

# Time to Spread the Joy of Reading

NEA'S READ ACROSS AMERICA MARKS YEAR 19 ON MARCH 2. ARE YOU READY TO READ?

Wisconsin paraprofessional Lynn Goss has been planning her reading celebration for months. She's organized a week's worth of reading activities, helped her school create a classroom door decorating contest, and picked out books, stickers, and treats to give to her students. For Goss, a veteran Read Across America coordinator, this is her favorite time of year, a chance to shine the spotlight on great books and authors.

In Jacksonville, Miss., members of the Shelby County Association are hard at work, gathering the PTA, school district, and local barbershops and hair salons into community readings and book giveaways for local students.

And Missouri and New Mexico, state affiliate—organized Cat in the Hat tours and bilingual readings have been in the works for weeks.

## Why the flurry of activity?

The countdown to the largest celebration in the nation—March 2, NEA's Read Across America Day and Dr. Seuss's birthday! More than 45 million children, teens, and adults are expected to gather for NEA's annual literacy party created in 1997.

"Nineteen years ago, an NEA member came to us with a simple plea," explains NEA President Lily Eskelsen García today. "My students aren't reading, inside school or outside school. They don't know the joy I feel when I read and share books with others. Can you please help me show them the fun—the joy—in reading?"

Read Across America Day was created with the help of founding partners Dr. Seuss Enterprises and Random House Children's Publishing. "It is a day to honor the work our members do in classrooms, schools, and libraries, and on school buses, encouraging students and parents to read aloud and read together," Eskelsen García says.

Every year, NEA members around the country seize the day and make it their own, transforming school campuses into scenes from favorite books by Dr. Seuss. They create character dress-up days and

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As part of NEA's Read Across America, the Cat-a-Van visited Evangeline Elementary School in Lafayette, La.

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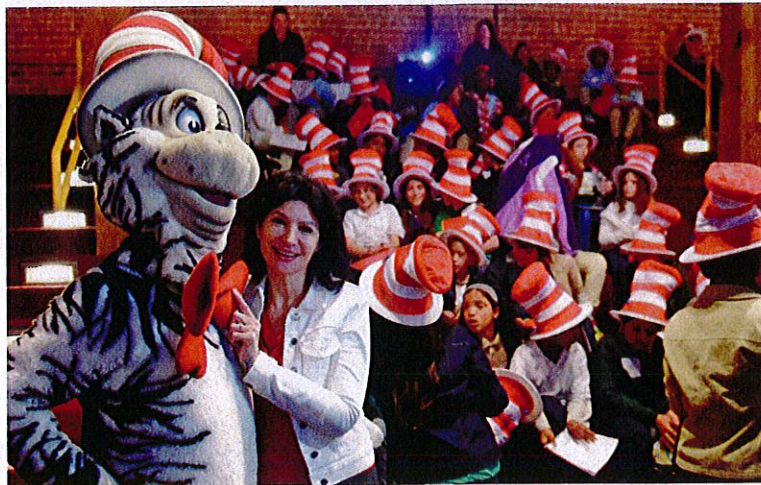


## TEACHING & LEARNING

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parades featuring favorite books by a variety of authors, and schedule reading pajama parties and author visits.

"The possibilities are endless and not limited to young children," says Carol Bauer, a fourth-grade teacher at Grafton Bethel Elementary School, and chair of NEA's Read Across America Advisory Committee. "High school students can hold marathon readings of their favorite books or stage poetry slams and readings for younger students. They're also great at creating reading flash mobs and book trailers," she says.



### Unsure how to get started?

NEA's Read Across America website offers planning tips, downloadable materials, and photos and videos of previous reading events. The site includes a media section with downloadable press releases, editorials, and a planning section with proclamations, and school board presentations, which are also downloadable. You can also find reading activities around the country, and even internationally, at the Read Across America pledge site [readacrossamerica.org](http://readacrossamerica.org).

You can follow NEA's Read Across America on Facebook, Pinterest, Flickr, Instagram, and YouTube. All are accessible from the Read Across America website.

And because NEA's Read Across America is a year-round program, a school year literacy calendar with diverse books and reading resources is included on the site. Limited print copies of the calendar are available to NEA members who contact [readacross@nea.org](mailto:readacross@nea.org). The calendar is also

NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia joins students and The Cat in the Hat for Read Across America Day 2015.

available to download at the Read Across America website.

What can you do? Spread the word about NEA's Read Across America and its rich resources. Make your plans to celebrate NEA's Read Across America Day on Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2. And don't forget to pledge your participation at [readacrossamerica.org](http://readacrossamerica.org).

— ANITA MERINA

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—CAROL BAUER, FOURTH-GRADE TEACHER AT GRAFTON BETHEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND CHAIR OF NEA'S READ ACROSS AMERICA ADVISORY COMMITTEE



[www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross)



## Help Your School Library and Reading Community

NEA's Books Across America is back with \$1,000 grants for school libraries in need, thanks to a generous donation by Walden Media and The Weinstein Company, producers of the film, "The Giver." NEA members will be able to apply for one of 100 grants in the amount of \$1,000, made available by the NEA Foundation to fund the purchase of diverse books and reading materials for under resourced school libraries. For more information, go to the Read Across America website [nea.org/readacross](http://nea.org/readacross).