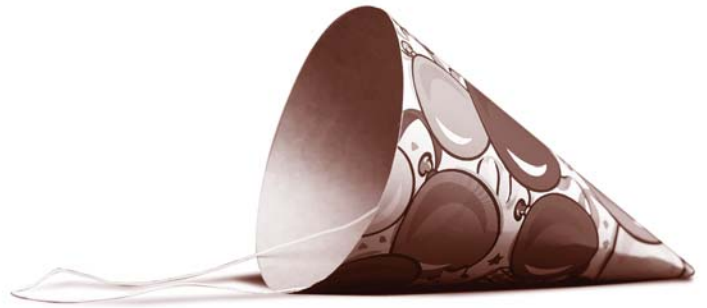


Happy Twenty-fifth Birthday IREAD!



Yes, the IREAD program turned twenty-five this year! IREAD is one of Illinois's premiere cooperative programming efforts. Many librarians too numerous to mention participated in its birth and its continued success. Let's take a look back at this wonderfully successful program — a program that stands for cooperative effort with a capital C.

A little bit of history

In the fall of 1981, Illinois Valley Library System youth consultant Ann Barnett Hutton called a meeting of all system youth consultants (at the time there were eighteen systems) to discuss the possibilities of a statewide-shared theme for summer reading programs. Most of the systems sent a representative to this meeting, which was held at the 1981 ILA Annual Conference. A representative from DEMCO was also there and expressed their desire to create promotional materials and programmatic publications for youth reading programs. In this one intense meeting, the first theme was born, "A to Zebra." Ann Barnett Hutton became the first chair. System consultants were assigned various roles to develop content and DEMCO printed the booklet, bookmarks, and a small poster and distributed them free of charge. Utilizing the Illinois statewide delivery system (ILDS), free materials were delivered to libraries for the summer of 1982. Prior to this statewide effort, many system youth consultants spent a great deal of their year helping public libraries develop a theme, bookmarks, and a program manual. Although many libraries continued to create their own programming, the idea of sharing and cooperation caught on.

The second year's theme, "Reading Rainbow" was aligned with the PBS series theme. Chicago Public Library System youth consultant Elizabeth Huntoon was the 1983 chair. Huntoon was involved at the national level in an advisory capacity for the then-new PBS television program. Libraries utilized multi-colored program manuals printed by the Lewis & Clark Library System. The manuals were distributed by ILDS.

In the few years of the statewide program, IREAD received Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) grant funds from the state library to support the program. Rolling Prairie Library System youth consultant Maxine A. Payne was the 1984 chair. Lincoln Trail Libraries System graphic artist, Cindy Carlson, was hired to develop the graphics and to prepare the camera-ready booklet, bookmarks, and activity sheet master.

"In this one intense meeting, the first theme was born, 'A to Zebra'."

Voyage to Book Island



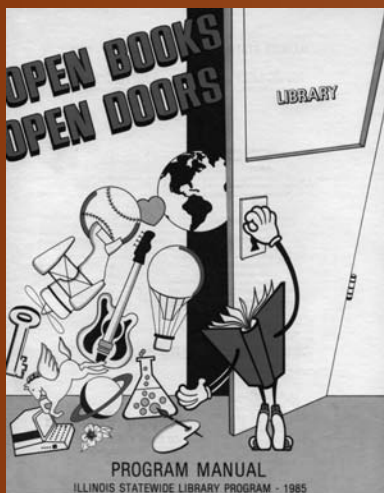
I READ 2006!

The technology of the early 1980s made it difficult for libraries to print their own materials. To put this into perspective, Kinko's only had seventy-two stores in the U.S. in 1979. IBM launched its first ever personal computer utilizing Microsoft's DOS operating system in 1981. The print shops in the various systems around the state were filled with electric typewriters, early word processors, and printing presses. Mass production of materials was costly and time-consuming. As more and more materials to support summer reading were produced, the systems held "sorting parties" at many of their headquarters to help get the product out statewide. This initiative was begun in an era before video teleconferencing equipment, e-mail, and other technologies. It was a superb example of the Illinois cooperative spirit and also fostered excellent comradery.

Where did all these great theme ideas come from?

Ideas were generated in sharing sessions and submissions were funneled through the library systems. There were volunteer editors and representatives from local public library staffs, all of which were cooperating statewide to bring a high-quality reading program to life.

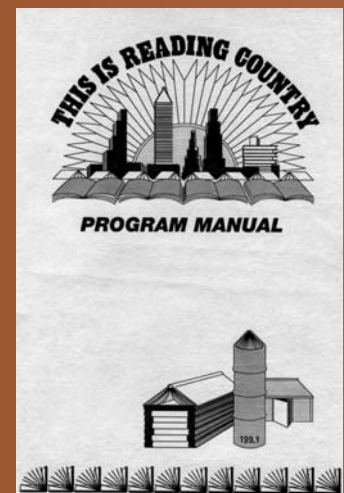
Creating and continuing to create a high-quality product each year requires dedication, cooperation, and teamwork. It was a risk to start such a large endeavor. Each public library and each system had its own history for reading programs and what worked best in their community. One of the best parts of the IREAD program is its flexibility — a library can use all, some, or none of the products or theme in a given year.



