is critically important to both parents and children.

♥ My Princess ♥ I Love you  
so, so, so, much!! My Baby ♥  
I Hope you Love this Book  
as much as Mommy does ♥  
♥ you my baby  
KRENN ♥ Love  
MOMMY ♥

I Love you so much,  
and when I get home  
we will Read a bunch of  
books together!  
Love,  
Daddy

I love you baby girl dad Will be home soon

With some creative adjustments, we have still been able to mail books home to children with special notes from their parents tucked inside. *"Daddy loves you very much and I miss you even more. Please sit down and take a little time out of every day to read a little ..."*

Our program partners inside the facilities have worked hard to facilitate this process so that kids can stay connected to both family and reading. Parents and relatives chose books for their kids at the facility or write CLiF a note about the types of books that are popular with the children in their lives. Back at the office, CLiF volunteers process the books for mailing and in some cases hand-select books from our library that match the interests communicated by parents. Each of our five prison partners have participated in getting books home to kids over the spring, summer, and fall.

Because we are temporarily unable to visit our partners in person, Duncan recorded a video version of the parent literacy discussion that he typically delivers to inmates. As our prison partners restart in-person programming in small groups, inmates can watch this video seminar, select books for their children, and write personal notes to send home. CLiF continues to mail these "messages in a book" home to foster critical connections through reading.

Enjoy the book my  
little man!  
All I do is read. I love it.  
Hope you do too.  
I love + miss you.  
I'm always thinking of you.  
don't ever doubt it.  
I love you.  
♥ Daddy

## Welcome, Kat and Leslie!

CLiF is delighted to welcome **Kat Lane** and **Leslie Williamson** to our team!

Kat, our new **Data/Office Manager**, has a degree from Colby College, and many years of administrative, marketing, and sales experience in the fields of education, and travel and leisure.



Leslie has joined **CLiF's Board of Directors**. She was founder and Executive Director of the Center for School Success, and has taught at Plymouth State University, Southern New Hampshire University, and Harvard University Extension School.



We are very fortunate to have them as our colleagues!



An Eden, VT student opens his mind by opening a new book

# Food, Shelter, and Books: The Perfect Partnership



*The Lunchbox in Barton, VT served up free, healthy meals and brand-new CLiF books*

Imagine being a child who does not know where your next meal is coming from, or where you'll be sleeping tonight. Unfortunately, too many children and families in our region live in poverty and

struggle to make ends meet, especially in these difficult times. These families may not be able to afford books and access to high-quality educational experiences during the pandemic. In order to learn

successfully, students also need housing and food security and to have their basic needs met.

This spring and summer, CLiF was proud to partner with several programs offering meals and shelter to families in need, including the **Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter in Nashua, NH**; **The Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) in Burlington, VT**; **The Upper Valley Haven in White River Junction, VT**; and summer meal sites in **Barton** and **Burlington, VT**. These partners distributed new children's books along with meals and services, so kids could keep learning and having fun while feeding their bodies and minds.

CLiF Program Manager Jana Brown says, *"At a time when many of the families we serve are particularly vulnerable and are dealing with issues such as unemployment and food insecurity, CLiF has worked with organizations serving children and families in high need to ensure all children continue to have access to the tools they need to learn and thrive."*

## With Her Bequest, a Renaissance Woman Inspires the Next Generation

Ruth Sylvester had a degree in classical Greek and Latin. She lined roadsides with daffodils. She was a dance caller, an accomplished cellist, an adventurous backcountry skier, an avid gardener, and someone who loved bringing friends together for games, fresh-picked strawberries, or a dance.

A freelance writer and editor by profession, Ruth's head was awash in memorized poetry and doggerel that emerged at random. She was in love with words and sharing them with others. This, of course, made Ruth and CLiF a perfect match.

Commented her wife, Elfie Forbes, *"Ruth loved books more than almost anything, and she delighted in cultivating a love of books in others, especially kids. Hence her great fondness for CLiF."*

Ruth encountered CLiF in 1999. In an early conversation, CLiF founder Duncan McDougall mentioned he needed a database to help track the growing number of donors. On the spot, Ruth offered to build the database herself. And she did. She was a very active volunteer who selflessly assisted many local organizations.

