

# Newsletter January 2025

Numbers  
All Around

Nebraska  
Growing  
Readers



## A House of Books

One of the central guiding principles of Nebraska Growing Readers is to make books available for families to keep at home. But books also act as homes of their own, offering windows, doors, and mirrors, according to Professor Rudine Sims Bishop of Ohio State University. Books can act as mirrors reflecting the experiences of young readers, act as windows to see how other experiences occur, and even open doors, allowing readers to enter new worlds in the imagination. This month we focus on building those homes made of books for the families and children you serve.

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## A New Year of Nebraska Growing Readers

We want to thank all of you who have been a part of the success of Nebraska Growing Readers! Our first year has seen the growth of the literacy landscape in the state, and we can celebrate our accomplishments during that time:

- 1053 early childhood educators registered to receive free books that families can take home to build children's libraries;
- 3,072 incoming kindergarteners enrolled to receive up to 100 free books in the mail;
- 900,000 books distributed in the state of Nebraska;

- 35 books written about Nebraska by 19 different local authors;
- 51 books translated into 6 different languages;
- 3 initial launches of Community Book Gardens making free books available in areas with less access.

We begin the new year with a sense of hope and renewed purpose as we seek to continue building the literacy landscape in Nebraska. We are currently pursuing all available funding streams as a means to continue supporting what we see as a crucial part of every child's development. We hope you will continue to support us as we move forward, and we will let you know as new funds become available.

## NGR News

### NGR Translations Mirror and Preserve Culture



*Fariha Mohmand Works on a Dari Translation*

Paw Tha Hser and Fariha Mohmand are both refugees who seek to pass on their native languages to the next generation. They have been working with Nebraska Growing Readers and teams of translators to create children's texts in their own languages. Their contributions have been an important part of the 51 NGR texts that have been translated this year.

[Read the Story](#)

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## Jump into an Activity

Nebraska Growing Readers can connect you to a variety of book-related activities and pair you with books to suit your needs. Explore our site to find a book and/or activity that works for you.

[Explore Activities](#)

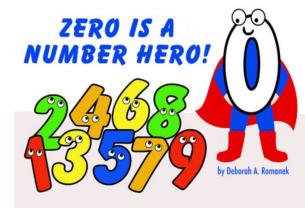
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## Webinar Opportunities

Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) is currently working with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to provide all NGR professional development opportunities on the NDE Canvas site. This change would allow early childhood professionals the opportunity to gain professional development credits online at their convenience. We hope to have more information available in the March enewletter.

To learn more about Professional Development Training please contact [Wendy Keele](mailto:wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) (wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) with any questions.

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



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## Nebraska Book Spotlight

## Open the Dino Door

In *Rex Visits Schuyler*, a tyrannosaurus rex visits the local community and opens a door into the imagination in which children get to spend a day with a dinosaur. But the book also acts as a mirror where the children get to introduce important people and places to Rex. The book is a great way to get kids to talk about their own community--where would they take Rex? Or you, too, can take a journey into the imagination. Make a list of favorite characters, animals, or people and create your own adventure through a real or imaginary landscape. Finally, you can use the book to talk about those favorite and fascinating creatures of the past, dinosaurs!

[Read \*Rex Visits Schuyler\*](#)



-Are there places in Schuyler that you would like to visit?

-Are there places in your hometown that you would like to tell others about?

## Dance into Different Cultures

*Pow Wow* is written in simple words that introduce young children to the elements of a traditional celebration for indigenous cultures in the United States. Each page contains a single noun that allows children not only to envision a pow wow, but also to think about where they see these same elements in their own cultures. You can use the book to talk about various celebrations, both big and small, that are a part of the lives of the children you educate.

[Read \*Pow Wow\*](#)



*-Find meaningful ways  
to introduce your child  
to your family's heritage.*

*-Sing and dance  
together for fun.*

[Read Moving Day Made Fun](#)

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

[Visit the NGR Library](#)

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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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## Learn More about Nebraska

[See Nebraska-Related Books](#)

Nebraska Growing Readers continues to build the library of content written by Nebraskans and about the various cultural experiences you can find in the state. Want to know more about Nebraska books? Visit our Spotlight on Books page to see what's happening in your state.

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](mailto:wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) (wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) or [Greta Carlson](mailto:gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org) (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org).



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