Secretary of Education Arne Duncan once said, “Some people are motivated by money or power or vanity, but teachers are uniquely driven to help others succeed.” In my opinion, this statement encapsulates why teachers do what they do. This quote can also be applied to the work that IRA councils are doing around the world.

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with the Past President of the Granite State Reading Council (GSRC), Donna Ciocca. The initial purpose of the call was to see what I could do in my position as Leadership Development Associate to help this council regain its active status with IRA. This council, along with so many others, is providing its communities with outstanding literacy support. However, this particular council is providing literacy support without the help of formal council leadership and an active IRA status.

Donna Ciocca desperately wants to regain active status with IRA but needs others to join her in the leadership process. “We need people who are interested in making a difference…a true difference!” Donna said during our recent conversation. Currently, GSRC is supporting New Hampshire through an initiative which was started five years ago, when the council was active.

**New Hampshire Family Literacy Day**

Donna and her team began a small project called the New Hampshire Family Literacy Day in 2008. Literacy Day was an option that allowed them to do what they wanted to do most: create an environment where children fell in love with books. They began by collecting donations of over 10,000 books, along with food from McDonald's and Frito Lay, supplies and costumes from local businesses, and anything else that would allow them to provide a cost-free event for the families of New Hampshire. Thanks to the support of New Hampshire’s governor and the Department of Education, this event has grown to over 5,000 attendees, with three separate events happening across the state simultaneously.
Dr. Susan Lynch shares new books with children

Kevin Skarupa from News 9 was a special guest

The Cat in the Hat made an appearance

Families enjoyed literacy games and activities

What All IRA Councils Have in Common

Donna and other council leaders across the world are all looking for the same thing...HELP! They need other educators to join them in their fight to increase literacy awareness in their communities. There are so many teachers out there with remarkable ideas and insurmountable amounts of energy! Councils need your help. Education is changing drastically, and without new leaders, it is difficult to survive.

Donna Ciocca and so many others want to be an official part of IRA, but they need YOU to help make this a reality.

Becoming a council leader does involve a lot of work and a huge commitment, but according to Donna and the other volunteers in New Hampshire, the benefit is far greater: “I know that we are doing good things, but I also know if we could become active again and increase our membership, we can do amazing things!”

For more information on Granite State Reading Association or to become involved in council leadership, please contact Donna Ciocca at MadCiocca@aol.com.

Tiffany S. Sears is a Leadership Development Associate (LDA) at the International Reading Association. She and fellow LDAs Rayann Mitchell and Qena Jennings assist IRA state councils and Canadian provincial councils and visit them regularly. Contact Tiffany at tsears@reading.org.

COUNCILS FUNCTION ON A VOLUNTEER BASIS, AND MAINTAINING ACTIVE COUNCIL STATUS ONLY TAKES A FEW THINGS:

• A minimum of 20 council members (10 of which need to be IRA members)
• A minimum of 3 council leaders (who must be IRA members and can be included in the council member count)

For a list of North American state, provincial, and local councils, visit www.reading.org/NAcouncils.