

**LOUISIANA READING ASSOCIATION  
SPEAKERS' BUREAU RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

**Mike Artell--** Mike Artell is an award-winning author, illustrator, TV cartoonist and musician. Prior to his success as a children's book author/illustrator, Mike spent 13 years in a variety of high-technology sales and marketing positions with companies in California, Texas and Louisiana. Mike is available for keynote/general session presentations, after-dinner speeches, workshops and seminars. Visit his website at <https://www.mikeartell.com/>

**Brod Bagert--** Brod Bagert , former lawyer and politician, is a poet/author who loves to entertain audiences . He tours some thirty weeks a year, and has visited Asia, Europe, South America, and just about every area of the USA. He has written many books for children and adults. Brod does presentations for school visits, conferences and inservices. Visit his website and see contact information at <http://www.brodbagert.com/>

**Annette L. Breaux—**a former classroom teacher, curriculum coordinator and teacher induction coordinator, Annette has co-authored books with Harry Wong and Todd Whitaker. Her message is one of practicality and personality in teaching. She leaves her audiences with practical and doable techniques to implement in their classrooms immediately. Contact Annette at [gbabin@educationspeakersgroup.com](mailto:gbabin@educationspeakersgroup.com) or phone 985-686-9102

**Colleen Carroll--**Dr. Colleen Carroll is a reading coach to parents of struggling and disengaged learners. Her website, [www.InnovativeReading.com](http://www.InnovativeReading.com), offers programs and ebooks to support parents with their children's literacy at home. Colleen's innovative concept of implementing easy to learn strategies in just 10 minutes a night gives parents the confidence and skillset to greatly increase their child's interest and ability in reading. Hundreds of testimonials from parents and teachers rave about her work, which has been perfected after 15 years as a teacher and administrator in public schools. Dr. Carroll's engaging style connects with parents and educators, engaging them in stories and strategies that energize, motivate and inspire, while she teaches just what to do when you leave the session for immediate success with your child. Reach Dr. Carroll at [colleen@innovativereading.com](mailto:colleen@innovativereading.com) or (914) 733-5735

**Jody Carroll—**Jody is a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher in Calcasieu Parish. She has given book workshops at several conferences, schools and libraries. She is author of the Mitsy Morgan children's books. Jody can be reached at [jody.carroll@cpsb.org](mailto:jody.carroll@cpsb.org) or <http://mitsymorganbooks.weebly.com/>

**Cecilia Dartez--** As a former elementary school teacher, a teacher of memoir writing classes, a licensed Tour Guide, Ms. Dartez is now a talented writer and gifted speaker, storyteller and a guide for children's historical tours with the Hermann-Grima/Gallier Houses, original mid 19th century house-museums in the French Quarter. Visit her website at <https://www.ceciliadartez.com/> for information and contact.

**Johnette Downing--** Johnette Downing is a multi-award winning musician, author and poet. She has written many children's books highlighting Louisiana culture. Visit her website at <http://www.johnettedowning.com/>

**Cindy G. Foust-** Author of **Alpha-kidZ** book series, Cindy shares her inspiration for writing her popular collection of children's books as she reads her stories. "StoryTime" can be shared with single classrooms or with large assemblies. Foust is also speaking to teachers and community groups. For more information or to schedule a StoryTime, please call (318)-651-0833. Visit her website at <http://www.alphakidz.com/>

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**Stacey Hodges**--Currently a 2nd grade teacher at Rollins Place Elementary School in Zachary, LA, Stacey is teaching math, science and social studies. Stacey loves to integrate reading, writing, technology, and art into everything. She has been teaching for 12 years. She is a Seesaw Ambassador and a Certified National Geographic Educator. She is married, has 2 boys and 1 grandson. She loves baseball, football, Christmas and DISNEY!! Contact Stacey at [Stacey.hodges@zacharyschools.org](mailto:Stacey.hodges@zacharyschools.org) phone 225-937-4223 or Twitter--@stacey4008 Topics-- Arts integration, Seesaw (digital portfolios), Genius Hour, technology integration, Reader's/Writer's workshop, class books.

