



WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER



www.tuscliteracy.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Holiday Greetings!

The Tuscarawas County Literacy Coalition board is excited to welcome the new year! We had a great 2025, hosting One Book One Community author Elizabeth Gutierrez of *My Side of the River* in November. We had a successful Shred Day event in August, raising over \$1,000 to promote literacy in Tuscarawas County. Additionally, the Literacy Coalition provided two scholarships to Cecilia Espenschied and Lake Van Sickle. The Literacy Coalition hosted literacy tutoring sessions at Bolivar Library and helped area students achieve grade-level reading and mathematics skills.

As we welcome 2026, we look forward to continuing the projects above and building on our shared commitment to literacy. Our hope is to collect gently used books throughout the 2026 calendar year for donation to our local shelters. In doing so, we will hope to spread literacy throughout our neediest populations. The Tuscarawas County Literacy Coalition seeks a new board member and treasurer. While we will miss Jim Gill, current treasurer, we look forward to continuing his vision and leadership into the new year.

We wish you a year full of hope, joy, friendship, and of course, great books!

Best,



Denise Cooley, TCLC President

SUPPORT LITERACY!

Want to make a lasting impact on literacy in Tuscarawas County? Join the Tuscarawas County Literacy Coalition! Your investment supports literacy efforts of all kinds across our community. We offer a range of membership options to fit your goals and budget, with perks like exclusive updates and invitations to TCLC events and programs. Join today at tuscliteracy.org or scan the QR code with your smart device.



FRIEND OF LITERACY SPOTLIGHT – SHERREL RIEGER



Sherrel Rieger has been leading the charge of literacy in Tuscarawas County for as long as a lot of lifelong residents can remember. Many alumni of Dover High School have her to thank for their foreign language literacy, due to her years of instruction there as a Spanish teacher. Although she retired from that role in 2018, she has been bringing literacy to the broader community of Dover since shortly after that “retirement” in her role as the Adult Program Specialist at Dover Public Library.

Throughout her different literacy day jobs, she has also used her understanding of Latino culture (thanks to the 11 years she lived in Mexico) to support cultural literacy for both the Anglo and Latino communities in Tuscarawas County for decades. She has served as an interpreter, translator, and overall “cultural broker” to foster understanding between residents who come from diverse backgrounds since the 1990s.

Sherrel says she has enjoyed reading the One Book, One Community book and hearing the author speak at Founders Hall for many years. “When the committee chose *My Side of the River*, it was the perfect opportunity for me to channel my heart and my energy into the 2025 project,” she said about co-chairing the committee this year. She added, “It was rewarding to know that throughout the county, many people read the book and engaged in meaningful discussions about a contemporary (and sometimes uncomfortable) topic – immigration. Not only was it a delight to meet and spend time with author Elizabeth Camarillo Gutierrez, but it was also very satisfying to work with the people on the committee who made the project a success this year.”

“Sherrel is quite simply one of the most interesting and selfless people you will ever know. Her passion for serving others and her commitment to doing things the right way is so impressive. Sherrel is so respected by so many, and it is an honor to call her a colleague... and a friend!”

- Jim Gill, Director at Dover Public Library

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES & RESOURCES

NEW COMMUNITY INITIATIVE LAUNCHING IN 2026

The Tuscarawas County Literacy Coalition (TCLC) is proud to honor the ideas of our 2025 scholarship recipients, Cecilia Espenschied and Lake Van Sickle, by launching a year-round book collection initiative beginning in 2026. Throughout the year, TCLC will collect new and gently used books for readers of all ages to donate to Tuscarawas County shelters, Little Free Libraries, and a special Christmas giveaway for underserved communities across the county. Members and community supporters are encouraged to begin setting aside books during spring cleaning and throughout the year. Donations may be dropped off at the Dover Public Library, the Tuscarawas County Public Library (Bolivar location), or at TCLC’s One Book, One Community author event in November 2026. Your generosity will help spark joy and foster a love of reading throughout our community. For questions, please contact TCLC at tuscarawasliteracy@gmail.com

FREE TAX RESOURCE | VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)

Hosted by United Way of Tuscarawas County

Starting February 10 through April 9, get your federal and state taxes done for free through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. VITA is open to households earning \$65,000 per year or less. This program is open to all ages and no geographic restrictions. Schedule your appointment online at www.tuscunitedway.org or by calling 330-994-VITA (8482).

