

REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Noticias del mes/News of the month

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to our September newsletter.

In this issue we're excited to announce the Lafe Allen Memorial Library as the winner of the 2024 REdeFL Pura Belpré Book Donation Grant. Read about the grant, then continue to Alicia K. Long's article to learn about her 250-mile trip to deliver these Latinx books to Edenia M. Hernandez in North Miami Beach..

I'm surprised to not have received any responses to several articles from the August newsletter, so am running them again in this issue.

Please consider becoming a member of the CAYASC Book Review Committee, submitting member spotlights for upcoming newsletters, sending us information about your company if you're a Corporate member, and sharing news from your region.

Until next time,

Alma Ramos-McDermott, Editor
(Southern region)

Alejandra Rodriguez, Reporter
(Central region)

Winner of the 2024 REFORMA de Florida Pura Belpré Book Award

The ReDeFL 2024 Pura Belpré Book Donation Grant Selection Committee is excited to announce the winner of our Book Donation Grant. The grant aims to bring books created by Latinx authors and illustrators portraying the Latino cultural experience into the lives of children. The 2024 winner is the Lafe Allen Memorial Library in North Miami Beach.

The winning entry, submitted by Edenia M. Hernandez, was selected based on why the collection was needed by the institution and its community, how acquiring the collection would help the institution better serve the children and youth of their community, and the effectiveness of the institution's plan to make the materials available in their community. Blind judging was instituted by Selection Committee members.

The Lafe Allen Memorial library received almost 200 Latinx and children's books to support the Latino cultural experience in the lives of children.

REFORMA de Florida thanks members of the 2024 Pura Belpré Book Donation Grant Selection Committee:

- Lucia M. Gonzalez: Vice-President/President-Elect of REFORMA de Florida; Library Consultant; Former Director of the North Miami Public Library.
- Isabel Castro: Treasurer of REFORMA de Florida, Assistant Director of the West Orange Public Library in West Orange, New Jersey.
- Alma Ramos-McDermott: Secretary of REFORMA de Florida, 5th-grade teacher at Avalon Elementary in Naples, Florida; Former School Librarian.

We thank everyone who applied for the award. Look for information on our 2025 edition. Submissions will be accepted sometime during July 2025.

All the colors in a gray sky: Delivering the REFORMA de Florida Book Grant to North Miami Beach

by Alicia K.. Long



The creation of the Pura Belpré Award by REFORMA leaders in 1996 had, among its goals, to help put more quality books by Latinx creators into children's hands. Therefore, when some REFORMA de Florida leaders and members were discussing what to do with accumulated books that publishers and authors submit to the committee for consideration each year, the goal was obvious: these books need to reach kids' hands.

The committee had hundreds of books submitted, published in 2023. As the former Cultural Competence Consultant of the Award, I had them all in my office. But the Awards had been selected and I needed the space. Plus, they were starting to

collect dust, and that's never good. Once REFORMA de Florida created the Book Grant, a call for applications was sent, and a winner was selected. I was happy to get these books out of my house! However, I was not expecting the excitement and impact this quick "book delivery trip" to Miami Beach would cause.

On a Saturday in late August, one of those typical Summer days in South Florida when the sky turns from blue to overcast in seconds, and the [North Miami Beach Library](#) was closed for building maintenance, my husband and I made the 250-mile trip with these hundreds of books. Edenia M. Hernandez, Library Director of Lafe Allen Memorial Library who won the grant, waited for us in a colorful, vibrant, beautiful library.



Yes, the sky was getting dark, but the library was shining! It includes outside murals by [Colombian artist Alicia Maria Vallejo](#), a "Forest of Dreams," and a "Butterfly" whose wings are ready to help you soar! The community also came together to knit and prepare a fiber arts installation, a "yarn bombing" of the library, which included hanging squares of beautiful crochet knitting, wrapping of poles, columns, the bike rack, knitted stripes around trees, and a beautiful piece composed of woven circles in the tradition of the Wayuu women of La Guajira, Colombia.



In this colorful context, Lucia Gonzalez (REFORMA de Florida Vice-President/President-Elect) and I presented Edenia with the books. Her excitement was contagious! She told us about the diversity of Latino cultures represented in her library community, and how these books will help those children see themselves and their cultures "portrayed, affirmed, and celebrated," in the spirit of the [Pura Belpré Award](#).

Would you like to know how the North Miami Beach Library will use the books? Would you like to meet Edenia and her library community? Stay tuned to your emails, our

All the colors in a gray sky (continued)

newsletter, FB page, and social media for more information on her Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, to which all of us are invited!



Are you interested in reviewing Latino books for CAYASC?

by Alma Ramos-McDermott

Besides being your Secretary, I'm also the Chair of *REFORMA National's Children and Young Adult Services (CAYASC) Book Review Committee*.

ReDeFL members interested in reviewing books created by Latinx authors and illustrators for Children and Young adults that portray the Latino cultural experience are being recruited for my committee. Our reviews will assist public and school librarians in curating their collections and will also be used by the public. Books may be bilingual, written in English or Spanish, and may be published by large, small, or independent publishers. Books by and about marginalized Latinos, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community, Latinos with disabilities, undocumented Latinos, etc. are also welcomed to be reviewed.

We have a [Book Review page](#) on our website, and reviews are also posted on my blog "[You decide: Should I read it or not?](#)" REFORMA will soon create a *CAYASC Book Review* webpage and, once completed, our committee reviews will be posted there.

Committee members don't need experience reviewing books as I'll send information to help you, so join us! Besides book reviews, we'll create a list of past Pura Belpré winning and honor titles with short summaries (not reviews) for each, starting with the 2024 winning titles and working our way back to 1996, to be published on REFORMA's *Pura Belpré* web page. We'll also brainstorm lessons, activities, or discussion questions to go with the summaries. With the 30th anniversary of the Pura Belpré awards coming up in 2026, this would be a great way to honor her legacy.

Reviewing Latino books for CAYASC (continued)

If interested in serving on the *CAYASC Book Review Committee* to review Latino books in the categories mentioned above and participate in producing summaries/lessons/activities discussion questions for Pura Belpré winning titles, email me. You must be a member of REFORMA de Florida to participate.

If you're a large, small, or independent publisher, and would be willing to send committee members recent titles from the above categories via email or snail mail for us to review, please email for logistics. I look forward to what we can accomplish. Junto podemos!/Together we can!

Are you a Corporate member of REFORMA de Florida?

Corporate members are an important part of our chapter. Send us a photo, business card, and/or a short blurb about you and your company to appear in a future newsletter. If interested, email them with the subject "Corporate member." We want to know more about you!

***What's happening in your region?
(Northern, Central, or Southern)***

Any news or events happening in your library or region related to our Latino community? Email your name, region, title, library name, a short summary of your news or event, and any pertinent photos with the subject "Qué pasa?/What's happening?"

Your news can grow membership in your region, and for our chapter, so we look forward to hearing from you.

***Were you forwarded this newsletter but are not yet a member of
REFORMA de Florida?***

To join or renew, go to REFORMA National's Membership page and make sure to check REFORMA de Florida as your chapter.

***Is your membership getting ready to expire?
Are you a Member-at-large?***

Not sure if your membership is expiring? Email with the subject "Is my membership expiring?" I'll let you know your status.

If you're a Member-at-large (not associated with any chapter), email with the subject "Member-at-large" for information on how to join the chapter as a full-fledged member.