She may be 104 years old, but Ona Vitkus is on a mission and it’s all because of The One-in-a-Million Boy

MONICA WOOD

“Wood’s exquisitely crafted prose radiates warmth, perception, and insight... Funny and uplifting.”
—Guardian
Read Together
Palm Beach County

PURPOSE: The Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County is working to involve thousands of adults throughout Palm Beach County in reading the same book at the same time. This community reading campaign will entice adults who can read, but often don’t, to get involved in the habit of reading again. It will also promote community dialogue and engagement as citizens gather together to discuss key themes.

HISTORY: Based on the success of similar campaigns in Seattle and Chicago, the Campaign Coordinating Committee conducted Read Together Palm Beach County biannually from 2002 to 2016. Building on the excitement, momentum and success of the 2016 campaign, the Literacy Coalition and the Read Together Committee decided to coordinate the initiative annually. In each campaign, thousands of adults read and discussed with great enthusiasm the chosen community book: Fahrenheit 451, Their Eyes Were Watching God, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Memory Keeper’s Daughter, The Book Thief, Last Train to Paradise, The Language of Flowers, The Light in the Ruins, A Man Called Ove and Best. State. Ever: A Florida Man Defends his Homeland.

Table of Contents

About The Author .................................................. 4
Praise for the Book ................................................... 5
Reading Group Questions ........................................... 6-7
Community Events .................................................... 8-11
Sponsorship Opportunities ........................................ 12
Finale Information ....................................................... 13
Literacy Coalition Events ............................................ 16-18
How You Can Help ..................................................... 19

Copies of the book are available at The Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County for a $10 donation.
Blume Literacy Center
on the Brenda & C.P. Medore Campus
3651 Quantum Blvd.
Boyon Beach, FL 33426
561-279-9103
LiteracyPBC.org

READ TOGETHER SPONSORSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE!
Sponsorship opportunities range between $1,000 and $10,000. This community initiative is not a fundraiser, but helps support the Coalition’s mission to improve the quality of life in our community by promoting and achieving literacy. We expect a crowd of 500 at the November 21st finale where we will feature a silent auction. We are asking businesses and individuals to donate prizes such as hotel stays, experiences, and merchandise from local shops and businesses. A printed Read Together program, distributed throughout the campaign and at the finale, recognizes our sponsors and donors.
About the Author

Monica Wood

Monica Wood is a novelist, memoirist, and playwright. Her most recent novel, *The One-in-a-Million Boy*, has been published in 22 languages in 30 countries and won a 2017 Nautilus Award (Gold) and the New England Society Book Award. She is also the author of *When We Were the Kennedys*, a New England bestseller, *Oprah* magazine summer-reading pick, and winner of the May Sarton Memoir Award and the 2016 Maine Literary Award. Her novel *Any Bitter Thing* was an ABA bestseller and Book Sense Top Ten pick. Her other fiction includes *Ernie’s Ark*, which has been excerpted on NPR’s “Selected Shorts” and selected by several towns and cities as their “One Book, One Community” read; *My Only Story*, a finalist for the Kate Chopin Award; and *Secret Language*, her first novel. Her widely anthologized short stories have won a Pushcart Prize and been featured on public radio. She also writes books for writers and teachers. Her nonfiction has appeared in *Oprah*, *New York Times*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Parade*, and many other publications. Her first play, *Papermaker*, debuted at Portland Stage in an extended run, its bestselling play ever. Her second play, *The Half-Light*, had its world debut at Portland Stage in 2019.

Monica was born in Maine and worked as a guidance counselor and in a nursing home before becoming a full-time writer. She lives in Maine with her husband.