**Lisa Holliday, M.Ed.** - Lisa currently serves Washington Parish as a literacy coach. She previously taught elementary and primary grades and has experience and expertise on classroom management, collaborative classroom conversations, building relationships, and leadership. She has presented at the annual LRA State Conference and LRA Leadership Meetings as well as school and district professional development events. She is actively pursuing a doctorate in Education and spends her free time with her three lovely daughters. She would love to visit your council or organization to share her passion for educational relationships. She can be contacted via email at [lisagayle0405@gmail.com](mailto:lisagayle0405@gmail.com) or phone at (985) 241-1280.

**Joan Pace Kennedy** - Joan is a retired librarian from Washington Parish Council, a former president of the Louisiana Reading Association and a published author. Joan speaks on *Using Books to Promote Early Literacy...* emphasizing reading for meaning, promoting oral language, and demonstrating the joy of books. She also speaks of *Integrating Poetry in the Curriculum...* using poetry to motivate, inspire, and develop a love of reading and writing. Joan's email address is [jkennedy@rcsaccess.net](mailto:jkennedy@rcsaccess.net) and her phone number is 985-986-2949.

**Louisiana Crawfish-Man "Mystery Author"** - Louisiana Crawfish-Man says--"Reckon it was 1977 when the the idea popped inside my head to give children 'never ending' stories written by my heirs before I leave this world. So I made up, wrote, sketched, self published and peddled darn near 200,000 books, most are the truth, mainly." You can view his 18 book **Tales From The Atchafalaya Collection** at [littlecajunbooks.com](http://littlecajunbooks.com) Louisiana Crawfish-Man "Mystery Author" provides workshops on "Snake Method" of Writing, Digital Illustration, Publishing, and Internet Marketing. To contact him call 337-229-8455.

**Brandie McNabb**--Brandi is a past LRA president serving from 2014-2016. She is a second grade teacher who is Nationally Board Certified. She has presented at national (ILA and NCTE), state (LRA), and local (ZARC) conferences. An article on incorporating the Arts in the ELA classroom was published in *Literacy Today*. She is passionate about making reading and writing fun for kids. She is a Seesaw Ambassador and would love to teach others how to effectively use this platform in their classrooms. Email Brandie at [brandieteach@gmail.com](mailto:brandieteach@gmail.com) for possible events or specific topics.

**Lenell Levy Melancon**--Lenell is an intuitive spiritual healer, Reiki Master, Tai Chi/Qigong and Yoga teacher, artist, actress, author, and most important of all, mother. After a near-death experience, Lenell realized her heart's true purpose in this life is to empower others to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. She has taught "Passionate Awakening" workshops and intuition development classes. Now she empowers children through her first children's book **Tootles the Turtle Tells the Truth**. Find more information about and contact information for Lenell at [www.TeamTootles.org](http://www.TeamTootles.org)

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**Ken Oertling**-- Ken is Executive Director of Secondary Schools in St. Charles Parish Public School System. He is currently working on a Doctoral program in Education Leadership at Southeastern Louisiana University. Ken has led the following trainings within school: *Common Formative Assessments, Unwrapping Standards, Data Teams, Content Literacy, Text Marking, Think Aloud, Cultural Diversity, Technology in the Science Classroom, Classroom Management, and Working on the Work*. He has been recognized with many awards including Louisiana High School Principal of the Year, 2014-15, and his school was the recipient of the IRA 2015 Exemplary Reading Program Award for Louisiana, 2015. Ken is an exceptional educator. He can be contacted at 985-758-1303.