For 22 years Ruth was a loyal CLiF supporter, and she periodically attended CLiF presentations. After one event, she said: *"... I've seen the pictures of book-choosing events, but I was not prepared for the thrill of seeing kids turned loose to choose... indeed an inspiring experience."*

Alas, Ruth passed away this spring in Norwich, VT. **Wishing to help inspire many more young readers and writers for years to come, she left CLiF a very**



*Longtime CLiF supporter Ruth Sylvester enjoys a good book*

Photo courtesy of Steven Maker

**generous bequest in her will.** Those funds will support various CLiF programs this year and beyond, and will also contribute to our CLiF Building Campaign. *Thank you, Ruth!*

If you, too, are a lover of children and literacy, we hope you will consider joining Ruth and the many others who have included CLiF in their planned giving. It's easy. To learn how to do so, contact your attorney, accountant, or Duncan at 802-244-0944 or [clif@clifonline.org](mailto:clif@clifonline.org).



# CLiF's Summer Readers Program Innovates to Inspire 12,000 Young Readers



Simon Brooks conducts socially-distanced storytelling in Jaffrey, NH

Across Vermont and New Hampshire, the summer of 2020 looked and felt a lot different for the libraries, summer school programs and summer camps that CLiF traditionally serves each summer. But the heart of our summer programming was still available for thousands of kids across both states. Thousands of brand new books were delivered to kids using new and creative delivery models and children still had the opportunity to engage and share a summer storytelling

experience with our network of talented CLiF presenters.

CLiF creatively transformed our usual summer programming to offer a six-week virtual author series this year. For each of the six weeks, CLiF authors, poets, and storytellers joined kids live via Zoom to share stories and their work. These presentations were followed by informative question-and-answer sessions. CLiF storyteller Simon Brooks also recorded a selection of his humorous and

engaging tales that we could share with all of our summer partners. And CLiF did host several outdoor storytelling presentations in beautiful green spaces where children and families could safely distance and still enjoy a community storytelling experience. Simon Brooks shared, *"The happiness on the kids' faces at the events shone through the masks, laughter still sounded, and the result was incredible. When families went up to get their CLiF-donated books there was palpable joy and a lot of mask-muted chatter. People needed to get out and see each other and these CLiF events were perfect, no matter where they were."*

Even under challenging circumstances, CLiF served 12,302 kids this summer and gave away 23,098 brand new books! We are grateful to our 87 summer partners for all their collaboration, hard work, and feedback. Danielle at the Wonderfeet Kids' Museum, a frequent Summer Readers partner, shared that *"all of the kids in the camps...were really excited to pick out their own books and sort through the huge variety we received. Parents who visited the museum were also excited to hear about the book giveaway and many used it as an opportunity to try new books — we noticed many families making an effort to choose books about racially, ethnically, or socially diverse characters."*

## Write On: CLiF's Kids' Writing Contest



A CLiF Kids' Writing Contest winner from Bristol, VT with her new books

Since Spring, we've been brainstorming creative ways to keep kids reading, writing, and engaged in stories during the COVID-19 pandemic, when schools and programs are remote and/or on hiatus.

This summer, CLiF held a kids' writing contest in which we challenged young writers (ages 12 and under) in New Hampshire and Vermont to come up with their own "fractured fairytales." These creative, unique takes on classic tales did not disappoint. There were three cowboys instead of bears, and Three Little Pigs without the Big Bad Wolf. There were snow queens and zombie gingerbread men and enchanted deer.

We loved reading these original stories and had a tough time selecting winners from each age category! All participants

## 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](mailto:clif@clifonline.org). Many thanks!

received a new book from CLiF, and the winners each received a small collection of books to add to their personal libraries. We hope these young writers keep writing and sharing their imaginations with the world!

# Literacy Resources and Activities: It's a 'Screen Time' Balancing Act These Days



Author/journalist Sandra Neil Wallace shares her work with Keene, NH students

In “normal” times, the schools and libraries that CLiF works with are constantly looking for low- or no-cost literacy activities to inspire kids to read and write more. But nowadays, in these “not-so-normal” times of COVID-19, the quest for such literacy activities is not as straight-forward. It isn't just schools and libraries, but now also parents of

students either partially or fully based at home, who are searching for quality literacy activities. And with so much learning happening at home, there's the added factor of reliable internet service (or not...). Plus, with the educational norm having shifted so much that it's barely recognizable, teachers and parents alike are, understandably, overwhelmed.

