



Claire's Day Toledo 2022

Authors/Illustrators

Ruth McNally Barshaw

Ruth McNally Barshaw grew up sketching and journaling life around her in little sketchbooks. Little did she realize she would do the same for her career. Today she has more than 300 little sketchjournals chronicling various events, trips, quirky discoveries, and times with beloved friends and family.

Her Ellie McDoodle books borrow the same format, with writing and cartoony art on every page. If you hang out with Ruth, you might get added into one of her sketchjournals. If you read her books, you might be inspired to put your own life on paper. Share your beliefs, memories, dreams ... keep a sketchjournal.

Books: Ellie McDoodle Diaries (series), Leopold the Lion

Grade Level: K-5

School visit availability: Toledo, May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$1000 Half Day \$750

Karen & Darrin Brege

Karen Bell-Brege is an author, comic, voice-over artist and public speaker. She is the author of the bestselling children's series, Mick Morris Myth Solver, (#'s 1-6), as well as the Ghost Board Posse series, (#'s 1-3), Sketch the Myths Sketchbook, the ChillArt Sketchbook (both co-written with her husband Darrin) and three picture books, Bigfoot and the Mitten, Monsters First Day at School, Biggie and Birdie are Different (so what) 2022, and the gift book Your True North Michigan.

Darrin Brege is an illustrator, creative director, voice over artist, comic and public speaker. He is currently employed as a full-time VP and Creative Director for Merkle Inc's (a Dentsu Company) promotion and loyalty division, where he creates interactive digital experiences for numerous Fortune 500 companies, and manages a team of artists and animators. Brege is the artist of the Mick Morris Myth Solver and Ghost Board Posse book series, the picture books - Bigfoot and the Mitten, Monsters First Day at School, Biggie and Birdie are Different (so what) 2022. He co-wrote and illustrated the Sketch the Myths Sketchbook and The ChillArt Sketchbook, and designed the Your True North Michigan gift book. He has also created original characters and animations for Warner Brothers (Space Jam), Hasbro, HBO, Coke, and Disney to name a few.

Books: Mick Morris Myth Solver (series), Ghost Board Posse (series) Bigfoot and the Mitten

Grade Level: K-5

School visit availability: Toledo, May 4, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$1275 Half Day \$850

Mary Kay Carson

Mary Kay Carson is a nonfiction children's book author. She's written more than fifty books for kids about wildlife, space, weather, nature, and other science and social studies topics

Books: Alexander Graham Bell for Kids: His Life and Inventions, Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet, Escape From...The Titanic, What Makes a Tornado Twist?: And Other Questions About Weather,

Grade Level: K-8

School visit availability: May 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$850 Half Day \$500

Bryan Chick

Bryan Chick is the author of the Secret Zoo series. He originally had the idea for the series when he was a nine-year-old and wondered what would happen if zoo exhibits had secret doors that allowed children to go inside . . . and the animals to come outside. Bryan Chick lives with his wife and three children in Clarkston, Michigan.

Books: Secret Zoo (series)

Grade Level: 5-8

School visit availability:

Honorarium: Full Day \$ Half Day \$

Lori McElrath Eslick

Lori McElrath-Eslick is the illustrator of a number of children's books, including *Read for Me, Mama*. Her illustrations have appeared in several magazines including *Cricket*, and *Highlights for Children*. She lives with her family in North Muskegon, Michigan.

Books: Barefoot, Goodness Gracious (A Gratitude Book for Children), Read For Me, Mama

Grade Level: K-5

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$750 Half Day \$500

Lynette Ford

Lyn Ford is a fourth-generation, nationally recognized, Affrilachian* storyteller, a teaching artist and workshop facilitator with the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, a Thurber House mentor, a writer, published in storytelling magazines and newsletters, as well as teachers' enrichment books and story anthologies, editorial collaborations. She is also a recording artist with award-winning CDs as well as a Laughter Yoga Teacher and breath mechanic.

