



# Nebraska Growing Readers

Enewsletter  
November 2024

Plant the seeds of literacy by  
reading together every day!



## Fall into Winter

The days are getting shorter, temperatures are dropping, and it's the time of year when children are staying indoors more. What better time to pick up a good book and read by a crackling fire or with a cup of hot cocoa.

Nebraska Growing Readers has plenty of books about the changing seasons, about fall and winter holidays, and about activities for the cold months. So on those chillier days, why not choose a good fall- or winter-related book and pair it with a fun indoor activity

This month we highlight Nebraska-related content and books that take us into those worlds of falling leaves and our winter wonderlands.

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## November Webinar Opportunities

Our fall into winter webinar kicks off with the November Nebraska Growing Readers webinar "The Social and Emotional Benefits of Reading to Young Children." The event will explore how reading can impact children's behavior.

1. November 12 from 1:00 – 2:00 pm Central Time
2. November 14 from 6:00 – 7:00 pm Central Time
3. November 17 from 2:00 – 3:00 pm Central Time

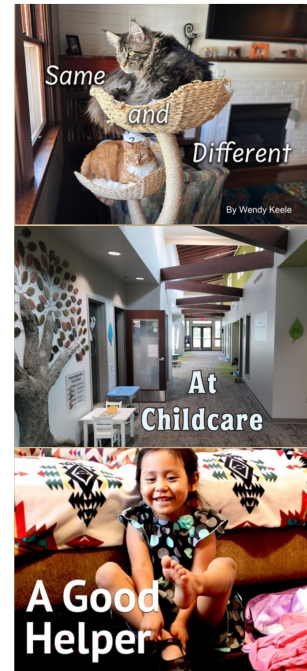


All three seminars can be accessed through this Zoom link:  
<https://uso6web.zoom.us/j/83483603979>.

To learn more about this Professional Development Training through NECPRS please click here: <https://necprs.ne.gov/training-public>;

You can also contact [Wendy Keele](mailto:wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) (wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) with any questions.

See our [Facebook Group](#) to learn more!



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## NGR News

### Not Just a One and Done for Nebraska Growing Readers' Local Writers



*Kim Parsons speaks with Unite for Literacy's Nick McGuffee*

Kim Parsons, a recent attendee of the Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) Schuyler Writers Workshop, says, “books aren’t just a one-and-done. You can continue to spread out that story for more than just nine pages.” She’s talking about the books she and other local writers are planning in the workshop and how the familiar stories they will tell will resonate beyond the pages of the books into the lives of the children who hear or read them.

Since its beginning, NGR has made creating stories that speak to the diverse landscapes, the experiences, the languages, and the cultures of Nebraska, a central part of its mission. And now, NGR is not only encouraging such local content, it is working with writer’s in a series of workshops to create Nebraska-related books. Kim has lived in Schuyler for over 50 years and is writing a book about the sweet corn farming that has been a part of her family for 21 years. She considers the impact of the book, “when kiddos in our community see that book, they might say, ‘hey, I know where that is. Mom bought their corn, and I helped clean that corn.’”

This speaks to what she means about books not being a one-and-done. As she puts it, “that continuation, that engagement with the book beyond the pages really helps make brain connections, curiosity, imagination, problem-solving skills.”

[Read the full article.](#)

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## **A Rare Book for Jeter and His Mom**



Maddie Reiman learned in the summer before her freshman year in college that she was pregnant. She immediately connected with Fremont Sixpence, a Nebraska Children and Families Foundation initiative, and, within 3 weeks, met her coordinator, Lauren Stoklas. She calls Lauren her “biggest cheerleader, my go-to gal.” When Maddie was pregnant, Sixpence introduced her to a local therapist and facilitated difficult conversations with her child’s father about parenting.



When her son Jeter was born, he was diagnosed with an extremely rare genetic disorder called mandibulofacial dystosis with microcephaly (MFDM). Maddie says her coordinator continued to support her by learning all she could about the disorder. Maddie says, “I don’t think I would be the parent I am today if it weren’t for Lauren supporting me and giving me the Sixpence community.” It was hard to make “mom friends” in college, she explains. “I would see other Sixpence parents out in Fremont and that was comforting to me.”

