YOUR REGIONAL TEAM:

LINDA RODRIGUEZ BERNFELD (SCBWI Florida Co-Regional Advisor) has worked in radio, television, and newspapers. Today she's a freelance writer, interviewing teens for positive people stories. She also writes newspaper stories about as many children’s writers as she can. Linda helped revive SCBWI in Florida when she started the Miami Mini-Conferences in 2001 which later became the Florida Regional Conference. She was able to get the first conference going when she overrode everyone’s objections and declared “conferences aren't that much work.” Over the years, the conferences have gotten more and more complicated but they remain just as much fun. This is the year that Linda hopes to break out of the pack and actually finish a book. Linda is married to Jerry Bernfeld and has two sons, Brian, 20, and Kevin, 24, and their rescue dog, Harley, who spends as much time cowering at thunderstorms in the closet as Linda does reading children’s books.

GABY TRIANA (SCBWI Florida Co-Regional Advisor) is a YA author, writing workshop instructor, and freelance ghostwriter. Her novels include SUMMER OF YESTERDAY (SimonPulse), BACKSTAGE PASS, CUBANITA, THE TEMPTRESS FOUR, and RIDING THE UNIVERSE (HarperCollins) and have earned the IRA Teen Choice Award, ALA Best Paperbacks, and Hispanic Magazine’s Good Reads of 2008. Her obsessions include Halloween, Disney World, hosting parties, designing mugs and wedding cakes, and watching Doctor Who with her three boys. WAKE THE HOLLOW, her modern mash-up of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, recently sold to Entangled Publishing and will be released in 2016. Her magical novel, CAKESPPELL, about a teen who inherits her late grandmother's matchmaking abilities through her baking, is currently out on submission. Her agent is Deborah Warren of East/West Literary. Visit her at gabytriana.com, Facebook, and @GabyTriana on Twitter.

LINDA SHUTE (SCBWI Florida Illustrator Coordinator) was a latchkey bookworm growing up in West Miami when she was inspired by Kate Seredy's books to be an author/illustrator. Characters in Linda's 14 picture books range from leprechauns to Chesapeake explorers. She earned an art degree at FSU and taught Children's Book Illustration at Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota. Linda has enjoyed being Florida SCBWI Illustrator Coordinator since 2010.

CURTIS SPONSLER (SCBWI Florida Assistant Regional Advisor & Mad Scientist) was born an artist and geek – and he is damned proud of it. He applies his passion as a 3D animator and motion graphic designer and has received an Emmy for his animation, along with numerous other awards (Telly, Addy, Cleo and more). Curtis' creative direction and design have been seen on national TV networks, cable channels, and before large convention audiences for nearly 30 years. His first published book was The Focal Easy Guide to After Effects, a tutorial reference guide for beginning to intermediate artists and broadcast industry designers. He is currently a perspiring novelist with his MG novel, REALM OF THE PAW, and YA, CHARLOTTE'S W3B UNRAVELED, currently under revision. He's drafting his newest YA novel, NOWHERE WOLF, along with a few other secret writing projects - mad scientists are always happiest when they are working on secret projects.
ALLYN JOHNSTON has been working in children’s publishing in her native California for twenty-four years. Among the authors and illustrators with whom she works are Mem Fox, Lois Ehlert, Marla Frazee, Cynthia Rylant, Debra Frasier, Arthur Howard, Jan Thomas, Avi, and M. T. Anderson. Recent titles she’s edited are New York Times bestseller Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes by Mem Fox, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury; and A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever by Marla Frazee and New York Times bestseller All the World by Liz Garton Scanlon, illustrated by Marla Frazee, both of which received a Caldecott Honor.

ERIN CLARKE is an executive editor at Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, where she works on a wide variety of books including picture books, middle grade, and young adult. She is the editor of WONDER by R.J. Palacio, THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak, OPHELIA AND THE MARVELOUS BOY by Karen Foxlee, TAKING FLIGHT by Michaela DePrince, the Tia Lola books by Julia Alvarez, the Sprout Street Neighbors books by Anna Alter, the Flying Beaver Brother graphic novels by Maxwell Eaton III, and the forthcoming picture book EAT, SLEEP, POOP by Alexandra Penfold, illustrated by Jane Massey.

