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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IBBY Announces Winner of the 2024 IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promotion Award

Junko Yokota, Chair of the IBBY Reading Promotion Jury announces the winners of the 2024 IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promotion Award. The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) is very grateful for the generous support of the Shenzhen iRead Foundation from China.

The 2024 winners are: **Basarat Kazim, from Pakistan**, nominated by the IBBY Section of Pakistan, and **Irene Vasco from Colombia**, nominated by IBBY Canada.

Basarat Kazim's nomination submitted by IBBY Pakistan notes that she is a “selfless committed humanitarian, an educator, a children’s writer, social activist and die-hard advocate of reading in youth—an ordinary person doing extraordinary work”. Starting in 1978 with 500 students and one library, Basarat Kazim’s innovative efforts have converted Alif Laila Book Bus Society into an entire movement with over 7000 libraries, benefitting 1 million children and training 1000+ teachers. Among many awards bestowed on her, Basarat was honoured with the 2023 Inspiring Woman Awards with the reputation of being one who turns everything into a children’s library because of the belief that every child in Pakistan should read. She converted camels, yaks, rickshaws, boxes, bicycles, motorbikes, all into libraries with her motto “Sky is the Limit.” Her influence can be seen in having trained 500 Teachers, 1000 Teaching Interns, 20 Creative Practitioners, and 200 Master Trainers. It is inspiring to note that Basarat has consistently been of aid to her country during times of devastation and destruction among much poverty. She showed innovative ways of meeting extraordinary needs during the pandemic and shifted to more of a literacy orientation.

Irene Vasco's nomination submitted by IBBY Canada shows that since the 1980s she is a “Colombian children’s literature expert, lecturer, writer, and reading promoter (...) Her participation in conferences throughout the South American continent and Spain has made her an international authority in reading promotion and a renowned author of children’s and young people’s literature in Colombia and beyond.” Irene is an influential heroine who faces challenges, reading to children in indigenous or dangerous areas, carrying books as her talisman. She collects stories of women, even on a bus. Her work is characterized as well-coordinated and well-conceptualized. She has shown innovation in numerous ways, from how she established “community home” small libraries in villages to how she uses a printing press to help understand alphabetic code.

Irene is inspiring in her dedication in sharing her knowledge with others, including publishing several books about reading promotion.

IBBY congratulates the winners. At the next IBBY Congress (Triste, Italy, 30 August–1 September 2024), the two winners will each receive a trophy and a diploma, 200,000 RMB and, in addition, 150,000 RMB Yuan will be given to a non-profit children's reading promotion project of their choice.

The 2024 IBBY Reading Promotion Award Jury comprised: Tina Bilban from Slovenia, Ingrid Källström from Sweden, Elena Pasoli from Italy, Luis Zenderera from Spain, and Wen Li from China, in representation of the iRead foundation. It was chaired by Junko Yokota from the USA.

Eleven other nominees were considered for the award. These include: Hugo Waldemar Cubilla, from Argentina; Sun Yi (Sister Xiaoyu) from China; Angela Chalkiopoulou, from Cyprus; María Teresa Pérez from the Dominican Republic; Michèle Petit from France; Kirsten Boie, from Germany; Ali Ashgar Seidabadi, from Tehran; Nader Mousavi, from Iran; Darja Lavrencic, from Slovenia; Slavko Pregl from Slovenia, and Arthur Atwell, from South Africa.

About the IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promotion Award

The IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award was first given in 2020 by the Shenzhen iRead Foundation and IBBY to encourage a real commitment to the cause of reading promotion in the hope of spreading this dedication to others around the globe. The Award aims to encourage further investment by individuals, organizations and governments in the promotion of children's reading and will stimulate educational innovation, give much greater access to children's books and an enhanced profile for children's reading promotion—key tools in global, social, economic and cultural development – all in the context of Article 17(C) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The iRead Foundation has pledged 1,200,000 RMB biennially for twenty years for this important award.

About IBBY

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), established in 1953, is a non-profit organization that represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together.

Contact

For more information, about IBBY and the iRead Outstanding Reading Promotion Award, please visit www.ibby.org or write to Executive Director Carolina Ballester at carolina.ballester@ibby.org.