So, in these unusual times, CLiF is committed to supporting and promoting literacy resources more than ever. We're here to help! This summer CLiF hosted a weekly Virtual Storytelling Series, where CLiF's partners — authors, poets, and storytellers — took to the screen to showcase their talents and answer students' questions; links to all 10 wonderful presentations can be found on our website (Go to [Clifonline.org](https://clifonline.org) > Resources) and we resumed this Virtual Series again in the fall.

In addition, CLiF continues to maintain our ever-growing list of literacy activities on our [Resources web page](#). The 70+ activities can quickly be sorted to suit the audience; *Community Wide*, *School Wide*, *Pre-K*, *Early Elementary*, etc., and include lots of fun activities such as *Reading with Animals*, *Poem in Your Pocket*, and *Book Trailer Posters*. The wonderful thing about most of these activities is that you need just a few basic supplies to get started, and — in a time where much of our lives takes place on screens — they are primarily non-screen activities. CLiF continues to be a leader in literacy in New Hampshire and Vermont and will continue to offer storytelling and tips for fun literacy activities at home.

## News from CLiF's Presenters

Jason Chin's new book, *Your Place in the Universe*, was released this fall.

New CLiF presenter Sarah Dillard's picture book *I Don't Like Rain* (Aladdin/Simon & Schuster) was published in March. Her Graphic Novel Chapter Book, *Extraordinary Warren's World* (Aladdin/Simon & Schuster), a reissuing of *Extraordinary Warren* and *Extraordinary Warren Saves the Day* in one volume, was published in July.

Karen Gross has two new children's books: *Tongue Twisters and Beyond: Words at Play*, and a bilingual book called *We See You; Te Vemos*.

Brown Fedora Books recently published Geof Hewitt's chapbook, “Affordable Poems, Alternative Facts.” And indeed it is affordable: \$3.99!

Sy Montgomery's new *Scientists in the Field* book, *Condor Comeback*, and her new picture book, *Becoming a Good Creature*, were published by Houghton Mifflin.

Jan Reynolds has a new book, *Lion Queens of India*.

Rebecca Rupp's latest book, *Home Learning Year by Year*, was published in January, and has a grade-by-grade account of general learning expectations, info on designing your own curriculum, many hands-on activities and book lists, and suggestions for alternative approaches to education (Broadway Books, 2020).

Steve Swinburne has an essay in the anthology *Nonfiction Writers Dig Deep*.



Poet Matt Forrest Esenwine helps young writers in Colebrook, NH write original poems



