

REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Noticias del mes/News of the month

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2025!

We begin with messages from President, Maria Vega, and Vice-President Lucia M. Gonzalez.

Read a summary of how our chapter was represented at the Miami Book Fair, and about Freda Mosquera's successful Noche de Cuentos event held in Broward County. Freda, a member from our Southern region, won a REFORMA National Noche de Cuentos grant.

Continue reading to learn how to apply for a Noche de Cuentos grant, as well as our chapter's Pura Belpré Book Grant. Also included is the 2024 *REFORMA and Graphic Novel Round Table Core List* of titles.

Lots to read, so enjoy!

If you'd like to submit an article [contact me](#).

Until next time,

Alma Ramos-McDermott, Editor
(Southern region)

Alejandra Rodriguez, Reporter
(Central region)

A Message from the President

by Maria Vega, President



2024 has been a busy year for REFORMA de Florida. We hosted the Story Wagon at the Miami Book Fair, two statewide Meet and Greets in Central and South Florida, and a panel at the Conference on Children's Literature in Broward County. We brought author Chantal Acevedo back to her home library in Hialeah and represented our members on the Executive Committee of the Florida Library Association. We also contributed to opening a Little Free Library in Orlando, and created a Pura Belpré grant that donated almost 200 books to the North Miami Library.

All of this was done through the outstanding work of your REFORMA de Florida Executive Board, made up of Lucia Gonzalez, Alma Ramos-McDermott, and Isabel Castro. These amazing members planned for and carried out hours of work to make sure REFORMA de Florida is serving our Spanish-speaking and Latinx population across the state through grants, programs, and outreach events, pushing for representation and services at every opportunity.

2025 is going to be equally busy, with ReDeFL Executive Board Members presenting two sessions at the Florida Library Association and working with Spanish Publishers to host an Author Breakfast at the Conference. We continue to represent you on the Florida Library Association Executive Board, and this February we are planning on hosting a Pura Belpré event during Black History Month to celebrate Afro Latinas. We need more members like you to become involved and help us create, plan, and carry out our mission—please join us by volunteering on one of our committees today!

Our individual members have been achieving amazing things—we would love for you to tell us about your accomplishments so we can share them in our newsletters. In this light, I want to congratulate past REFORMA de Florida President Alicia Long on the successful defense of her doctoral thesis, and Lucia

A Message from the President (p. 2)

Gonzalez on her upcoming REFORMA de Florida Presidency! What wonderful things have you been successful at this year?

Please don't hesitate to share any amazing programs, resources, and achievements you would like us to share with the ReDeFL membership. Email us so we can celebrate your achievements and hard work together.

Here's to REFORMA de Florida having an even stronger and brighter 2025!

¡Feliz año nuevo!

by Lucia M. Gonzalez, Vice-President



Feliz año nuevo! Happy New Year, REFORMistas de Florida!

I'm so excited to kick off this new year with all of you as your REFORMA de Florida Vice-President for 2024-25. The New Year arrives with its sack brimming with new resolutions, great projects, and endless possibilities for REFORMA de Florida.

This will be a year of growth for REFORMA de Florida. Florida librarians are faced with the challenge of serving Latinos in communities everywhere, many of whom are new immigrants. Library workers are eager to find resources and guidance to help them serve Latino families in their communities. We will be at the Miami Book Fair, FLA, FAME, and other local, regional, or statewide events getting the word out and recruiting new members. Our goal is to be "the point of encounter," a clearinghouse of information for library services to Latino communities in our state.

There will be perks for our members! This year, once again, members will have the opportunity to submit their proposals to qualify to win the REFORMA de Florida Pura Belpré Book Grant. The winning library(s) will receive a collection of children's/YA books published in 2024 submitted for consideration to the 2025 Pura Belpré Award Selection Committee. Among the books will be this year's Belpré medalists and honorees.

Personally, I call 2025 my "Homecoming Year." After years of working at the national level, serendipity now offers me this opportunity to "come home" to actively serve in a leadership capacity as a member of my Florida REFORMA Chapter. As some of you might already know this past summer, due to difficult circumstances, the REFORMA de FL Board appointed me to serve in the capacity of Vice-President. I am excited to work together with REFORMA de Florida members as we move forward in the realization of our mission to "promote the implementation, advancement, and improvement of library and information services to the Spanish-speaking and Latino populations of the state of Florida."

I invite library workers from all communities and all types of libraries to join REFORMA de Florida or to renew your membership.

En la unión esta la fuerza / In unity there is power! Y juntos si se puede!



Miami Book Fair

by Alejandra Rodriguez

ReDeFL Secretary Alma Ramos-McDermott and President Maria Vega represented our chapter at the 2024 Miami Book Fair. Alma and Maria assisted with *Stanza's Story Wagon*, which took place in the *Children's Alley* on Saturday November 23rd and Sunday November 24th. During *Stanza's Story Wagon* participants were invited to "Walk down Wordsmith Way and wade into Stanza's Swamp Land to meet new and favorite picture book authors, navigate a swampy obstacle course, and create some boggy folk art!"