TUTORING RESOURCES 2026

Subject(s): Reading | Grades: K-5th

Does your child need help with reading? Schedule a one-on-one, 30-minute session with certified literacy tutor Lana Schrock, PhD in Hispanic Languages and Literature.

TUSCARAWAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM - BOLIVAR BRANCH

Select Tuesdays from January 27 - April 27, from 6:00PM - 8:00PM

*** No session Tuesday, February 24th

Sponsored by Tuscarawas County Literacy Coalition

DOVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 4:00PM - 6:00PM (During the school year.)

Sponsored by the Friends of the Library - Dover

HIGHLIGHTS FROM TUTORING OF 2026

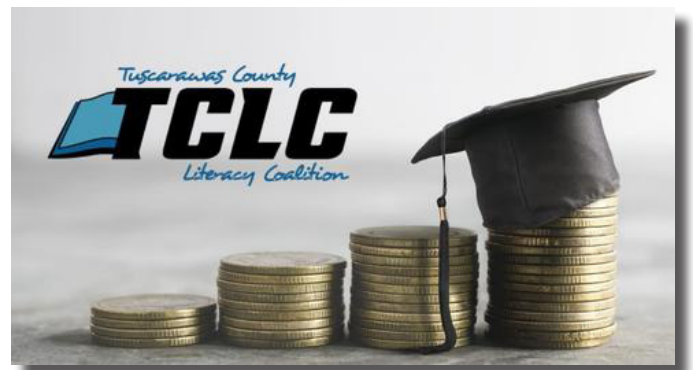
- One student was so excited to share with Miss Lana their test score because they passed with flying colors. The student came skipping into the branch to show Miss Lana.
- Another family said their daughter loved working with Miss Lana and she was excited to see Miss Lana every week. She was so excited to start back up during the fall session because she missed working with Miss Lana.

“Over the year, I have enjoyed watching the students work with Miss Lana on their literacy skills. I have seen the students grow in confidence directly because of their tutoring sessions. As the supervisor, I have enjoyed seeing the families utilize resources we have added to the collection like more phonics books, decodable books, and homeschooling resources. This has been a great partnership between the Literacy Coalition and Bolivar Branch.”

- Courtney Wallace, Bolivar Branch Supervisor

TCLC'S ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP 2026 LITERACY SCHOLARSHIP

The Tuscarawas County Literacy Coalition will be awarding two \$500 scholarships to eligible high school seniors in memory of former TCLC board member and friend of literacy, Keith Rathbun. Rathbun was the former publisher of The Budget Newspaper in Sugarcreek, Ohio, and served as president of the Ohio Newspaper Association.



These one-time scholarships support Tuscarawas County seniors who reside in the county or are enrolled in a Tuscarawas County high school or homeschooling network. Recipients can use the funds to pursue a certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree at an accredited post-secondary institution in any field of study.

The scholarship submission deadline is March 1, 2026. Visit <https://tuscliteracy.org/scholarship/> for more information and the 2026 application form.

NOW SEEKING BOARD MEMBER AND A TREASURER!

We are seeking a Board Member and a Treasurer to join our Board of Directors. These volunteer leadership roles offer an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on literacy in our community. Our board consists of individuals dedicated to enhancing traditional literacy as well as cultural, financial, medical, and technological literacy in Tuscarawas County.

General Board Member Duties Include:

- Attending monthly board meetings (in person or virtually).
- Supporting the mission, vision, and strategic goals of TCLC.
- Participating in committees or community initiatives as needed.

Treasurer Duties Include:

- Attending monthly board meetings (in person or virtually).
- Reviewing and presenting financial reports to the board.
- Assisting with budget and financial planning.
- Ensuring sound financial practices and compliance with nonprofit requirements.

If you are passionate about literacy and community impact, we invite you to consider serving on our board to help with advancing literacy in Tuscarawas County. Those interested should email TCLC at tuscarawasliteracy@gmail.com.

“BECAUSE BOOKS, MY FRIENDS, ARE TRUE MAGIC BOUND BETWEEN TWO COVERS.”

