

October 2024

President-Elect's Message...

Dionna Roberts

Michigan Reading Association

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mrj>

Recommended Citation

Roberts, Dionna (2024) "President-Elect's Message...," *Michigan Reading Journal*: Vol. 57: Iss. 1, Article 4.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mrj/vol57/iss1/4>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Michigan Reading Journal by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

President-Elect's Message...

by **Dionna Roberts, MRA President-Elect**

“Reading is like breathing in, and writing is like breathing out. Storytelling is what links both: it is the soul of literacy.”

Let's take a moment to reflect on our earliest literacy memories. Before we became the educators we are today, someone took the time to nurture the young reader and writer inside each of us. These early experiences were transformative, where we first discovered the gift and magic of stories through read-aloud and shared texts. Whether it was at home, with our special grownups reading or telling stories before bed, over campfires, or on a front porch in summer, these experiences have shaped us. Now, as educators, we have the power to inspire others with our unique literacy journeys.



Dionna Roberts

My earliest memories of literacy take me back to the attic of my family's small house on Belvidere Street in Detroit, MI. My momma transformed this unlikely space into a sanctuary for creativity, stories, and intentional learning. On Saturday mornings, she and I would play school where she was the skilled teacher, and I was her eager little learner. She could narrate the pages of a book like nobody else. The cadence of her voice made the words leap off the page and dance straight into my heart. My momma would read aloud stories with expression in such a way that made me want to read and write to create just like that. Because of these experiences, I learned to read before stepping into my first traditional classroom, but the greater reward was experiencing how life-changing language could be for my soul.

Pam Allyn wrote in 2015 for ILA,

The profound power of children's literature is that it teaches us how to live, not just how to read. The stories and information that children read changes them by challenging, nurturing, inspiring, and allowing them to discover and explore the world. Children breathe in the big ideas, people, places, and facts and breathe out their own ideas, theories, and opinions in response.

Reading and Writing are not just essential components for living and thriving; they are also sources of joy and passion. They provide equitable opportunities and access to knowledge, offer an escape, a place for voices to be heard, and a place where diverse stories are celebrated. They are gifts and fundamental human rights, but they are also sources of inspiration and excitement. Let's share this excitement with our students and the MRA community.

As educators and literacy leaders, we must have time and space to recharge our own batteries as readers and writers. As you continue to build those classroom communities, remember the heart and soul of it all—storytelling. Your mindful classroom moments, where reading and writing are at the center of the work,

have the power to inspire and guide others. Your experiences are not just valuable, they are integral to the MRA community. Please consider sharing these moments with other MRA members by writing about them for the *Michigan Reading Journal*, participating in online events, and submitting a session proposal for our 69th annual conference, March 7-9, 2025, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Our theme this year is “Read It In. Write It Out.” I hope to see you all there.

Dionna Roberts
MRA President-Elect