Alma and Maria introduced several storytellers, authors, and illustrators during the two-day sessions including Edel Rodriguez, Kwame Alexander, Meg Medina, Jerry Craft, George O'Connor, and many more. Each session concluded with an *Illustrator Draw-Off*, a mashup battle of illustrator vs. illustrator vying for the title of champion featuring Jerry Craft, Jon Hendrix, George O'Connor, Edel Rodriguez, Uru-Chan, and Robin Ha.

In between hosting sessions, Alma squeezed in a quick photo with "*Dork Diaries*" author Rachel Renée Russell and her illustrator daughter Nikki. She also met Yamile Saied Mendez, author of the Pura Belpré award winning "*Furia*."

For more information about the 2025 Miami Book Fair please visit: <https://www.miamibookfair.com/>.



Holiday Caribbean stories: A Celebration of the Power of Stories in English, Creole, and Spanish

by Lucia M. Gonzalez

The *Noche de Cuentos* event held December 17, 2024, at Broward County Library's Lauderdale Lakes Branch and hosted by Freda Mosquera, was a compelling statement of the power of storytelling to unite communities. The program, made possible through support from REFORMA National's *Noche de Cuentos Mini-Grant* program and the Friends of the Lauderdale Lakes Branch Library, was a vibrant celebration of storytelling, poetry, art, and music in which languages flowed together like the mighty waters of a river.



In addition to storytelling, the program included Creole poetry by Haitian American Poet Andre Fouad, a presentation on the seven principles of Kwanza conducted by folklorist Takiyah Williams, steel drum music by General Stan, and a heartwarming Chicken Soup to celebrate the Holiday season prepared by former City of Lauderdale Lakes Commissioner and President of the Friends of the Library Mrs. Beverly Williams. I had the privilege of being the evening's featured storyteller.

Noche de Cuentos at the Lauderdale Lakes Library truly resembled those nights in the Caribbean when families and children gather in the intimacy of their homes to tell stories. Freda set the tone for the evening with a heartfelt welcome speech that, from the get-go, managed to make the walls between audience and performers disappear. As host and MC, Freda facilitated a truly inclusive space in which everyone's voices were heard.

It was magical!



REFORMA National 2025 Noche de Centos Mini Grants



Would you like to host your own Noche de Cuentos event at your library? Public, School, and Academic Librarians are encouraged to apply for REFORMA National's Noche de Cuentos mini-grants. Ten awards of \$500 each will be distributed for programs to be held between September-December 2025.

To apply you must be a member of REFORMA so, as a member of REFORMA de Florida, you are eligible! Applications are due by June 30th.

More information on criteria and the application process is available on [REFORMA National's website](#). Good luck!

North Miami Library Pura Belpré Book Grant Ribbon Cutting

by Alma Ramos-McDermott



As announced in a previous newsletter, the winner of the 2024 REFORMA de Florida Pura Belpré Book Donation Grant was the Lafe Allen Memorial Library in North Miami Beach. The winning entry was submitted by Library Director Edenia M. Hernandez. The Lafe Allen Memorial library received almost 200 books created by Latinx authors and illustrators to support

the Latino cultural experience in the lives of children.



In October, the North Miami Beach Library held a Multicultural Hispanic Heritage Children's Celebration as well as a ribbon cutting for the books they won. Present for the festivities were members of the [READ Foundation](#), [NMB Library Friends](#), and REFORMA de Florida members, as well as residents of North Miami Beach. All present were able to enjoy traditional Mexican dances, Colombian stories, and Venezuelan arepa making. A ribbon cutting was held for the Pura Belpré books won by the library. As noted on their Facebook page, the NMB library believes these books will offer their patrons "continuous access to Spanish items and services." (*photos from the NMB FB page.*)



Stay tuned to this newsletter, our [FB page](#), and [our website](#) for information on when applications will open for the 2025 REFORMA de Florida Pura Belpré Book Donation Grant.

REFORMA Graphic Novel & Comics Round Table Collaboration Core List for Juveniles, Teens, and Adults has been released!



In October 2023, the Graphic Novel & Comics Round Table (GNCRT) formed a joint committee with REFORMA National to highlight Latino/x voices in the world of comics.

Co-Chair President Maria Vega and committee member Immediate Past President Mari Martinez-Serrano worked hard with members of the committee to create the *REFORMA and Graphic Novel Round Table Core List*.

The 85 titles are divided into Juvenile (elementary and middle schools), Young Adult (High school), and Adult. Check it out, and let us know what you think!

2024 GNCRT REFORMA Collaboration Core list

Are you a Corporate member of REFORMA de Florida?

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

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

Are there any events happening in your library or region related to our Latino community? Email me your name, region, title, library name, a short summary of your news or event, and any 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 "Is my membership expiring?," and I'll let you know your status. If you're a Member-at-large (not associated with any chapter), email me with the subject "Member-at-large." I'll send information on how you can join the chapter as a full-fledged member.