

## **IDEA STARTERS – International Literacy Day**

*Work independently or with your local Rotary Club.*

- Stage a Fun Run for Literacy and provide donated books to participants.
- Use newspapers to go global — conduct a scavenger hunt for country names or compare how stories are covered by newspapers from different parts of the world.
- Match different alphabets (Chinese, Cyrillic, Arabic, Hindi, etc.) to countries.
- Read and compare folk tales from different countries.
- Invite students, parents, or guests who have lived in other parts of the world to read a story or to talk about classrooms in other countries.
- Hold a cultural fair with information displays about children’s native or ancestral countries. Read stories, share songs, and have people dress in ethnic costumes.
- Have students select countries, research essays on similarities/differences of literacy issues internationally.
- Create an event with a reading theme, such as Read Across Asia or Reading Takes Me Places. Be part of read-in chain that celebrates books written by authors of certain ethnic or cultural groups, like the Hispanic American Read-In Chain.
- Celebrate with a book fair. Invite an author or illustrator.
- Form links with a school or educational group in another country and have letter-writing campaigns, book collections, and other activities that generate media and public interest in your school or group and literacy issues in other parts of the world.
- Think globally, act locally. The Internet is a great resource for communicating throughout the world. Tap into its potential as a tool for making global contacts.
- Ask an adult learner involved in a literacy program to give a testimonial.
- Tap your students’ creativity for ideas about how to make the community more aware of literacy issues.
- Establish one-day hotline that community members call with questions about reading, learning disabilities, literacy programs, and resources. Staff hotline with reading professionals/volunteers from literacy organizations.
- Have older students make books to share with younger students or donate to childcare centers.
- Conduct a read-a-thon to raise money for community literacy programs.
- Partner with a television/radio station, magazine/newspaper to support literacy projects.
- Ask a local business to help heighten awareness about a reading or literacy topic. A supermarket chain may agree to print a literacy message on its shopping bags. A local dairy might carry tips for parents on its packaging. Many utility suppliers feature community issues in newsletters sent with monthly bills.
- Invite a publisher to your classroom or school to discuss how books are developed.
- Ask a local bookstore to donate books to disadvantaged children or for reading contest prizes.
- Initiate an annual contest or award. Hold a writing contest for students or senior citizens, or a film contest for the best home video about reading.
- Organize local businesses to raise money to purchase magazines and books for area schools.
- Recruit sponsors/mentors who will ensure that children have school supplies and an adult to read with.
- Hold a press conference to publicize literacy issues in your community.

## **Project samples and other resources:**

[ReadWriteThink.org](http://ReadWriteThink.org) website developed by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English with support from the Verizon Foundation, provides lesson plans and activities for reading that incorporate technology and the Internet.

### **Reading Across Continents**

Connects Students and Teachers around the World via Technology and Literature. IRA's Washington D.C.'s ILD event on 9/8/08 launched this project. Inaugurated in January 2009, *Reading Across Continents* linked Washington, D.C.'s School Without Walls High School (SWW) students with their counterparts in secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria and Accra, Ghana. Via live feeds, author visits, international student and teacher exchanges, blogs, email, writing, reading, and the study of history, geography, and economy of the countries involved, the students and teachers in both countries reflected on their lives and connected with the overseas classes. US, Nigerian, and Ghanaian students experienced the cultures described in the novels *Copper Sun* by US author Sharon Draper, *Things Fall Apart* by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, and *The Girl Who Can* by Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo. Draper met with SWW students and Abuja and Accra students. The students forged incredible international friendships through this literacy project. (The US Department of State contributed to this initial project to facilitate the cultural exchanges of students, teachers, and authors.) Contact Sakil Malik at [smalik@reading.org](mailto:smalik@reading.org).

### **Sudan Teacher Training Initiative**

Supported by International Reading Association and Rotary International volunteers, Rotarian and IRA member Judy Backlund trains South Sudanese teacher-leaders on instructional methods which they in-turn share with local school teachers. The first training session was conducted in Tanzania in August of 2009. Teacher training I continues via video sessions and other customized materials. Planned is two weeks of intensive training for 12 teachers led by volunteer professors from Central Washington University in Washington State. To join this effort contact Judy Backlund at [BacklundJu@cwu.EDU](mailto:BacklundJu@cwu.EDU).

### **IRA and Rotary Partnership (IRARI) page**

IRARI members promote literacy awareness and development projects between International Reading Association councils, national affiliates, and international development committees, and Rotary Clubs and District and Zone Literacy Resource Groups. They provide a network and forum for members to generate ideas for, and exchange information about, IRARI activities in local, district, national, and international communities. IRARI conducts a symposium at the annual IRA convention and the biennial World Congress, and organizes SIG-sponsored sessions on IRA/Rotary International Partnerships at various IRA and Rotary International meetings.

### **IRA and ROTARY literacy ideas:**

[Rotary/IRA Brochure](#) and [Rotary/IRA "Every School a Star" literacy toolkit](#)

Samples of joint IRA-Rotary literacy projects with contact information.