



Colorado Humanities Newsletter

September 11, 2023

September is here, and the academic school year is underway for 2023-2024! As a former elementary, preschool, and English-language development teacher, I have been concerned by the very real issue of staff shortages in childcare and education in Colorado. This comes at a time when the impacts of the pandemic on language development and academic skills are still huge. In spite of the

challenges, some of the most amazing and inspiring people you will meet anywhere are in our education community, and they are working hard to innovate and offer more, not less, to the families they serve. They have a sincere desire to ensure all kids in Colorado have the best chance at education and life success, and it is well known that the path begins long before children even reach our K-12 schools. This is one reason why I'm so passionate about our Motherread/Fatheread Colorado program, which helps educators empower parents and primary caregivers to help ensure children have the greatest conditions for a positive start. I am so excited by the feedback from participants who say these classes make a difference!

Karen Murphy

Motherread/Fatheread Colorado Program Coordinator

Motherread/Fatheread Colorado for Early Childhood and Family Literacy

At Colorado Humanities we are doing as much as we can to support those who work directly with young children and their families. One of our signature programs since 2004 is Motherread/Fatheread Colorado (MFC), which offers services in two components, Motherread/Fatheread for educators who work with preschool teachers and parents of young children, and ChildcareRead for childcare providers. In 2023 alone, we trained and certified over 155 public school staff members and other adults, enhancing their awareness and skills, and providing children's books and other materials for promoting children's early literacy learning. Comments from MFC participants encourage us in our work, and we'll share just a few here:

"The Motherread/Fatheread training was more than I expected, it added to the culture of the district, and I have great hope that it changes the literacy experience for our students and their families." – Dr. Anthony Martinez, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Pueblo School District 70.

“This training has helped me change the way I use books with children both at home and in the classroom.” Early Childhood Care and Education Provider, Weld County

“Thank you! I learned so much and can’t wait to share it with parents and kids!” Home Visitor, Weld County

We welcome your support for this important program. To participate in a training or to bring one to your community, please contact [Karen](#). Financial support is also always gratefully accepted, and can be made [here](#), or by sending your check to our office at 7935 E. Prentice Avenue, Suite 450, Greenwood Village, CO 80111.



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Enter the 2024 Colorado Book Awards

Submissions for the 2024 Colorado Book Awards (CBA) opened on September 1, 2023, and will close on January 5, 2024 for books published for the first time between October 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023. We are particularly interested in receiving and reviewing works created by authors of communities that have been historically marginalized. [Visit our website](#) to find more information and the link to submit.

Selectors and Judges Needed!

Colorado Book Award submissions are reviewed in a two-part process by volunteer selectors and judges from across the state. In the first round, a panel of three selectors reviews all books submitted in a category to determine the finalists, typically three per category. A panel of three judges then reviews the finalists and selects a winner. If you enjoy reading Colorado’s new up-and-coming books, this role is perfect for you. [Learn about the categories on our website.](#)



Andrea Gibson Named Colorado Poet Laureate

“I want to come up with new and inventive ways to help a larger population fall in love with and appreciate poetry. I want everyone to have a poem that they can go to like you would with a song. Poetry can be the vehicle that allows us to know each other and expand humanity. That’s what I hope to help do with this role,” said Gibson.

Governor Polis announced that Andrea Gibson (they/them) has been selected as the new Colorado Poet Laureate, succeeding Bobby LeFebre. Gibson infuses a sense of hope, awe, and possibility into their work and believes that poetry can engender empathy, connect communities, and awaken audiences to new perspectives with the power and delight of elevated language.

The Poet Laureate serves as an active advocate for poetry, literacy, and literature by participating in readings and other events at schools, libraries, literary festivals, and the State Capitol. We look forward to working with Andrea as they create opportunities to expand Coloradans' engagement with the written and spoken word. Join us in congratulating Andrea on this exciting new role!

History Live! Durango

The Southwest Colorado Humanities Roundtable has coordinated a month of history, anthropological, and archaeological events in La Plata County for this September that will include two Colorado Humanities presentations by national Chautauqua scholar Brian “Fox” Ellis. The first of his performances will be “Birding with Audubon,” on Thursday, September 28, 9-10 a.m., and “Adventures with John James Audubon” on Thursday, September 28, 7-8 p.m., at Fort Lewis College. Brian will also present “Charles Darwin and His Revolutionary Idea” on Friday, September 29, 7-8 p.m., at Durango’s Powerhouse Museum. [Visit our calendar](#) to view the event-packed month.

2023 Colorado Book Award Author Updates

The 2023 Colorado Book Awards finalists and winning authors are not slowing down! Between winning awards, interviewing, and releasing more books, these talented writers have kept busy.

In addition to releasing a new book, *The Phone Book: Stay Safe, Be Smart, and Make the World Better with the Powerful Device in Your Hand*, Jessica Spear was awarded first place in Story Monster's 2023 Purple Dragonfly Book Award in the School Issues category for her book *Middle School - Safety Goggles Advised*, a CBA juvenile literature finalist.

Mark Lee Gardner’s book, *The Earth Is All That Lasts*, a CBA history/biography finalist, also won the John M. Carroll Literary Award from the Little Big Horn Associates. Mark gave a presentation on his book that aired on C-SPAN and [can be viewed online](#).

The Chimera Club, a CBA mystery finalist by Chuck Greaves, was honored as the year’s best mystery novel at the 2023 Colorado Authors League Awards ceremony.

Cristina Holbrook, author of the CBA romance winner *All the Flowers of the Mountain*, has participated in a number of interviews by the [Colorado Sun](#), [Summit Daily](#), [KOA Radio](#), and [more](#). Christina notes, “Winning the Colorado Book Award has really made a huge difference to the success of my novel.”

And, we also congratulate Vuahini Vara, author of CBA general fiction finalist *The Immortal King Rao*, who will release her new book *This Is Salvaged* on September 26. [Book orders for](#)

This Is Salvaged are now available. Signed copies are available upon request.

Congratulations to the Colorado Book Awards authors. We can't wait to see what else is in store.

More News

Latinx KidLit Book Festival Fridays

The Latinx KidLit Book Festival, from September 22 to October 13, is a virtual celebration of Latinx children's literature, authors, and illustrators. Join live from your classroom, library, or home and meet Latinx creators of picture books, middle grade and young adult novels, poetry, comic books, and graphic novels. To join the festival, tune into their [YouTube page](#) or view their [schedule of events](#).

“Making it Up” with Carter Wilson

Live Podcast Recording

Join the electrifying live podcast of “Making it Up” with Carter Wilson at the [Broomfield Auditorium](#) on Thursday, September 14 at 7 p.m. Carter, whose book *The Dead Husband: A Novel* was the 2022 Colorado Book Award winner in the thriller category, will interview three writers about their inspiration and creative process. He will also hold a Q&A session with the audience. Participating writers are award winning



“Return of the Corn Mothers” Closing Reception

History Colorado's “Return of the Corn Mothers” project includes books, photographs, and the written history exhibit of multi-generational and multi-cultural women from the Southwest who exemplify the essence of Corn Mother, a deity-figure that represents growth, community and sustenance. With this exhibit, History Colorado invites us to honor the induction of 22 women to the Corn Mothers family. On September 29, History Colorado will [hold a closing celebration](#) for the year-long exhibit that began in September 2022. This closing event is free and open to all.

graphic novelist and TED Talk speaker R.
Alan Brooks, Denver Post bestselling author
and two-time Colorado Book Award finalist
Emily Littlejohn, and New York Times Editor
Pick and Good Morning America Buzz Pick
author Erika T. Wurth.

Thank you



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