Author Carolyn Scoppettone tells stories in Barre, VT

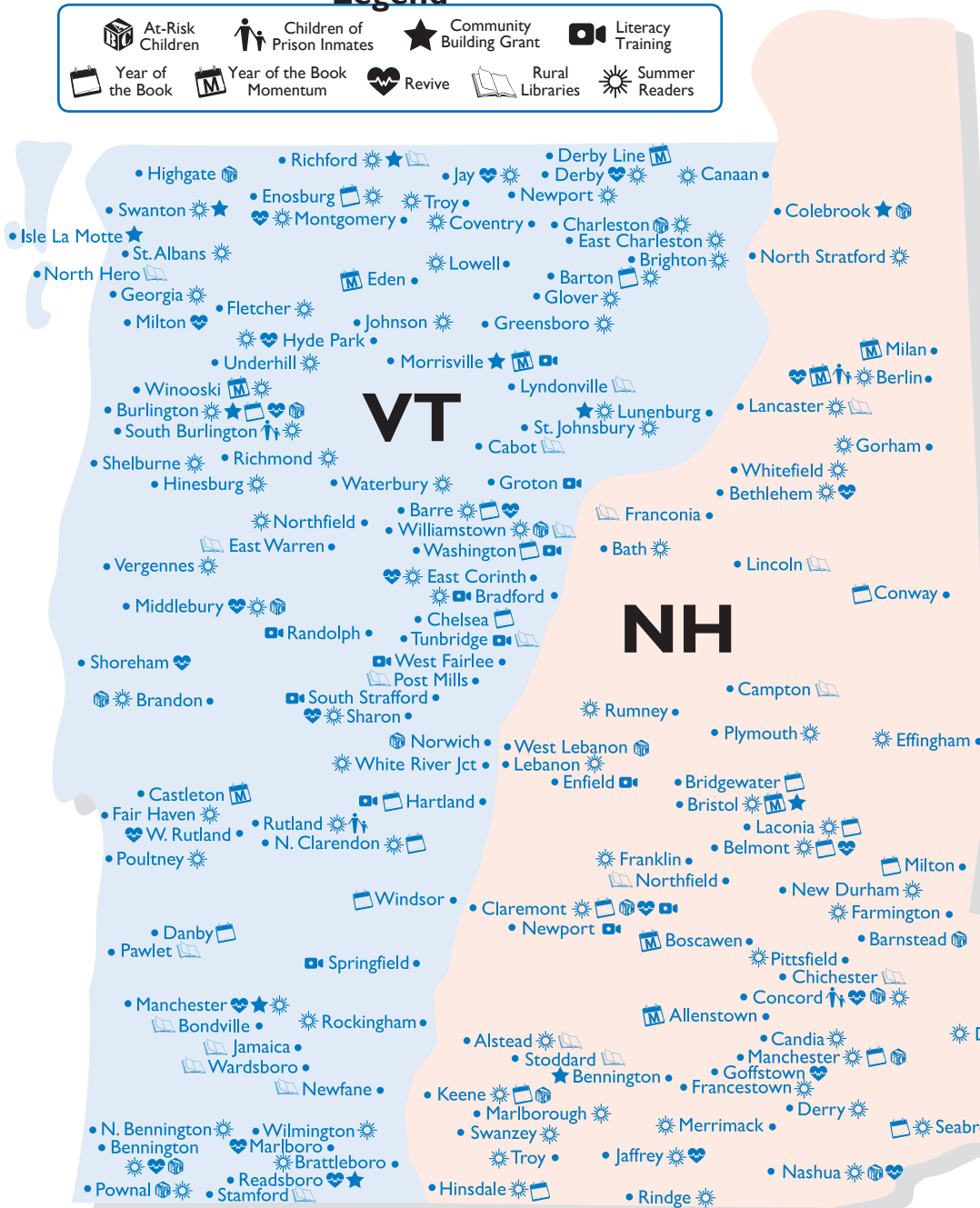
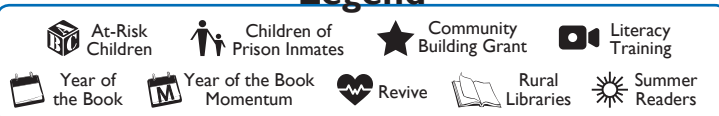


# CLiF Sponsorships (January – December 2020)

Since 1998 CLiF has served 300,000 children in more than 420 towns across New Hampshire and Vermont. Through nine programs—and with the partnership of more than 65 professional authors, illustrators, poets, storytellers and graphic novelists—CLiF inspires low-income, at-risk, and rural children to love reading and writing.

CLiF provides free, inspiring literacy programs and new books to: children of prison inmates; refugee, migrant and foster children; children who live in shelters and low-income housing; and children served by bookmobiles, Head Start, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other social service organizations. CLiF sponsors rural libraries, elementary schools, prisons, and provides programs to dozens of other sites that serve children.

## Legend



## At-Risk Children



Storytelling presentations and new [on-site library for partnering organizations](#) serving at-risk children, a parent seminar, and two new books for each child.

## Children of Prison Inmates



[Family literacy seminars for incarcerated parents](#) and new books to send home to their kids, grandkids, or nieces and nephews, plus new on-site children's libraries, storytelling, family events, and the storybook program.

## Community Building



Training with CLiF's professional presenters, new books, and program support for community-based programs.

## Literacy Training



Early educator literacy training using CLiF's video.

## Year of the Book



\$25,000 in literacy programming, including author visits, workshops, and fun family events, plus new books for ten selected elementary schools in NH and VT, and ten new books for each child.

## Momentum



Additional literacy support following the Year of the Book.

## Revive



Additional literacy support, such as [author visits and funding for special literacy initiatives](#) for past CLiF partners.

## Rural Libraries



Two storytelling presentations and [new books for rural public libraries and local elementary schools](#), plus two new books for each child and a program grant.

## Summer Readers



Inspiring [storytelling presentations and two new books](#) for each child during the summer.



Children's Literacy Foundation  
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Please remember to make  
your year-end gift to CLiF!



*A young reader  
is excited for his  
new books*

*Note from a young reader and writer*

Dear Storyteller I love The Book's That  
I chose I cant wait to read it and I love The  
Store That you told us.



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