The New Mexico Reading Association (NMIRA) is a professional organization of literacy professionals who volunteer their time and efforts to promote literacy. The organization provides current news about literacy, leadership, professional development, and many great services to students and communities around the state.

**New Mexico Journal of Reading**

The New Mexico Journal of Reading provides not only information about the professional organization, but engaging articles relating to literacy and the teaching profession. Dr. Jose Montelongo and his wife, Dr. Anita Hernandez, the journal's new co-editors, are both literacy professionals who inspire others through their passion for learning and teaching.

Dr. Montelongo is currently working as a librarian at an elementary school library in Canantuollo, TX. Dr. Anita Hernandez, a published Heinemann author, is a professor of bilingual education for pre-service teachers at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM where she and her husband currently reside.

The journal is mailed out to members of the New Mexico State Reading Association as well as subscribing members in New Mexico and surrounding states. Literacy professionals are encouraged to submit articles for review and publication.

**Leadership**

Every summer, NMIRA provides a Leadership Workshop for its members. Last July, we met at Hotel Encanto in Las Cruces, NM. The topic was, “Why? Why are we committed to NMIRA and promoting literacy?” The inspiration for this workshop was the book by Simon Sinek, *Start With Why*. Sinek introduced the book this past year at the International Reading Association Annual Convention in Chicago. The workshop was a powerful experience that allowed us to reassess and recommit to important professional goals as literacy educators.

Our guest speaker, Dr. Toni Hull, an instructional leader and member of a Washington Fellowship, also addressed the topic. She continued with the theme of asking why and then presented several strategies to build upon why we are members of NMIRA and where we want to go in our future efforts. The summer leadership workshop brought us closer as an organization and strengthened our commitment as advocates for literacy promotion.

**State Conference**

The highlight of the year is the New Mexico State Reading Association’s annual conference. The 2013 conference will be held on February 8–9 in Las Cruces, NM. Las Cruces is New Mexico’s second largest city. The conference will be held
at the Las Cruces Convention Center near the University. We are looking forward to hosting this conference and the many wonderful speakers who are presenting, including Chris Lehman, co-author of Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement. This year’s theme is “Literacy for All.” The motivation behind the theme is that we want to reach all students and give them the gift of reading.

The International Literacy Project

Twice every year the International Literacy Project Committee collects donations and supplies for the small town of Palomas, Mexico. The town sits just across the United States border. Although the students in Palomas live in poverty, they are fortunate enough to have one elementary school, a middle school, and high school. These schools appreciate the donations of paper, pencils, crayons, scissors, and general cleaning supplies that NMIRA is able to provide.

Nancy Bellegamba, Ginger Berry, Estrella Becerra, and Carlos and Virginia Cuellar are the leaders of the International Project Committee and travel to Palomas each Labor Day and Memorial Day. Over the past few years, this has been a dangerous effort because of the violence that has been occurring in Palomas and along the entire United States and Mexican border.

Land of Enchantment

Land of Enchantment is a committee that serves schools across the state of New Mexico. We have partnered with the New Mexico Librarian’s Association to share this committee. It provides book lists to students who read the reviewed books and vote on their favorites to win the Land of Enchantment Award. The author is recognized and awarded at the state conference.

NMIRA is a strong organization of dedicated professionals who truly care about the promotion of literacy. We hope to continue to provide professional development for teachers and also support parents and community members in their endeavors to promote literacy for all.

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