- Dolly Parton

2025 COMMUNITY IMPACT

Contributions to Community Programs

- Collected over \$1,000 to promote literacy and OBOC during Annual Shred Day in August.
- Awarded two \$500 literacy scholarships to area graduating seniors.
- Donation to May the Course Be With You 5K Race.
- Distributed nearly 500 copies of *My Side of the River* to county schools and libraries for One Book, One Community.
- Sponsored author Elizabeth Camarillo Gutierrez as our featured author for the 2025 One Book, One Community project.
- Sponsored the prizes for the art and writing contests for this year’s One Book, One Community project.

Tutoring at Tuscarawas County Public Library - Bolivar

- 88 thirty-minute tutoring sessions were offered
- 60 tutoring slots were filled
- 13 families utilize the tutoring service in Bolivar



2025 ONE BOOK, ONE COMMUNITY WRAP-UP A LOOK AT 2026 OBOC PROGRAMMING

The 2025 One Book, One Community Planning Committee extends its sincere thanks to the TCLC membership, our sponsors and donors, and especially the community for embracing *My Side of the River: A Memoir*, the 2025 One Book, One Community featured title. Author Elizabeth Camarillo Gutierrez was a pleasure to work with, and her presentations — at Literacy Connection Day with area high school students and at the public program in Founders Hall at Kent State Tuscarawas on November 3 — were both memorable and inspiring. One Book, One Community is a celebration of the written word, and a powerful reminder of how a shared story can bring our community together.

“One of the highlights of Literacy Connection Day was hosting Book Trivia with students from across the area,” Courtney Wallace, OBOC Committee Member. “All of the students were able to answer the trivia questions about *My Side of the River*, and they truly impressed me with their strong general literacy knowledge.”

The One Book, One Community planning committee is hard at work planning the 2026 edition of the project. It can be a daunting venture to capture a book that is meaningful, fun, inspiring, and often challenging. Nominations have come in from the community and are as follows:

- *Hope Squad: The Successful Suicide Prevention Program for Youth* by Dr. Gregory A. Hudnall
- *Mill Town: Reckoning with What Remains* by Kerri Arsenault
- *The Boys of Riverside: A Deaf Football Team and a Quest for Glory* by Thomas Fuller
- *Blue Highways: A Journey Into America* by William Least Heat Moon
- *Shoe Dog: A Memoir* by Phil Knight
- *Shouting at the Rain* by Lynda Hunt
- *Blue Zones: Secrets for Living Longer* by Dan Buettner
- *Scratching the Woodchuck: Nature on an Amish Farm OR Great Possessions: An Amish Farmer's Journal* by David Kline
- *Just Friends* by Haley Pham
- *Epitaph for a Peach: Four Seasons on a Family Farm* by David Masumoto
- *The Small and the Mighty: Twelve Unsung Americans Who Changed the Course of History, from the Founding to the Civil Rights Movement* by Sharon McMahon
- *The Distance to Home* by Jenn Bishop

Stay tuned for the 18th edition of Tuscarawas County's One Book, One Community project! The 2026 title will be announced in the spring during National Library Week!

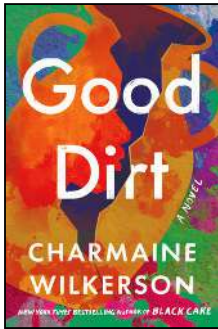
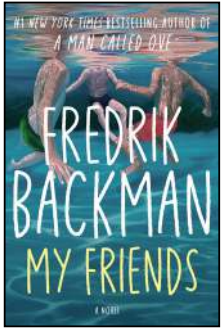
2025 ONE BOOK, ONE COMMUNITY SPONSORS:

Thank you for making One Book, One Community a success!