School visit programs include but are not limited to: **LET'S THROW STORIES:** Folktale adaptations rooted in African and African American storytelling traditions (for all ages), **TALES OF EARTH, SEA, AND SKY:** Folktales and fiction that lead to an interest in the facts (elementary-school grade levels), **Affrilachian Folktales** - African American folktales, fables, and fool tales, from the hills and valleys of Appalachia. Humor and heart in stories rooted in my family's storytelling traditions, **Turtle-shell Tales** - African and African American tales of the folksy and fabled turtle or tortoise. Silly stories include rhythm and rhyme, a little history, and a lot of heart. **PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET each school's NEEDS!**

Grade: K-8

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$600, Half Day \$300

Mary Winn Heider

Mary Winn Heider is the author of two middle grade novels: THE LOSERS AT THE CENTER OF THE GALAXY and THE MORTIFICATION OF FOVEA MUNSON. She is currently working on a theatrical adaptation of FOVEA for The Kennedy Center with the composer Justin Huertas. Her picture book THE UNICORNS WHO SAVED CHRISTMAS, illustrated by Christian Cornia, is out now. Mary Winn has an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and she lives in Chicago, where she teaches creative writing residencies with PlayMakers Lab, performs at theaters around the city, and sometimes helps out at The Mystery League.

Books: The Losers at the Center of the Galaxy, The Mortification of Fovea Munson, Unicorns Who Saved Christmas

Grade Level: K-8

School visit availability: May 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$800 Half Day \$400

Michelle Houts

Michelle Houts believes we all navigate the world in which we live through stories. The stories we hear, the stories we tell, the stories we read, and the ones we make up in our own lives. A lover of artifacts, Michelle writes in a restored one-room schoolhouse in rural Ohio. She's an award-winning author of fiction and nonfiction for readers age 4 -14, sparking the imaginations of young readers and writers everywhere with lively and engaging school and library presentations. With Lucy's Lab, her STEM-based chapter book series for science-minded kids, Michelle ties science and literature together for the early elementary crowd in a fun, exciting manner!

Books: Lucy's Lab (series), The Beef Princess of Practical County, Winterfrost, Barn At Night

Grade Level: K-8

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$1000 Half Day \$600

Denise Brennan-Nelson

Denise Brennan-Nelson has written a number of books for children, including Tallulah: Mermaid of the Great Lakes, Leopold the Lion, Someday Is Not a Day of the Week, My Momma Likes to Say, and the popular Willow series. As a national speaker, Denise encourages adults and children to tap into their imaginations to create richer, fuller lives. She travels the country, sharing her reading and writing enthusiasm with schoolchildren and teachers. Denise lives in Howell, Michigan with her husband, Bob. She strives to spend each day teaching and learning with a creative spirit.

Books: Good Night Library, Good Night Forest, Willow, Willow and the Wedding

Grade Level: K-5

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4

Honorarium: Full Day \$1000 Half Day \$700

Nancy Roe Pimm

Nancy wrote her first book at age ten, and she brings it to the schools to encourage the students to believe in their dreams. In her more current books, Nancy has drawn from her experience as a pit crew member for her husband's race team to write, The Indy 500- The Inside Track and The Daytona 500-The Thrill and Thunder of the Great American Race. Nancy Roe Pimm also volunteered as a docent for the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium in the 1980's. After she took an animal handling class, the zoo entrusted her with a vanful of critters to take to local school assemblies. Another docent duty was to lead zoo tours.

While giving the tours, Nancy discovered her fascination with gorillas, especially Colo and her family. In 2007, Nancy's book, *The Heart of the Beast—Eight Great Gorilla Stories* was published and in 2011, *Colo's Story—The Life of One Grand Gorilla*. All four of Nancy's books are Junior Library Guild Selections. *Colo's Story* has been chosen as a Choose to Read Ohio book and was selected to represent the state of Ohio at the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C.

Books: *The Indy 500-The Inside Track*, *Colo's Story-The Life of One Grand Gorilla*, *Fly Girl Fly: Shaesta Waiz Soars Around the World*

Grade Level: K-8

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$1000 Half Day \$600

Merrill Rainey

Growing up, MERRILL RAINEY spent most of his Saturday afternoons watching monster movies, drawing superheroes, and going on imaginary adventures with his brothers. Today, he is a cowboy-boot-wearing, award-winning illustrator, designer, and paper engineer. Merrill likes to experiment with tools and uses marker, cut paper, or water soluble graphite to create his illustrations. He has served on faculty at the [Highlights Foundation](#) and is currently the illustrator coordinator for the Northern Ohio chapter of the [SCBWI](#). Merrill lives in the historic town of Whitehouse, Ohio, with his editor (his wife), subject matter experts (his kids), and very opinionated coworkers (one pup, a toad, two goldfish, and some crabby hermit crabs).