Other Titles by Monica Wood

Praise for the book

“This is a book of heartbreaking beauty. That an 11-year-old boy could bring together so many people of starkly contrasting interests is, in itself, amazing. But that he could bring them together in such a way as to form deep, lasting bonds is truly remarkable. Monica Wood has accomplished a feat of staggering wonder with *The One-in-a-Million Boy*.”
— BOOKREPORTER

“ Intricately woven ... *The One-in-a-Million Boy* is provocative, and it evokes Anthony Doerr’s *All the Light We Cannot See* for its twin story lines and the theme of endless searching for an anchor point. The ending is a deeply affecting surprise.”
— MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM, US

“This is a novel about many things: isolation, community, music, language and friendship. Wood’s prose sparkles with lyrical descriptions and sharp observations about people and their motivations. But the over-arching theme running through it all concerns second chances. Even when you’re older than a century, life still has the capacity to surprise you.”
— THE HERALD SCOTLAND, UK

“A lovely, quirky novel about misfits across the generations...There is humour as well as hope.”
— DAILY MAIL, UK

“A whimsical and bittersweet novel about finding friendship in the most unlikely places.”
— Good Housekeeping

“A simultaneously sad and joyous story of a unique 11-year-old boy and the legacy he leaves behind. Wood’s portrait of a fractured, grieving family is peopled by endearing characters.”
— Booklist, USA

“I loved it! Ona is such a brilliant heroine and Quinn is such a surprising hero. And, oh – that ending... Such a life-affirming read — I just love the way Monica’ story brings out the best in people.”
— Hannah Beckerman, Author and Journalist

“Why aren’t there more characters in literature like the 104-year-old Ona, Monica Wood’s feisty heroine, a lady you’d be happy to spend time with from a wise and touching book...”
— Frances Gertler, Head of Content, Foyles.co.uk

Courtesy of www.monicawood.com and authorsunbound.com/monica-wood
Reading Group Questions

The One-in-a-Million Boy

1. In the opening pages, we discover that the boy of the title has died. And yet, he is a catalyst for everything that happens afterward. How did you perceive the boy’s role in the story – as an absence? A presence? A sort of invisible stage manager? Did you sometimes forget that he was gone?

2. When did you first notice that the boy was nameless? Why do you think the author chose not to name the boy?

3. For the first time in her life, Ona gives away her secrets – to a child. What is it about the boy that Ona instinctively trusts?

4. Ona observes, “People like Quinn, always running from themselves, loved the road.” What does she mean by this? Is Quinn the only character “on the run” here?

5. The author has spoken publically about creating character. “You reveal a character in two ways,” she says. “One, how the character views the world. Two, how the world views the character.” Does this insight apply to the characters here? Quinn, for example, is rightly regretful for his fatherly failings, and yet the boys in Resurrection Lane trust and rely on him completely. How do varying perceptions combine to make fictional characters feel real?

6. After Ona tells the boy about seeing a thousand hummingbirds on a roadside, she adds: “This is the sort of thing Louise invited into my life.” Was Louise a friend or an opportunist? Did she earn Ona’s devotion? What do you think was the nature of Ona’s love for Louise?

7. Talk about the scene in which Ona recalls her brother and her native tongue. What is happening to her? Is this “a mix-up in her head,” as Ted believes, or “magic,” as Belle believes? Or is it something else?

8. How does the road trip reveal the varying motivations of Ona, Quinn, and Belle? Was meeting Laurentas a surprise to you? What were you expecting to find in Granyard, Vermont?

9. When Belle says, “I figured you must have worked,” Ona is thrilled to have been recognized “as the employable type.” Why is her career as a “professional secretary” such a badge of honor for Ona?

10. Discuss the various friendships in the book: Ona and the boy; Ona and Quinn; Quinn and Belle; Ona and Louise. What about Quinn’s friendship with his bandmates in The Benders? Or with Sylvie? To what degree are all these friendships necessary to the people involved?

11. Throughout the book Quinn makes several references to his mother, who died young. Does this early loss contribute to Quinn’s growing affection for Ona?

12. When Ona explains the Guinness World Records to Belle and Quinn, she observes: “How tranquilizing it was to arm yourself with information, how consoling to unpack the facts and then plant them like fence pickets, building a sturdy pen in which you stood alone, cosseted against human fallibility.” Is this why the boy made lists? Is there a calming aspect to list-making that appeals to more than one type of person?