Case Farms | Commercial & Savings Bank | Dennison Rotary Club | Dover Exchange Club
First Federal Community Bank | Friends of Claymont Public Library
Friends of the Dover Public Library | Friends of the Tuscarawas County Public Library - New Phila
Haman Foundation | Kent State Tuscarawas | Marsh Foundation | McInturf Realty
Moomaw Foundation | Progressive Foam Technologies | ProVia | Simona Boltaron
Springer Orthodontics | Sugarcreek Rotary Club | Tuscarawas County University Foundation
Tuscarawas County Community Foundation | United Way of Tuscarawas County
Zimmerman Foundation | DoverPhila Federal Credit Union

FAVORITE READS OF 2025 & READING PLANS FOR 2026 - TCLC BOARD PICKS

TOP PICKS FOR DENISE COOLEY, PRESIDENT



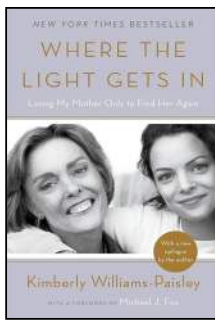
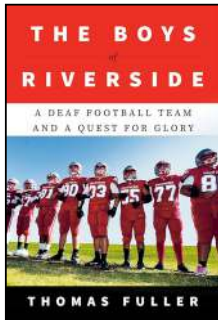
Top Read(s) in 2025

My Friends by Frederik Backman; *Divine Rivals* by Rebecca Ross;
Frozen River by Ariel Lawhorn; *Black Cake* by Charmaine Wilkerson

Looking Forward to Reading in 2026

Good Dirt by Charmaine Wilkerson; *These Impossible Things* by Salma El-Wardany; *The Book of Lost Hours* by Gelfuso; *The Downstairs Girl* by Stacy Lee

TOP PICKS FOR RACHAEL BOWERS, VICE PRESIDENT

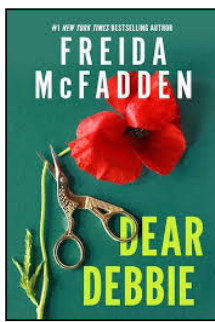
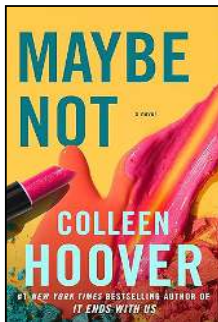


Top Read(s) in 2025

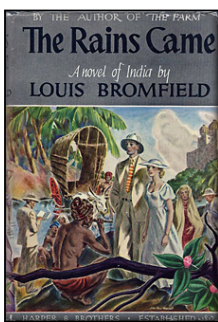
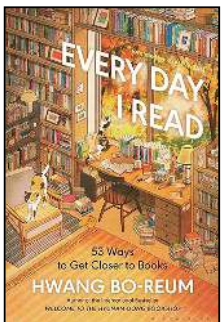
The Boys of Riverside by Thomas Fuller
Where The Light Gets In by Kimberly Williams Paisley
The Art Thief by Michael Finkel
The Great Alone by Kristen Hannah
The Witness Wore Red by Rebecca Musser

Looking Forward to Reading in 2026

Maybe Now, Maybe Not by Colleen Hoover
Woman Down by Colleen Hoover
Dear Debbie by Frieda McFadden
David Bowie and the Search for Life, Death, and God by Peter Ormerod



TOP PICKS FOR JIM GILL, TREASURER



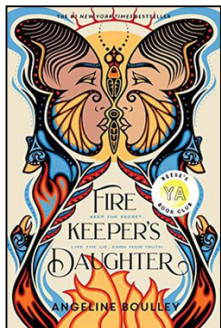
Top Read(s) in 2025

Every Day I Read: 53 Ways to Get Closer to Books by Hwang Bo-Reum

Looking Forward to Reading in 2026

The Rains Came by Louis Bromfield

TOP PICKS FOR COURTNEY WALLACE, SECRETARY



Top Read(s) in 2025

***Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley**

This was the only book; I gave five stars on my Goodreads list this year. This book was recommended to me by Liz Strauss at Dover Public Library – it was a great recommendation. I still find myself thinking about the story and looking forward to reading more by this author.

Looking Forward to Reading in 2026

***Buckeye: A Novel* by Ryan Patrick and *Rebellion 1776* by Laurie Halse Anderson**

Our Bolivar Book club selected both books to help celebrate America 250 next year, and I can't wait to see read the stories. Plus, it will be fun to celebrate America's birth of a nation!

