We are dedicated to supporting the children's publishing industry, connecting publishing professionals, advocating for inclusivity, and shining a light on the books, creators, and resources available for young readers.

October 2023 will mark my four-year anniversary of working at the Children's Book Council (CBC), the trade association for 125 children's publishers. In addition, I work on the programs of Every Child a Reader, our children's literacy nonprofit arm that provides free education materials for librarians, teachers, and booksellers.

We are a small but mighty team of six. Originally based in New York City, we transitioned to fully remote working in 2020, and our team now resides in Atlanta, Georgia; Denver, Colorado; El Paso, Texas; Miami, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee, and upstate New York. This change allowed us to pursue adventures in our personal lives in a variety of different cities, as well as open up our hiring pool to the United States as a whole—a wonderful opportunity to maintain our diverse team. We still have our New York office for a group of great interns who manage our mailings and book donation work.

Our side-by-side organizations each have their own sets of programs and initiatives. They are interconnected and complementary, supporting common goals and giving us the opportunity to connect various stakeholders in the world of children's literature.

The Children's Book Council has two different audiences. As a dues-supported trade association, the CBC works with children's book publishers on topics and challenges that affect the industry as a whole, such as book banning, which we've fought for several years in concert with other groups. For over 10 years, the CBC has also led in promoting diversity in hiring and on the page. Our many awards, programs, and resource lists promote the work of diverse book creators and publishing employees.

Another central role for us is to support publishing professionals in their careers. The CBC has a group of active committees working in the areas of mentoring, professional development, and education. I lead the CBC Early Career Committee and also plan important virtual programming for all publishing professionals with our Ed. Talks series, with topics focused on learning about various departments and supporting marginalized groups in the workplace. Our other committees are the CBC Diversity Committee, Mid-Level Career Committee, Graphic Novel Committee, and Fight Against Book Banning Committee.

The CBC's other audience is the vast and beautiful world of teachers, school and public librarians.
and booksellers for whom we create a fantastic array of curated lists, resources, and award lists highlighting the best in new and backlist children’s books. Basically, the CBC team is the intermediary that works with publishers and outside groups on free content. The programs below generate a wealth of resources for teachers, librarians, and booksellers to utilize in building collections and stocking shelves:

• A regular feature in this wonderful literary magazine, our Knowledge Quest column highlights a book creator’s connection to and thoughts around that issue’s topic. We are fortunate to have been given the opportunity to write a column ourselves!

• The annual Best Of Awards lists, which I’ve managed for two years, are in partnership with the National Science Teaching Association and the National Council for Social Studies. These lists feature notable books in science, STEM, and social studies—as reviewed and vetted by experts in those fields—through the Outstanding Science, Best STEM, and Notable Social Studies Trade Book lists.

• The annual Favorites Award lists consist of Children’s, Young Adult, Teacher, and Librarian Favorites, all of which are read and rated by their respective demographic. Over 100,000 students, teachers, and librarians from around the country participated in the readings and ratings for our recently released 2023 lists. This program was created by the International Literacy Association in 1995, and the CBC, specifically my colleague Sommer Wissner, who has managed it in full since the pandemic.

• Our Inclusivity Resources are book lists and other carefully chosen resources from expert organizations to help combat racism and banned books and in support of cultural heritage months, gender identity, respect for others, health and well-being, and more.

• The CBC Hot Off the Press reading list is a monthly highlight of recently published books and the CBC Showcase is a quarterly thematic list of titles. My colleague Paulina Ramirez develops these themes, including our recent showcase about activists and activism.

• The CBC recently launched two new annual book awards: the Goddard Riverside CBC Social Justice Children’s Book Award and the Eloise Greenfield Children’s Poetry Advocate Prize, adding to the Anna Dewdney Read-Together Award housed at Every Child a Reader.

Every Child a Reader is an award-winning charity that is public facing and supported by donations and grants. While the CBC creates the many awards and resources listed above, Every Child a Reader provides fun, free resources for classrooms and libraries around its core programs that promote the power of books and storytelling with young people.

• The National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature is a co-partnered program with the Library of Congress to appoint a beloved and respected children’s book creator to raise awareness of the importance of young people’s literature as it relates to lifelong literacy, education, and the development and betterment of young people’s lives. During the ambassador’s two-year term, they travel nationwide to speak with kids and adults about the vitality of literature and how it can impact their lives. Shaina Birkhead, our associate executive director, manages this essential program.

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Children’s Book Week is a biannual national celebration of books for young people. Established in 1919, it is the longest-running national literacy initiative in the country. Over 2,500 schools, libraries, bookstores, and families at home celebrate by holding events and reading together. Free resources are created around a theme including an official poster, activity pages, and bookmarks from renowned illustrators. Recent illustrators have included Yuyi Morales, Christian Robinson, and Raúl the Third. For our 104th year in 2023, Rilla Alexander created inspiring art around our theme of Read Books, Spark Change. An educator kit, challenge, and activities in Spanish are designed by CBC’s own Laura Peraza. Children’s Book Week takes place during the first full week in May and the second full week in November.

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Meg Medina is our current ambassador and was preceded by Jason Reynolds, Jacqueline Woodson, Gene Luen Yang, Kate DiCamillo, Walter Dean Myers, Katherine Paterson, and Jon Scieszka.

The Kids’ Book Choice Awards is a national program where kids—and only kids—vote on their favorite new books, characters, and creators. Voting takes place each fall and the winners are announced in December.

Get Caught Reading is a year-round campaign that showcases role models such as athletes, musicians, authors, community leaders, and book characters on posters getting “caught” reading a favorite book. These bulletin-board-sized posters are free and have recently featured a school librarian, an assistant principal, heads of local literacy centers, and leaders in the Indigenous writers’ community. Get Caught Reading has also created posters of inspirational people like Nathan Chen, Danica McKellar, and Queen Latifah, as well as a recent Women Leading the Way set of posters.

Every Child a Reader recently won the Eric Carle Angel Award and a Mellon Foundation grant as an essential literacy charity. The Children’s Book Council continues to add new independent children’s publishers to its membership and new opportunities to feature books, authors, and illustrators.

On behalf of the staff at the Children’s Book Council and Every Child a Reader, I can say confidently that we pour our hearts and souls into these programs and the work we do. We are dedicated to supporting the children’s publishing industry, connecting publishing professionals, advocating for inclusivity, and shining a light on the books, creators, and resources available for young readers. It is an honor to support librarians, teachers, booksellers, and everyone working directly with young people. We are always improving our programs and adding new ones as the industry grows and adapts to an ever-changing world. We will continue to do so for many years to come.

Find all our resources and learn more at cbcbooks.org and everychildareader.net.

Jena Groshek is the marketing manager at The Children’s Book Council (CBC), the nonprofit trade association of children’s book publishers in North America, dedicated to supporting the industry and promoting children’s books and reading.