13. Early on, Quinn derides Ted Ledbetter as a “middle-school teacher and single father who claimed to love woodland hikes.” And yet, near the end, he thinks: “He wanted to be – God help him – Ted Ledbetter.” What has changed? How is it that we so often end up admiring our rivals?

14. Whom do you believe Belle should have chosen, Quinn or Ted?

15. Quinn is “uneasy around the boy, troubled by the world in which he dwelled.” Why do you think that is the case? Why are Quinn and his son so ill-matched?


17. Near the end, Quinn confesses to Belle: “I did fall in love with him. I did. But not till after he was gone.” When and how do you think this happened?

18. The author has said, “If a writer can’t make you like a character, she must at least make you understand him.” Despite Quinn’s flaws, do you like him? If not, did you understand why he behaves the way he does?

19. “I have deficiencies,” the boy tells Ona. Does he? The author has said that she created the boy before the word “autism” or “Asperger’s” entered the American lexicon. “He’s just who he is,” Belle says, bristling against labels. Is Belle right? Does it matter?

20. Before meeting the boy, “Ona had believed herself through with friendship.” How does old age change Ona’s ideas about friendship? Did reading the novel cause you to examine your own friendships?

21. At 104, Ona is young compared to the world’s oldest citizens. This is a surprise to both her and the boy. Was it a surprise to you? Did meeting Ona change your presumptions about extreme old age?

22. Quinn refers to Belle, with whom he has a fraught relationship, as his “truest friend.” What does he mean by this? Can we be friends with those whom we have hurt? Do you find echoes of Quinn and Belle in the friendship between Ona and Louise?
Community Events

Wednesday, November 6, 2019, 6:30 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
The Book Cellar
801 Lake Avenue, Lake Worth, FL 33460
Attend a lively book club discussion of *The One-in-a-Million Boy*. Enjoy 1/2 price wine by the glass all day for The Book Cellar’s Wine Wednesday. (60-90 min.) Call 561-452-5456 for more information.

Thursday, November 7, 2019, 2:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Okeechobee Blvd Branch Library
5689 West Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach, FL 33417
Borrow a copy of *The One-in-a-Million Boy* and attend a lively discussion featuring this year’s Read Together Palm Beach County selection! (90 min.) Call 561-233-1880 to preregister.

Thursday, November 7, 2019, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion and Dinner
Serenity Teahouse & Cafe
316 Vallette Way, West Palm Beach, FL 33401
An evening of book club discussion of *The One-in-a-Million Boy* while enjoying an entree and wine. The fee is $23, plus tax and gratuity. Additional wine and food will be available, so don’t worry, you can still have your scones! *Reservations are required.* Call 561-655-3911 for more information and reservations.

Monday, November 11, 2019, 7:00 PM
Staged Reading of *The One-in-a-Million Boy*
Palm Beach Dramaworks
201 Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Palm Beach Dramaworks is proud to support the Literacy Coalition’s vital mission by bringing *The One-in-a-Million Boy* to life with a staged reading of this powerful novel. A superb cast of professional actors breathe life into the prose of acclaimed author Monica Wood’s warm and uplifting novel. The event is free, but a donation is appreciated. Register at LiteracyPBC.org/event/read-together-pbc/. Call 561-514-4042 for more information.

Thursday, November 14, 2019, 2:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
West Boynton Branch Library
9451 Jog Road, Boynton Beach, FL 33437
Borrow a copy of *The One-in-a-Million Boy* and attend a lively discussion featuring this year’s Read Together Palm Beach County selection! (90 min.) Call 561-734-5556 to preregister.

Thursday, November 14, 2019, 2:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Hagen Ranch Road Branch Library
14350 Hagen Ranch Road, Delray Beach, FL 33446
Borrow a copy of *The One-in-a-Million Boy* and attend a lively discussion featuring this year’s Read Together Palm Beach County selection! (90 min.) Call 561-894-7500 to preregister.