Books: *Dr. Doodle Bug*, *OINK! I'm a Pig*, *Super Hero Color-Cut-Crete*

Grade Level: K-5

School visit availability: May 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$600 Half Day \$400

Nick Rokicki & Joe Kelley (Pete the Popcorn)

[Nick Rokicki](#) is from Toledo, Ohio. A graduate of Specs Howard School of Media Arts, Nick worked in radio and television before joining a major airline. It was through this work that he had the opportunity to travel and really get to meet people and be inspired. In 3rd grade, Nick was encouraged by his teacher Ms. McCloskey to be a great writer. Since then, his work has been published in newspaper op-ed pages across the country, including *USA Today*. *Pete the Popcorn* was his first published book. His favorite part of this whole book process? Visiting schools.

[Joseph Kelley](#) is from the suburbs of Detroit and a proud graduate of John Glenn High School in Westland, Michigan. Joe then went on to earn degrees from both Schoolcraft College and Madonna University before beginning his career in marketing and criminal justice. Working with kids at summer camps allowed Joe to keep a creative mind, which is reflected in his interactions with children at all events. *Pete the Popcorn* is Joe's first book and he is thrilled that other projects have since been released, with more in the works.

Books: *Pete the Popcorn* (series), *Casey and Callie Cupcake*, *Mason the Pickle*, *The Ideaparnockolis*

Grade Level: K-5

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (booking from 6th, working back)

Honorarium: Full Day \$1000, Half Day \$750

Julie Rubini

Julie and her husband Brad established Claire's Day, a children's book festival in honor of their daughter. This celebration of Claire's love for reading has grown to a week-long celebration, impacting over 20,000 children and family members, and is gaining national attention. Julie loves encouraging children to learn to read, and currently volunteers with Creating Young Readers. Julie is the author of Virginia Hamilton: America's Storyteller, named to Bank Street College of Education's Best Children's Books, 2018 edition, Missing Millie Benson: The Secret Case of the Nancy Drew Ghostwriter and Journalist, and Hidden Ohio, a children's book about her great State. She has also written a biography of Christine Brennan, USA Today Sports columnist. These works are included within the Biographies for Young Readers series published by Ohio University Press.

Books: Virginia Hamilton: America's Storyteller, Hidden Ohio

Grade Level: K-8

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$1000 Half Day \$600

Tricia Springstubb

Tricia is the author of many books for children, including the award winning middle grade novels "What Happened on Fox Street" and its well-loved sequel, Mo Wren Lost and Found. She's also written four books in the Cody chapter book series, illustrated by Eliza Wheeler, as well as the picture book Phoebe and Digger illustrated by Jeff Newman. Tricia has also worked as a Head Start teacher and a children's library associate. Besides writing and, of course, reading, she loves doing school and library visits. Mother of three grown daughters and four perfect grandbabies, she lives with her husband, garden and cats in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

Books: What Happened on Fox Street, The Most Perfect Thing In the Universe

Grade Level: 2-8

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full day \$750 Half day: \$400

Aaron Zenz

Aaron Zenz loves the art of storytelling. His understanding of the craft has been shaped by the roles he has held as author, illustrator, fine artist, college instructor, graphic recorder, and designer of multimedia, characters, and toys. Aaron creates illustrations with colored pencil, employing unusual methods to achieve rich vivid colors. He is also just as happy creating art digitally. Due to his deep love for children's books, Aaron has amassed a collection of over 3500 titles in his home in West Michigan. He has illustrated 33 books for children, 9 of which he authored as well.

Books: The Hiccupotomus, Chuckling Ducklings, Skeleton Meets the Mummy

Grade Level: K-5

School visit availability: May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Honorarium: Full Day \$1000 Half Day \$500
