

Nancy Cooper

First Nation Communities READ

How Schools Can Implement FNCR Programming in 5 Easy Steps

First Nation Communities READ (FNCR) is an annual book award program that celebrates the very best of Indigenous Children's and Young Adult/Adult literature. FNCR was launched in 2003 by the First Nation Public Library community. Each year books are nominated by publishers and are considered by a jury of librarians from First Nation communities throughout Ontario. Selected title authors are awarded the Indigenous Literature Award sponsored by the Periodical Marketers of Canada and each receive \$3,000.00.

The 2019/2020 selected titles will be announced in August 2019. Award presentations will take place in Toronto at Word on the Street at the end of September.

FNCR posters will be available for free to all libraries in Ontario. Please contact Nancy at ncooper@sols.org for more information about booklists, posters, or programming.

First Nation Communities READ is an excellent program to use in school libraries. The following are 5 easy ways school libraries can implement the FNCR nominated and/or selected titles.

1. Art show

A librarian in Timmins helped her library to showcase the FNCR Children's category by hosting a series of readings from nominated books and then urging children to create a piece of art based on one of the stories. She then framed each of the pieces and had them situated throughout the children's section of the library. Invitations were sent out to families and surrounding community. A great art show ensued.

2. Author visit

Did you know that the Writer's Union of Canada has a grants program for hosting authors? Check out their website for requirements. Maybe there is an Indigenous author you have wanted to speak at your school (writersunion.ca/public-readings). The Ontario Arts Council has a grant program that supports Indigenous artists to visit and work within communities. Maybe you would like to collaborate with a local artist or author. Many of the authors highlighted as part of FNCR are also wonderful visual artists. For example, Joanne Robertson, winner of the 2018/2019 FNCR Children's Category wrote and illustrated her book, *The Water Walker* (arts.on.ca/grants/priority-group/-artists).



3. Purchase books from GoodMinds.com

All First Nation Communities READ books are featured at a discount on the GoodMinds.com website. Not only is GoodMinds.com the official wholesaler for FNCR, each purchase guarantees a donation to the SALT Fund (Supporting Aboriginal Libraries Today).

4. Celebrate Indigenous History Month in early June

While National Indigenous Day is celebrated on or near June 21, you can celebrate Indigenous history all month long with FNCR titles. Small weekly thematic collections such as families, residential schools, animals, or being out on the land could all be supported by FNCR titles.

5. Celebrate the Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019

In a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, 2019 was declared the Year of Indigenous Languages. Invite a language speaker into your library! Check out Twitter for various Indigenous Word of the Day profiles. For more information about how your school/community can get involved, visit the International Year of Indigenous Languages website at en.iyil2019.org. ■