

The Red Clover Award

Welcome to the 20th year of the Red Clover Book Award, a children's choice picture book award for children in kindergarten through fourth grade.



The Red Clover Award is a statewide program under the auspices of the Vermont Center for the Book, with the Vermont Department of Libraries and the Vermont Agency of Education as co-sponsors.

The Red Clover Award, named after Vermont's state flower, is given annually to one of 10 picture books nominated by a committee comprised of teachers, librarians and sponsors and voted on by Vermont children. The list of nominees is published and distributed each March. The list is also posted at www.mothergooseprograms.org at libraries.vermont.gov.

All vote tallies for the 2015 award must be postmarked by Monday, April 25, 2016.

To date, just over 420,000 Vermont children have participated in the Red Clover Award. It is our hope that the Red Clover Award will help children develop an appreciation for excellence in writing and illustrations that will stay with them all of their lives.

—The Red Clover Award Committee

History of the Red Clover Award

The Red Clover Award Program was created in 1995 by Windham County Reads, a non-profit literacy organization dedicated to bringing families and books together. Conceived by Eileen Christelow and named by Jessie Haas, this children's choice award was designed to help young children experience the unique genius of the picture book and develop a lasting appreciation for excellence in writing and illustration.

Program guidelines and materials were originally developed by Ruth Allard of Windham County Reads and Eileen Christelow, with encouragement from Grace Greene of the Vermont Department of Libraries and the help of many Windham County librarians, teachers and children's book authors and illustrators. The program was launched from the Windham County Reads Reading Room at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, accompanied by an exhibit which introduced children and adults to visual thinking strategies and provided educators with a model for discussing books with children.



The Eyes of Gray Wolf, written by Jonathan London and illustrated by Jon Van Zyle, was the award winner during an enthusiastically received initial year in Windham County, and the program quickly went statewide. Under the leadership of Mother Goose Programs™/Vermont Center for the Book, the Red Clover Award Program now provides a wonderful opportunity to invite all Vermont children into that rich and varied world where literature and art meet to enlarge everyone's understanding and expression of life: the world of the picture book.

Mission

The Red Clover Award Program is a children's choice picture book award designed to foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the picture book. The award encourages readers to enjoy, explore and discuss the pictorial, narrative and design elements of the picture book in order to: sharpen critical thinking and communication skills; heighten appreciation of literature and the visual arts; and nurture enthusiasm for reading and promote lifelong learning.

How to Participate

Schools with students in Kindergarten through fourth grade, public libraries and students who are homeschooled may all participate by downloading activities and other information from www.mothergooseprograms.org.

There is no need to register. The public or school librarian or a designated teacher may conduct the program for an entire community or school, or a teacher may do the program for his or her classroom only if the rest of the school is not participating. Participants have until April 25, 2016 to cast their votes.

Materials

We strongly encourage schools and libraries to purchase the ten nominated titles, which were all published in 2015.

Support and Promotion

We recommend that teachers let your principals know that you plan to participate in the Red Clover Award program so he or she can support the school's participation. Each participating classroom should have use of the books for at least one week. If your school owns the books, you will have much more flexibility as to the length of time the books stay in each classroom.

We encourage teachers to devote some time to related classroom activities, and librarians should support the program with library-centered activities. In schools where the school librarian and art teacher have worked together, classroom teachers have been more likely to participate.

Voting

Children in Kindergarten through fourth grade are eligible to vote if they have read or heard read aloud at least five of the books from the list of nominees. Children may not vote for books they have not read or heard. Participating teachers, librarians and homeschooling parents will encourage children to keep track of the books read or heard and then vote for their favorite using the simple student record-keeping sheet we provide. Children may vote for one book only. You may want to hold a voting party—have a snack, then vote and discuss what was voted for and why.

Adults will then make a tally of individual votes using the tally sheet in this guide, and send the tally sheet(s) to the Vermont Center for the Book by Monday, April 25, 2016. We recommend that children vote immediately after exploring the books. Tally sheets should be sent in right away so there is no chance of them getting lost. Please record totals for all books on the list, not just the winner in your class or school. This is a good opportunity for the class to do some data collection activities.

Red Clover Award Calendar

What do you need to do to participate in the Red Clover Award Program? Here's a brief month-by-month guide for activities. The program begins in March to coincide with the calendar of the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award, Vermont's children's choice book award for readers in grades 4-8 and the Green Mountain Book Award, Vermont's children's choice book award for readers in high school.

March

You will receive an email from Mother Goose Programs/Vermont Center for the Book, announcing the new booklist for the upcoming year (please add mothergooseprograms.org to your email address book!).

This information will also be posted at mothergooseprograms.org and libraries.vermont.gov.

You should start ordering the books. Books are available for preview at the Children's Book Exhibit Center at the Department of Libraries in Montpelier.

April

If the children in your program haven't voted yet, it's time to do so. Download the individual ballot and tally sheet from www.mothergooseprograms.org. You may organize the voting as you wish but please encourage children to read and re-read as many books as possible before they cast their votes.

May

Watch for the announcement of the winning book at www.mothergooseprograms.org, or if you'd like to receive notification, call the Vermont Center for the Book at (802) 875-2751 or email your request to winner@mothergooseprograms.org. The award-winning author/illustrator will be invited to attend the annual Red Clover Award conference for teachers and librarians to be held in the fall.

Activities are available for download during the summer from www.mothergooseprograms.org.

Summer

Summer is a good time to work with children through the public library. Schools might lend their collections of Red Clover Award titles to the local public library along with any supporting material. Teachers and librarians can familiarize themselves with the titles as well. Perhaps you'd like to host a summer potluck book discussion featuring the ten titles with a brainstorming session for activities.

September

It's now time to get into full swing to promote the Red Clover Award program. Since the purpose of the program is to encourage children to become enthusiastic and discriminating readers, emphasize the joys of reading rather than the competition. It's time to start booktalking the books, do a display, hold an open house and begin activities and discussion.

October

This year's Red Clover Award conference will be held on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at Lake Morey Inn and Resort in Fairlee, VT. Drew Daywalt, author of Red Clover Award winner *The Day the Crayons Quit*, will keynote and poet and writer Geof Hewitt will provide the endnote.

November

Programs continue in schools and public libraries.

December - February

The nitty-gritty work continues: active involvement by all interested teachers in grades K-4, school librarians and public librarians.

