



READING IS FUN NEWSLETTER

JANUARY
2025

Hot Off The Press: RIF Is Now A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit

In an exciting new chapter of RIF's evolution, the Leadership Committee announces that **The Reading Is Fun Program Inc.** is now a tax-exempt charitable organization, under the Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

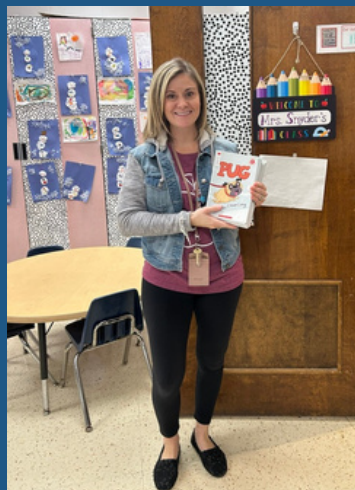
Since its establishment in 2013, RIF has operated in partnership with the Schenectady City School District Educational Foundation. Effective immediately, RIF is incorporated with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. With this status, the organization does not pay income taxes related to its nonprofit mission and purposes, is able to receive tax-deductible contributions, and is eligible for foundation grants.

How does it impact RIF? The main differences are (1) that officially RIF is now "The Reading Is Fun Program, Inc." and (2) that as such it is now able to accept donations to deposit in its own bank account, thereby simplifying its financial management to enhance fundraising (especially to attract more grants). To donate, please issue checks to "The Reading Is Fun Program, Inc."

Additionally, in compliance with IRS regulations, RIF has made governance changes, most notably by establishing a Board structure for oversight of RIF policymaking and implementation.

Dr. Al Magid, founder of The Reading is Fun Program, expressed deep gratitude for the long, mutually beneficial relationship RIF had with the Schenectady City School District Educational Foundation. He notes that over the years, the Foundation has been an unstinting supporter of its RIF partner, lending encouragement to RIF to grow and develop in ways that will continue to benefit young readers in the Schenectady City School District. Also, he thanks RIF's leadership team and its ever-growing cohort of volunteer reading mentors who infuse RIF with a spirit of civic engagement in the interest of supporting Schenectady youth.

If you have any questions, please contact Larry Pierce at lpierce1@nycap.rr.com or Mary Lou Russo at russo5times@gmail.com.



Woodlawn Pre-K teacher Mrs. Snyder showing the bonus books from RIF for her whole class.

Scrabble-Rama - April 5, 2025

Please **save the date for our 5th Annual Scrabble-Rama and get a team of 2-4 to play!** All levels of players are welcome to come, play and have fun. If you are up for the challenge, try to topple the reign of our three-time champions The Chans!

Key information:

- Saturday, April 5, 2025, 9 am to 12 noon (*note time change*)
- At **Schenectady High School** cafeteria, 1445 The Plaza, Schenectady,
- Enjoy a tasty breakfast and exciting raffles!
- More details coming soon

**** We are also seeking sponsors for the event **** Please email Sabrina Ricci at sabrinaevericci@gmail.com if you would like to be a sponsor.



Thank you!

Over the holidays, a RIF volunteer held a party at her home, gathering family, friends and neighbors. Instead of food or drink, she asked them to bring books for RIF. They in turn donated over 230 new and gently used books. They gave early reader books, as well as works by popular authors Mo Willems, Eric Carle, Dr. Seuss, & more (see photo at left). Thank you to all who contributed for your wonderful generosity to RIF!

January Volunteer Update

At this point in the 2024-2025 school year, 101 RIF volunteers are working with 239 students.

Welcome to our newest volunteers!

Kermit Ackley (Yates), Stephen Anderson (Lincoln), Lisa Chouffi (MLK), Rachael Fisher (Paige), Sharon Gariepy (Pleasant Valley), Kim Morgan (Hamilton), Margaret Pearson (MLK), and Kelle Roberts (MLK).

Do you love volunteering with RIF? Do you have family or friends who would like to join you? Ask them to email Valerie Rivera at rifvolunteerplacements@gmail.com.

Important Dates

- April 5, 2025 Scrabble-Rama RIF Benefit
- May 12, 2025 "Spring Into Reading is Fun!" week

Join us to make a difference!

The Reading Is Fun Is Program, Inc. is grateful for tax-deductible monetary donations supporting our organization. A gift to RIF to honor someone or in memory of someone or to commemorate someone or something is a special way to show you care. **To contribute, please write your check to "The Reading Is Fun Program, Inc." , & mail it to *The Reading Is Fun Program, PO Box 9437, Schenectady, NY 12309.* Thank you for your consideration.**

Volunteer Spotlights

Michele Kopp

Where do you volunteer? This is my third year at Van Corlaer Elementary in Grade 1.

Why did you join RIF? I am a retired Middle School special education teacher. Close friends had encouraged me to look into the RIF program, and I was hooked. What's not to love about a class of exuberant 6-year-olds still excited about school?

How do you make reading fun? Getting to know each student is crucial, so I LOVE the interest inventory concept. I set up an individual folder for my students, including the inventory and book lists, a composition book, stickers & whiteboard. All of these items go home with them in June. We also do a project involving writing. The students complete a 2-4 page "book" of their choice. They are able to bring it home as a gift to their parents.

How do you spend free time? Aerobics/walking with friends, volunteering with some organizations in Schenectady, member of Niskayuna Reformed Church's Mission & Service committee, traveling to see grandchildren and traveling to see the world.



Michele dining with friends



Ricki out and about

Ricki D Shapiro

Where do you volunteer? At Paige Elementary School, with a second grader & a third grader.

Why did you get involved with RIF? As the second of six children, I learned early on how to "be" with children, a life-lesson that carried into adulthood. As a child, I wanted to be a Kindergarten teacher. While I never pursued teaching as a career goal (I chose communications), it was what propelled me to start mentoring in 1993, and continue mentoring 30+ years later.

How do you make reading fun? When I was growing up, my dad would use "big words" at the dinner table. When I asked what they mean, he would say "go look them up." So I like to use "big words" with my RIF students. I tell them, "This is a fifth-grade word & you'll be the only one in your class who knows what it means." I also teach the students some sign language to go along with words they are reading.

What are your other interests? Teaching Junior Achievement (20+yrs), volunteering at Ellis Hospital, ushering at Capital Rep & SLOC, helping in my Congregation Agudat Achim kitchen, & participating with Stars of Honor (American Legion). I also work out several days/week.