Thursday, November 14, 2019, 6:45 PM
Meals on Wheels and World Records: A One in a Million Story
Keiser University, Auditorium
2085 Vista Parkway, West Palm Beach, FL 33411
Our Writing Studio Coordinator, Kristin Brittain, will discuss the Read Together Palm Beach County book *The One-in-a-Million Boy* briefly and present some relevant Guinness's Book of World Records that relates to the elderly. Also, we will have Pamela Calzadilla, the CEO of Meals on Wheels of the Palm Beaches present on the importance of connecting to the elderly and how Meal on Wheels works. (60 min.) For more information, call 561-471-6000 and ask for Elizabeth Houlihan.

Saturday, November 16, 2019, 11:00 AM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Mandel Public Library of West Palm Beach
411 Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33401
You are invited to join the Mandel Public Library of West Palm Beach for a lively discussion of this year’s Read Together Palm Beach County selection: *The One-in-a-Million Boy* by Monica Wood. We will meet on Saturday, November 16 at 11:00 a.m. in the Florida Room on the 4th Floor. Please call 561-868-7701 to reserve a copy of the book, or you can check out the ebook or downloadable audiobook using the hoopla app!

Visit LiteracyPBC.org for updates about events and the campaign
Help Build Better Readers

There are two opportunities to become a tutor. You can tutor children in reading at selected elementary schools throughout Palm Beach County during school hours or after school at the Literacy Coalition office. Or, you can tutor adult literacy students in public places such as schools or libraries.

Requirements: Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and attend a training provided by the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR FUTURE TUTOR TRAINING DATES AND LOCATIONS

For information and training registration, call 561-279-9103 or visit www.LiteracyPBC.org

Visit LiteracyPBC.org for updates about events and the campaign

Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 2:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Royal Palm Beach Branch Library
500 Civic Center Way, Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411
Borrow a copy of The One-in-a-Million Boy and attend a lively discussion featuring this year's Read Together Palm Beach County selection! (90 min.) Call 561-790-6030 to preregister.

Thursday, November 21, 2019, 6:00 PM
Come see Monica Wood at the Read Together Finale!
Harriet Himmel Theater, Rosemary Square
700 S. Rosemary Ave., West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Come see Monica Wood, the author of The One-in-a-Million Boy, at the Read Together Palm Beach County finale. Held at the Harriet Himmel Theater, Rosemary Square. Registration is required at LiteracyPBC.org and a donation is suggested.

Saturday, November 16, 2019, 2:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Lantana Road Branch Library
4020 Lantana Road, Lake Worth, FL 33462
Borrow a copy of The One-in-a-Million Boy and attend a lively discussion featuring this year's Read Together Palm Beach County selection! (90 min.) Call 561-304-4500 to preregister.

Monday, November 18, 2019, 2:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Acreage Branch Library
15801 Orange Blvd., Loxahatchee, FL 33470
Borrow a copy of The One-in-a-Million Boy and attend a lively discussion featuring this year's Read Together Palm Beach County selection! (90 min.) Call 561-681-4100 to preregister.

Tuesday, November 19, 2019, 6:00 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Greenacres Branch Library
3750 Jog Road, Greenacres, FL 33467
Borrow a copy of The One-in-a-Million Boy and attend a lively discussion featuring this year's Read Together Palm Beach County selection! (90 min.) Call 561-641-9100 to preregister.

Tuesday, November 19, 2019, 6:30 PM
Read Together PBC Book Discussion
Riviera Beach Public Library
600 West Blue Heron Blvd., Riviera Beach, FL 33404
Join us in the library conference room to discuss this year’s Read Together Palm Beach County book selection, The One-in-a-Million Boy by Monica Wood. All are welcome and preregistration is not necessary. (60 min.) Call 561-840-0155 for more information.