REBECCA M. DAVIS is a Senior Editor for Boyds Mills Press and WordSong, Imprints of Highlights. WordSong is the only imprint in the United States dedicated to children’s poetry. Rebecca has been editing children’s books for more than 20 years, including approximately six years each at Greenwillow Books and Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. She has edited everything from young picture books to middle grade and young adult novels. Rebecca has long loved poetry and in the course of her career has published as much of it as she could get away with. Poets that she’s had the honor and joy of publishing include Lee Bennett Hopkins, Jane Yolen, Rebecca Kai Dotlich, Nikki Grimes, and J. Patrick Lewis.

LEE BENNETT HOPKINS has written and edited numerous award-winning books for children and young adults, as well as professional texts and curriculum materials. He has taught elementary school and served as a consultant to school systems throughout the country. Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Hopkins graduated Kean University, Bank Street College of Education, and holds a Professional Diploma in Educational Supervision and Administration from Hunter College. In 1980 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Kean University. In 1989 he received the University of Southern Mississippi Medallion for “outstanding contributions to the field of children’s literature” in recognition of his work; 2009 brought him the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Excellence in Poetry for Children, recognizing his aggregate body of work. In 2010 he received the Florida Libraries’ Lifetime Achievement Award.

ALLYN JOHNSTON has been working in children’s publishing in her native California for twenty-four years. Among the authors and illustrators with whom she works are Mem Fox, Lois Ehlert, Marla Frazee, Cynthia Rylant, Debra Frasier, Arthur Howard, Jan Thomas, Avi, and M. T. Anderson. Recent titles she’s edited are New York Times bestseller Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes by Mem Fox, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury; and A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever by Marla Frazee and New York Times bestseller All the World by Liz Garton Scanlon, illustrated by Marla Frazee, both of which received a Caldecott Honor.
MADELEINE KUDERICK grew up in Oak Park, Illinois, a community with rich literary tradition, where she was editor-in-chief of the same high school newspaper that Ernest Hemingway wrote for as a teen. She studied journalism at Indiana University before transferring to the School of Hard Knocks where she earned plenty of bumps and bruises and eventually an MBA. Today, Madeleine likes writing about underdogs and giving a voice to those who are struggling to be heard. She speaks at schools and conferences sharing her honest stories with teens, educators and parents. KISS OF BROKEN GLASS is her debut novel, a Florida Book Awards gold medal winner, and a YALSA 2015 Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers.

E.B. LEWIS (Earl Bradley Lewis) was born on December 16, 1956, in Philadelphia, PA. Inspired by two artist uncles, Lewis displayed artistic promise as early as the third grade. E.B. attended the Temple University Tyler School of Art where he discovered his medium of preference was watercolor. E.B. Lewis has illustrated over seventy books for children, including Nikki Grimes’ Talkin’ About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman, the 2003 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Winner; Alice Schertle’s Down the Road, an ALA Notable Book; Tolowa M. Mollel’s My Rows and Piles of Coins, an ALA Notable Book and a Coretta Scott King Honor Book; Bat Boy and His Violin by Garvin Curtis a Coretta Scott King Honor Book, and Jacqueline Woodson’s The Other Side, a 2002 Notable Book for the Language Arts.

JACQUELYN MITCHARD is the number one New York Times bestselling author of nine novels for adults, including The Deep End of the Ocean, the inaugural selection of the Oprah Winfrey Book Club, which also was made into a major feature film. The editor of a realistic Young Adult imprint, Merit Press, she also is the author of seven novels for young adults, and five children's books. Winner of the Bram Stoker and Shirley Jackson award, as well as the UK's Talkabout Prize, her work also was short-listed for the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction. Mitchard is a professor of Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction at Vermont College of Fine Art and a contributing editor for More magazine. She grew up in Chicago, and now lives on Cape Cod with her family.

DANIEL NAYERI is the author of How to Tell a Story and Straw House, Wood House, Brick House, Blow, a collection of four novellas, which have been called, "the writer's equivalent of a singer with a four-octave range". He is the director of children's publishing at Workman Publishing Company.
SARA PENNYPACKER is the author of fourteen children’s book, including the award-winning, New York Times bestselling Clementine series, the Stuart books – recently reissued, Pierre in Love, which won the Golden Kite Award, Sparrow Girl, and four Flat Stanley books. Her latest book is Summer of the Gypsy Moths. Ms. Pennypacker travels widely to speak about literacy and to encourage reading and writing. She is the founder of the ShareOurBooks.org program which lends books provided by authors for community reads. Visit her at www.sarapennypacker.com.

