

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Literacy Festival Celebrates National Picture Book Month

By: Megan Northcote

**Cornelius, N.C.** – This November, Cornelius Public Library and Cornelius Elementary School are collaborating on a plethora of activities to celebrate National Picture Book Month. Events will culminate in a Festival from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, November 19 on the town green directly beside the public library. Children’s book author Aaron Reynolds will headline the festival with a presentation about creating his Caldecott award winning book *Creepy Carrots*. A Q& A session with the author will follow.

The event is sponsored by Charlotte Read, a collaborative, community-wide movement to double the percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students reading at grade level. According to their website, more than half of all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are not reading at grade level. The organization aims to raise the percentage of students reading on grade level from 40 percent to 80 percent by 2025.

“Reading picture books, or any age appropriate book, aloud is a great activity for parents and their children to partake in, not only to prepare the kids for kindergarten, but to encourage reading throughout their early school years as well,” Munro Richardson, Charlotte Read Executive Director, said.

While the festival is targeted at preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and their parents, any age child is welcome. Other activities include: a ‘book-nic’ which features a smorgasbord a food from popular picture books, a picture book swap, face painting, a character photo booth, a craft station, and a raffle.

Throughout the month, Cornelius Elementary School students will participate in a variety of picture book awareness activities, including a picture book trailer contest. The winning book trailers will also be debuted at the festival.

“Encouraging school age kids to reimagine picture books in a new way really opens their imagination and helps develop their critical thinking skills,” Pam Lilley, Cornelius Elementary School media specialist, said. “We’ve really had some outstanding book trailer entries so far.”

The public library is also offering a wide variety of picture book activities for school age students, including picture book trivia night and a readers’ theater led by teen volunteers where kids write their own script for a wordless picture book and act it out in front of the green screen.

“The i-studio is a new technology resource for the public library system that is really opening doors for kids and teens to be able to play around with literacy in digital formats,” Megan Northcote, senior children’s library assistant at Cornelius Public Library, said. “We’re anticipating that this project will encourage these kids to view picture books in a new light as they realize that children’s stories aren’t just limited to static words and images on the page.”

These wordless picture book videos will be created and filmed during a two part workshop from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Monday, November 14 and 21 and later premiered at the festival.

For a schedule of events and more information about any of these programs for National Picture Book Month, visit Cornelius Public Library’s website at [www.cmlibrary.org/cornelius](http://www.cmlibrary.org/cornelius).

#####