BECOME A TRAINED VOLUNTEER TUTOR WITH THE LITERACY COALITION OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

For information and training registration, call 561-279-9103 or visit www.LiteracyPBC.org
Read Together Palm Beach County Finale

FALL 2019

Everyone in Palm Beach County is reading the same book at the same time and we’d like you to join us as a sponsor and partner in this Read Together Palm Beach County initiative. Please see the list of benefits below for this community reading initiative, which helps support the Literacy Coalition’s mission to improve the quality of life in our community by promoting and achieving literacy.

The 11th Read Together Palm Beach County “one book, one community” campaign is coordinated by the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County and many community partners. The adult reading initiative promotes community dialogue and engagement as we gather together to discuss key themes at various events at libraries, coffee houses, theaters, businesses and offices.

The One-in-a-Million Boy by Monica Wood is our 2019 selected title. It is an award-winning book that has been published in 22 languages in 30 countries and is “A must-read book … Whimsical and bittersweet” according to a review in Good Housekeeping. Events and book discussions are planned for September through mid-November with a free finale event with the author on November 21 at the Harriet Himmel Theater at Rosemary Square in West Palm Beach at 6 p.m. The finale event is always popular with a crowd each year of 500 guests. Copies of the book are available at the Literacy Coalition for a $10 donation. Palm Beach County libraries and municipal libraries also have copies.

Please consider hosting an event, sponsoring the Campaign or partnering with us in some way in support of Read Together Palm Beach County. Contact the Literacy Coalition with partnership ideas and to be added as a sponsor.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Gold Sponsorship** .............................. $5,000
  Attend a meet-and-greet with the author at a private reception prior to the finale, for up to 24 people. (Invite your whole office!) Includes reserved VIP seating at the Read Together finale, recognition in Read Together materials and a full-page ad in the program booklet.

- **Silver Sponsorship** ............................ $3,000
  Attend a meet-and-greet with the author at a private reception prior to the finale, for up to 14 of your closest friends. (Invite your whole book club!) Includes reserved VIP seating at the Read Together finale, recognition in Read Together materials and a full-page ad in the program booklet.

- **Bronze Sponsorship** ........................ $1,000
  Attend a meet-and-greet with the author at a private reception prior to the finale for four people. Includes reserved VIP seating at the Read Together finale, recognition in Read Together materials and a full-page ad in the program booklet.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Gold Sponsorship** .............................. $5,000
  Attend a meet-and-greet with the author at a private reception prior to the finale, for up to 24 people. (Invite your whole office!) Includes reserved VIP seating at the Read Together finale, recognition in Read Together materials and a full-page ad in the program booklet.

- **Silver Sponsorship** ............................ $3,000
  Attend a meet-and-greet with the author at a private reception prior to the finale, for up to 14 of your closest friends. (Invite your whole book club!) Includes reserved VIP seating at the Read Together finale, recognition in Read Together materials and a full-page ad in the program booklet.

- **Bronze Sponsorship** ........................ $1,000
  Attend a meet-and-greet with the author at a private reception prior to the finale for four people. Includes reserved VIP seating at the Read Together finale, recognition in Read Together materials and a full-page ad in the program booklet.

Please mail or contact us:
Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County
3651 Quantum Blvd. | Boynton Beach, FL 33426
Email: Communications@LiteracyPBC.org
www.LiteracyPBC.org | (561) 279-9103

Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7352 within the state or visit http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisionsoffices/consumer-services and referring to CH3135. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. Federal Tax ID #42-1501874. 100% of this contribution goes to the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County.

Members of last year’s Read Together Palm Beach County Committee

Visit LiteracyPBC.org for updates about events and the campaign
2019 Read Together Palm Beach County

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Christina Wood, Freelance Writer & Editor

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Join us for LOOP for Literacy!

Join us for LOOP for Literacy on our 10th year of walking, running, cycling and a morning of family fun activities on Leap Day 2020. Consider a sponsorship and incorporate this family-friendly, healthy event into your company wellness program. The event provides a way to actively promote wellness and team-building, while supporting the important goal that every adult and child in Palm Beach County will be able to read. LOOP for Literacy is an exciting opportunity for anyone who likes to walk, ride a bike or run and every child participating receives a book. You can participate individually or as a group. You will also have the opportunity to fundraise and earn further recognition in support of literacy.