RUBIN PFEFFER is a veteran of the children's and adult Trade industry. He has served as President and Publisher of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, SVP and Chief Creative Officer of Pearson, and as SVP, Publisher of Children's Books for Simon & Schuster. Pfeffer joined the East West Literary Agency in December 2009 and established the Boston base of the agency. He has served as one of two judges of the National Parenting Publications Awards (NAPPA) for Best Children's Books published in 2009 and 2010. In 2014, Pfeffer launched Rubin Pfeffer Content, LLC, a literary agency focusing on children's content for Trade publishing. He proudly works with such luminaries as Patricia MacLachlan, Marion Dane Bauer, Steven Kellogg, Susan Cooper, Michael Hague, David Diaz, and Jeff Mack. In his five years as an agent, Pfeffer has launched the literary careers of Elana Arnold, Scott Blagden, Mike Austin, Arree Chung, Brian Won, Rob Sanders, and a host of other talents new to the publishing arena.

MARTHA RAGO was named the Creative Director for Random House/Golden Books Young Readers Group in January 2015 and oversees their growing trade list of picture books, YA, middle grade and chapter books. Martha has had a long career as designer and art director in children's books. As the associate creative director at HarperCollins for the past 12 years, she oversaw the development and design of HarperCollins picture books under the Harper imprint and those in the Rayo, Collins, Katherine Tegen imprint, the Balzer + Bray imprint, and the estate programs of C.S. Lewis and Shel Silverstein. Martha has worked with many established illustrators in her career, such as Eric Carle, Tomie dePaola, Peter McCarty, Mo Willems, Floyd Cooper, Peter Sis, Dan Yaccarino, Susan Jeffers, Pat Cummings, and Kadir Nelson. She loves to discover and support new talent as well, and in this past year has worked with newcomers Mike Curato, Ryan O'Rourke, Mike Lowry, Joseph Keufler, and Suzanne Kaufman, to name just a few.

ROB SANDERS does not work as a telephone sales rep, a loading dock worker, a trophy engraver, or an editor. But he used to. Rob is not a cowboy, a ballerina, an alien, or a temper-tantrum-throwing toddler. But he writes about them. Rob is a picture book author, a writing teacher, a blogger, and a great uncle. He worked for fifteen in religious educational publishing as a writer, editor, editorial manager, and product designer. These days he teaches elementary kids about books and words and reading and writing, and writes books for those same kids. Rob’s first picture book, COWBOY CHRISTMAS, was released by Golden Books/Random House in 2012. OUTER SPACE BEDTIME RACE was released by Random House Children’s Books in January 2015. RUBY ROSE ON HER TOES (the first in a two-book deal with HarperCollins) releases in January 2016, and Rob just sold RODZILLA to Justin Chanda at Simon & Schuster. Rob also coordinates the Rising Kite Writing Contest for SCBWI Florida and organizes meetings for SCBWI Florida members in the Tampa Bay area.
ERICA RAND SILVERMAN is an agent at Sterling Lord Literistic and represents some of the most exciting new talent and treasured mainstays in the children’s market. In addition to representing bestselling and award-winning careers such as Tony Abbott, Lois Duncan, Alexandra Flinn, Chris Gall, Patricia Reilly Giff, and Peter Spier, she is proud to be launching talented authors and illustrators such as Ezra Jack Keats Writing Award recipient, Adam Auerbach; comedic writing duo Annabeth Bondor-Stone and Connor White, authors of Shivers! The Pirate Who is Afraid of Everything; Eric Kahn Gale, author of The Bully Book; Tim Miller, author-illustrator of Moo in a Tutu (Balzer & Bray, 2017); Mika Song, SCBWI Portfolio winner and author-illustrator of Tea with Oliver (HarperCollins, 2017); children’s musician David Weinstone of Music for Aardvarks and author of Music Class Today! (FSG, 2015). Additionally, Erica represents and manages acclaimed estate clients such as the Lydia Freeman Foundation (Corduroy). Erica was previously a teacher and dean in a New York City high school and continues to write educational materials for the publishing industry through Room 228 Educational Consulting.

JENNIFER SWANSON is a self-professed science geek and the author of twenty nonfiction and fiction books. She has three books forthcoming from National Geographic in 2015 and 2016. Her book How Hybrid Cars Work received a starred review from Booklist and also a Top 10 Books for Youth 2012 Award from Booklist Online. Several of Jennifer’s other books have received “highly recommended” reviews from the National Science Teacher Association, as well as School Library Journal. Body Bugs was a 2012 Tri-state Book of Note and designated an award winner by the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association. Her favorite saying to her students is to “notice the science all around you.” Learn more at www.JenniferSwansonBooks.com.