TOP PICKS FOR CHRISTINE KENDLE, MEMBER AT LARGE

Top Read(s) in 2025

***The Secret Book of Flora Lea* by Patti Callahan Henry**

Two sisters, evacuated from London during WWII, find comfort in a world of make believe which 14-year-old Hazel has created for 5-year-old Flora. Then tragically, Flora disappears. Twenty years later, Hazel stumbles upon a rare book which might hold the answers to her sister's disappearance as well as hope for her safe return.

Looking Forward to Reading in 2026

***My Beloved* by Jan Karon**

I have read all of the Mitford novels, and the release of *My Beloved* is an unexpected delight as Jan Karon had indicated her fourteenth Mitford novel, *To Be Where You Are*, would be her last. After an eight-year hiatus, I am looking forward to returning to Mitford to catch up with old friends.



TOP PICKS FOR KELSEY MCCONAHA, MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR

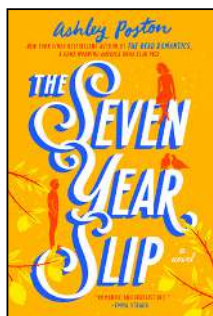
Top Read(s) in 2025

***The Seven Year Slip* by Ashley Poston**

This was on my 2025 TBR from last year's newsletter – and I actually read it! It was the witty, lighthearted read that I needed. I enjoyed the characters and loved the plot twist. This book sent me down a rabbit hole looking for similar authors, which led me to Lynn Painter. I ended up spending most of 2025 reading Painter's stories, and I have absolutely zero regrets. Definitely check out this title and when you finish, look up Lynn Painter.

Looking Forward to Reading in 2026

I'm open to suggestions, but I'll probably end up choosing a Board-recommended read for 2026.



TOP PICKS FOR KARI SOMMERS, MEMBER AT LARGE



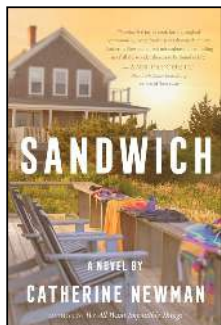
Top Read(s) in 2025

***Before the Coffee Gets Cold* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi**

There are a bunch of books in this series now, and I plan on reading all the rest of them whenever I need to feel better about the future – even though these stories are about revisiting the past.

***The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet* by Becky Chambers**

Is this book about a diverse cast of aliens making a living on a spaceship by tunneling wormholes? Yes. Is it just as much about finding family and building community? Also, yes. It's like a warm hug in a spaceship.



***Sandwich* by Catherine Newman**

This book touches on the challenges that the “sandwich generation” faces, but the characters support each other so thoroughly that even tragedy in the story leaves you with a feeling of hope.

Looking Forward to Reading in 2026

So many books. But the top two on my TBR right now are *Anita De Monte Laughs Last* by Xochitl Gonzalez and *The Small and the Mighty* by Sharon McMahon.

TUSCARAWAS COUNTY LIBRARIES

Claymont Public Library
215 E. Third Street
Uhrichsville, OH 44683
Phone: 740-922-3626

Mineral City Nicole Donant
8503 S High Ext
Mineral City, OH 44656
Phone: 330-859-9100

TCPL – Emma Huber Memorial Library
356 5th Street N.W.
Strasburg, OH 44680
Phone: 330-878-5711

Dennison Branch Library
15 N. Fourth Street
Dennison, OH 44621
Phone: 740-922-5851

Newcomerstown Public Library
123 E. Main Street
Newcomerstown, OH 43832
Phone: 740-498-8228

TCPL – Sugarcreek Branch
120 S. Broadway Street
Sugarcreek, OH 44681
Phone: 740-852-2813

Dover Public Library
525 N. Walnut Street
Dover, OH 44622
Phone: 330-343-6123

Tuscarawas County Public Library
121 Fair Avenue N.W.
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
Phone: 330-364-4474

TCPL – Tuscarawas Branch
209 S. Main Street
Tuscarawas, OH 44682
Phone: 740-922-2748

Gnadenhutten Public Library
160 N. Walnut Street
Gnadenhutten, OH 44629
Phone: 740-254-9224

TCPL – Bolivar Branch
455 W. Water Street
Bolivar, OH 44612
Phone: 330-874-2720

Kent State Tuscarawas Library
330 University Dr. NE
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
Phone: 330-308-7471