Sixpence Vice President Stephanni Renn asked Maddie to write a book about Jeter for the new Nebraska Growing Readers program supported by Sixpence, which resulted in *Rare is Beautiful*. In June of 2024, Maddie and Jeter were able to attend an MFDM conference at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and were provided with copies of the book to distribute there. She says the children were excited to see in the book someone who looked like them and that parents she met at the conference still send pictures of their children reading the book.



Looking at the book was the first time Maddie ever heard Jeter say his name. Because he struggles with speech as part of his disorder, book reading has been an important connection between mother and son. During their first reading of *Rare is Beautiful*, Jeter opened it, saw himself, and “pointed to the page, saying, ‘Jeter,’ Jeter.”

Sixpence’s work with Maddie then not only provided her with support as a teen mother and subsequently with Jeter’s disorder but, thanks to NGR, helped her build a local and international community.

[Read More.](#)

## A Seasonal Pair

Winter in Nebraska provides plenty of opportunities to use *Let’s Make Snow Ice Cream* as a lead in for both outdoor and indoor activities. Spend some time outside playing in and gathering the main ingredient and then head inside for some ice cream making. Try variations on the original recipe, such as adding peppermint extract and some





chocolate chips or adding fresh fruit juices like lime and lemon.

## NGR Website

Nebraska Growing Readers continues to build the resources available for early childhood professionals and families. We invite you to explore the NGR site.

[Visit Our Website](#)

## Nebraska Book Spotlight



*It's Fall* is a great way to get children thinking about how animals, plants, and people react to fall. Use the book as a way to talk about what shows us the seasons are changing or choose a fun activity like playing in raked leaves, painting pumpkins, or creating craft projects out of fall leaves.

-take a walk and notice the signs of a new season  
-bring home books about nature

[Read \*It's Fall\*](#)



*Here Comes Winter* uses longer sentences appropriate for older children and gets them to think about the colder, shorter days that make up winter, as well as many of the changes outdoors. The book can be used to inspire both cozy indoor activities and chillier outdoor fun.

-Draw a picture about winter.  
-Go outside and play in every season.

[Read \*Here Comes Winter\*](#)

**Did you enjoy reading these books?  
Want to read other books available  
in the NGR library?**

[Visit the NGR Library](#)

## Quick Reminders

## Final Shipment

Thank you providers for registering with NGR. Due to budget constraints, the shipment of books you will be receiving in October will be the last one.

We believe in the power of literacy and are working to secure further funding that will allow us to bring more books to Nebraska in the coming year. Please look for future announcements.

In the meantime, we encourage you to continue using our digital library and the Nebraska Growing Readers website, where we will continue to offer resources and content that promote shared reading.

## Please Complete the Post-Survey

As we build on the work NGR has done this year in providing you free books, we look toward future funding and literacy initiatives. In mid-November those providers registered for free books should receive notification on completing a post-program survey.

The data gathered from the survey will help NGR assess our needs and secure funds to continue the work we do. Please help us by completing the survey when it becomes available.

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## Join Our Facebook Group

Nebraska Growing Readers has a Facebook Group where you can get up-to-date information about the program; engage with this program and the other NGR provider sites; and share ideas, resources, and tips for getting kids excited about reading.

[Follow Us on Facebook](#)

This private group, will require you to answer a question to get in. There are no wrong answers. We just want to assure a safe space specifically for providers.

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## NGR Resources Help You Connect with Families

We have resources available on the NGR website so that you can better connect with families about shared reading habits and available materials. You can, for example, **click on the image to download a "Free Books" sign that has an enlarged QR code that links to the NGR library.**

[View More Resources.](#)

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## Send us your pictures!

We'd love to see pictures of your family reading Nebraska Growing Readers books and include them in our newsletter. Please send your photos to [Ivan Young](#) and feel free to include comments on what your children enjoy about reading and the books you read to them.



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Nebraska Growing Readers is a collaboration between Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Statewide Family Engagement Center, and Unite for Literacy.

If you have questions or comments concerning the program, please contact [Wendy Keele](#) (wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) or [Greta Carlson](#) (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org).



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