1985



1988



1991

What's in a name?

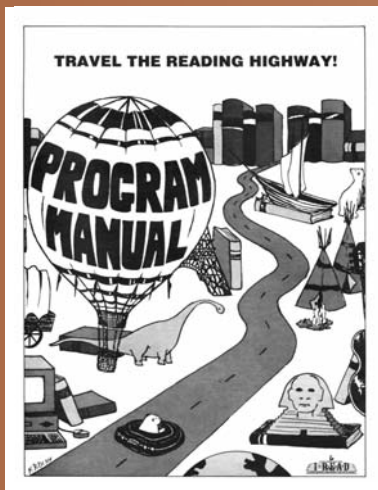
Although the statewide summer reading program had been around for four years, it wasn't until Ruth Fakis, then multi-type consultant at the Suburban Library System, and Paula Moore, then youth services manager at the Downers Grove Public Library, were in a car driving back from a meeting with the system directors that "IREAD" came into being. The system directors wanted an umbrella name for the program, so they took to brainstorming in the car. At that time, the Illinois Secretary of State Jim Edgar had a program called "Read Illinois." They inverted the words to become Illinois Read and then came up with words for each letter until they hit upon the "Illinois Reading Enrichment And Development" program. And that's how IREAD was born. The term IREAD was first used in the 1986 program.

How did ILA get involved?

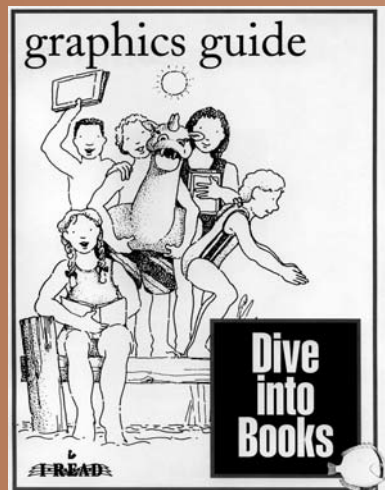
It was clear that IREAD could not continue to be supported by annual LSCA grants, since the purpose of these grants focused on new initiatives and not funding ongoing programs. Another base was needed, and it was necessary to develop an entirely new structure for administering and creating the program each year. In 1985, Ruth Fakis and Paula Moore as the president of the children's librarians section of ILA initiated the process of seeking ILA's sponsorship of IREAD, believing that ILA could provide a stable foundation for IREAD's future. The last program funded by a grant was the 1986 program.

Rolling Prairie Library System youth consultant Rachel Miller was the chair of the 1986 program, and she was given the challenging task of pricing IREAD materials more realistically, with the goal that the purchases from 1986 needed to generate enough seed money to cover the administrative cost of starting up the next year's program. As part of the presentation to ILA, Lincoln Trail Libraries System youth consultant Brenda Pacey coordinated a summary survey and fiscal analysis of the history of library systems' support of IREAD. This report was given to the ILA Executive Board with the recommendation that ILA take on IREAD for broader programmatic development and sustainability led by librarians throughout the state (not just system consultants). The ILA Executive Board voted to support the program on an initial basis, and the 1987 IREAD program titled "Quest — Journey into Reading" was the first program offered under ILA.

“Creating and continuing to create a high-quality product each year requires dedication, cooperation, and teamwork.”



1996



1998



2003

The 1987 and 1988 IREAD programs were test years. The bar was set for Rachel Miller and Denise Farrugia from the Woodridge Public Library to prove to the ILA membership that IREAD was not only a great cooperative undertaking but that it would not deplete ILA's limited resources. The 1987 and 1988 IREAD programs were also the first time that professional artists were invited to submit their interpretations of the themes.

In 1989, the ILA membership voted to approve IREAD as one of its programmatic offerings to the public libraries of Illinois. Farrugia was instrumental in convincing the ILA membership to vote for IREAD. When asked about her involvement as chair of three IREAD committees, Farrugia commented that IREAD was the "most rewarding professional work" and that "IREAD always strived to be relevant to [the current] generation of children."

Over the last eighteen years, IREAD has expanded and grown with its offerings. Many public libraries from other states utilize IREAD. Each year, IREAD has instituted changes: hiring a children's illustrator and a resource guide editor, employing a product selection and development consultant, and utilizing the services of a warehouse for order fulfillment. An online submission form was made available this year so it is now easier than ever to submit your ideas for the resource guide. Other changes include: placing the graphics on a CD-ROM; instituting online orders; planning a full year earlier in order to get themes and illustrators lined up; changing the virtual showcase back to a live showcase during the ILA Annual Conference; introducing artwork and programming to support Young Adult summer reading programs; and making the 2008 resource guide available at the 2007 ILA Annual Conference in Springfield. And the rest, as they say, is history.