Choose from:

BIKE: Roadside Ride – $50.00
The 24-mile ride begins in the park at 7:00 a.m. and loops back to the park. Helmet is required for all cyclists.

5K USATF CERTIFIED RUN / WALK:
Adult – $35.00 | Student (18 years and under) – $15.00
Runners start at 8:00 a.m. and Walkers start at 8:05 a.m.

KIDS 1 MILE FUN RUN: (12 years and under) – $10.00
Start at 8:45 a.m.

KIDS 100 YARD DASH: (7 years and under) – $10.00
Start at 9:00 a.m.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

PLATINUM .................. $20,000
GOLD ........................... $10,000
SILVER ......................... $5,000
BRONZE ......................... $2,500
SUPPORT ........................ $1,000
MILE MARKER, WATER OR AID STATION ..................... $500
START/FINISH LINE EXHIBITOR: .. $250

Register Online at: LiteracyPBC.org
Join the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County for Literacy Links, a golf tournament to benefit our efforts to provide children and adults with links to literacy needed to succeed in school and life. Foursomes and individual spots are available for the tournament that welcomes all levels of players at the Palm Beach Par 3, an unparalleled golfing experience, nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal Waterway.

Check-in and registration begins at 7:30 a.m.  
Shotgun Start at 8:30 a.m.  
Scramble Format  
Awards Luncheon and Silent Auction following play on-site at al Fresco Restaurant and Bar

**SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE**  
Foursome – $700  |  Individual Player – $200

**VOLUNTEER**  
You can volunteer to tutor an adult or child in need of literacy skills. There are also opportunities to help an adult learn English and/or prepare to take the GED exam. No experience is required as we will provide training.

**BOOK DRIVES**  
Organizations and individuals can conduct book drives for the Literacy Coalition. The collected books are shared with the children’s literacy programs operated by the Literacy Coalition. We have shared 2,455 of these donated books in the last year to groups in need including teachers, schools and organizations. We have many more requests for gently used children’s books.

**MAKE A DONATION**  
Your tax-deductible donation will help provide literacy services to adults, children and families who are working to achieve a better life by improving their literacy skills.

**MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT**  
Donate long-term appreciated securities, including stock, bonds, and mutual funds, directly to the Literacy Coalition. Compared with donating cash, or selling your appreciated securities and contributing the after-tax proceeds, you may be able to automatically increase your gift to the Literacy Coalition and your tax deduction.

**IMPACT FUTURE GENERATIONS**  
Consider an endowment gift to the Literacy Coalition that will allow us to sustain our impact in our community for future generations. Include the Literacy Coalition in your retirement plans, will, living trust, or related planned giving methods allowing you to extend your legacy of literacy to future generations. Planned gifts – large and small – are a lasting way to help us continue the success we know today in helping families be successful in school and in life.

**READ TO A CHILD**  
Read together everyday.  
Point out print everywhere.  
Do not limit yourself to reading books with your child. Street signs and cereal boxes count too.  
Tell your child how much you enjoy reading with him or her. This attention lets them know they are special and loved.

**ATTEND AN EVENT**  
There are various events to attend throughout the year that support our literacy programs and initiatives. Events include LOOP for Literacy, the Love of Literacy Luncheon, The Grand Bee Literary Fun & Games and Literacy Links Golf Tournament.

**PROMOTE LITERACY**  
You can support the mission of the Literacy Coalition and become an advocate for literacy. Share our posts and information on your social media accounts. Follow LiteracyPBC today!
Our Mission
The mission of the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County is to improve the quality of life in our community by promoting and achieving literacy.

Our Vision
That every child and adult in Palm Beach County becomes a reader.

Thank you to our Read Together Partners & Sponsors