**Leif Pedersen**—Leif has been a big band singer for almost 40 years, has been a professional fundraising executive for the last 25 years. He is one of Louisiana's new children's authors and is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Leif's first book, **The Adventures of the Swamp Kids: The Missing Chord** was published in the fall of 2013. He now has published 5 books in the series about the Swamp Kids. His newest book **Bayou Santa** was published in 2017. He would love to share his books with you. Call Leif at 985-774-4433. Visit his website at [www.theswampkids.com](http://www.theswampkids.com)

**Rickey Pittman**- Rickey Pittman "Bard of the South" is a songwriter, story teller, author and folksinger. He has written numerous childrens books such as **Rio Grande Valley ABC Book**, and **The CajunAlphabet**. Rickey Pittman would love to entertain and educate your group through storytelling and songs. Some of his presentations include :**Songs & Stories of Acadiana and Louisiana, The Scots and Irish, and America's War Between the States 1861-1865**. Check out Rickey's website: <http://www.bardofthesouth.com/> for details on his presentations, stories and songs. Contact Rickey at cell 318-547-2906 or Facebook: Rickey E. Pittman

**Patricia Reece**-Patricia Reece is currently a teacher in Slidell, Louisiana. Patricia has always had a passion for writing, especially rhyming books for children. As a teacher, Patricia was always looking for books that both captured students' attention while also teaching valuable lessons. A victim of bullying herself, Reece was thrilled to write "**Bernice**", a book designed to help children deal with this serious topic. When she is not writing, Patricia enjoys spending time with family and staying involved in the community. Her website <http://www.bernicebook.com/> is full of beautiful illustrations from her book. Contact Patricia through her website, or email her at [bernicebook1@gmail.com](mailto:bernicebook1@gmail.com)

**Dee Scallan**—Dee is the author of *Crawfish Tales, the Moby Pincher stories*. She speaks to teacher groups on such topics as We Want to be Authors (project and the results), Motivating Young Children to Read, How I Became an Author and Why, If You Can Read, You Can do Anything, Helping Children Comprehend What They Read, How Literacy Can Help Children Fight Obesity, Putting Fun into Reading, Follow Your Dreams—Age is not a Factor, and An Interactive Reading/Song Performance with Educators. Her website is [www.mobypincher.com](http://www.mobypincher.com) and her email is [dscallan@comcast.net](mailto:dscallan@comcast.net).

**J. Steven Spiers**—Steve is a third grade teacher in Slidell and a Louisiana children's book author. His first storybook, **Three Little Shrimp** is a delightful tale of three little shrimp in the gulf. It is beautifully illustrated, too. **The Oak Tree**, published in 2015, is a story of love and hope in the midst of disaster. Steve would love to share his books and tell you what else he is working on. Visit his website <http://jstevenspires.com/> for contact information and events.

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**Karen Williams** -- Karen Williams, MSSW, is an independent education consultant who is known for her ability to explain the latest neuroscience in ways that are easy to understand and apply to real life. Her workshops and training sessions focus on: 1) child and adolescent brain development and behavior; 2) the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study; 3) the impact of distress, anxiety, and trauma on brain development and behavior; 4) the developmental approach to Juvenile Justice and preventing the school-to-prison pipeline; 5) stress management practices for adults and youth; and 6) the trauma-informed/sensitive and compassionate schools movements. She provides: keynotes, educational workshops, skills training workshops, and skills practice facilitation. Email [williamsgroup@cablone.net](mailto:williamsgroup@cablone.net)

**Willie J. Kimmons**--Dr. Willie J. Kimmons is one of America's leading authorities on education, leadership, parental involvement, and health related issues. He is a nationally recognized consultant, speaker, seminar leader, and author of five (5) books. His newest book is **A Parenting Guidebook, for parents, grandparents, teachers, schools and community to help save our children and save our schools**. He is a veteran, public school teacher, superintendent of schools, college president and chancellor. Currently, he is serving as an Educational Consultant for Pre-K-16 schools, a Motivational Speaker and author. Contact Dr. Kimmons in Daytona Beach, FL Office: 386-253-4920 Cell: 386-451-4780 Email: [WJKimmons@aol.com](mailto:WJKimmons@aol.com) Website: [www.savechildrensaveschools.com](http://www.savechildrensaveschools.com)

**(Additions to the Speaker's Bureau Resource Directory are encouraged. Contact the Speaker's Bureau Chairperson.)**