

Read. Return. Repeat.

A Wichita Public Library Podcast

Show Notes

Season 6 Episode 5:

Let's Get LITerate! featuring Corinthian Kelly

October 15th, 2026



In this episode

In this episode, podcast hosts Daniel Pewewardy and Jenny Durham sit down to talk with Corinthian Kelly, Director of Partnerships and Community Impact for Wichita Public Schools, about the national literacy crisis, how it has impacted Wichita, and what we can do in our community to help foster a love of reading at all ages.

About Corinthian Kelly

Corinthian Kelly is the Director of Partnerships and Community Impact for Wichita Public Schools, a system serving over 45,000 students and their families. In his role there, he leads initiatives that foster inclusive environments, strengthen family and community relationships, and expands equitable opportunities for success for all students. Corinthian holds a Master of Public Administration from Wichita State University and graduate certificates in City and County Management, Public Finance and Nonprofit Management. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Public and Urban Affairs from Virginia Tech. He is currently pursuing a second Master's Degree in Human Resource Management from Wichita State University.

Topics discussed in this episode (with timestamps)

- Introducing Corinthian Kelly 1:50

- What inspired Corinthian to pursue a career in education and community engagement 3:51
- Defining literacy 9:08
- How low literacy impacts individuals and communities 12:17
- Possible contributors to falling literacy rates 16:39
- The importance of promoting early literacy 18:46
- The intersection of access to healthcare and literacy challenges 22:28
- The relationship between economic mobility and literacy 27:21
- Corinthian's work collaborating with other organizations in Wichita to promote literacy 33:18
- Volunteer organizations community members can work with to help promote literacy 39:28
- What changes we could make to help address the literacy crisis 41:28
- The importance of brick-and-mortar bookstores/comic bookshops 43:16
- Different ways to support literacy in the community, even if you are short on time 49:44
- The challenge of AI 54:50
- Corinthian shares a favorite childhood reading memory 59:58
- Corinthian's book recommendations 1:02:59

Books, authors, films & other media mentioned in this episode

- *Reading Rainbow* (TV Series)
- *Jump, Frog, Jump!* by Robert Kalan
- *Oh, the places You'll Go!* by Dr. Seuss
- *Goosebumps* series by R.L. Stein
- *Boxcar Children* series by Gertrude Chandler Warner
- *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens
- *Scholastic* magazines (for middle school & teens; various titles)
- *National Geographic Kids* magazine
- *Time for Kids* magazine
- *The Week Junior* magazine
- *Disney Adventures* magazine (no longer being published)
- *Time Life: Mysteries of the Unknown* series
- *Worldbook Encyclopedia*
- *The Holy Bible* (The New King James Version)
- *Atomic Habits* by James Clear
- *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* by Dr. Joy DeGruy
- *Protect Your Mind Workbook* series Dr. William Polite

Relevant links to topics mentioned in this episode

[The Atlantic: *The End of Reading Is Here* by Rose Horowitz \(July 8, 2026\)](#)

[Americorps](#)

[TRIO Student Support Services @ Wichita State University](#)

[Wichita State University Public Policy and Management Center](#)

[Stand Together Foundation](#)

[College of Staten Island @ CUNY: Types of Literacies](#)

[Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#)

[Wichita Public Library: Creating Young Readers](#)

[American Library Association United for Libraries: Early Literacy](#)

[Harvard Business Impact: What Reading Fiction Can Teach Graduate Students About Empathy and Emotion by Christine Seifert and Russell Clayton \(February 21, 2021\)](#)

[CASEL.org: Fundamentals of SEL](#)

[The National Literacy Institute: U.S. Literacy Statistics Update for 2026](#)

[National Center on Improving Literacy: The Science of Reading: An Overview](#)

[Education Week: A New Phonics Debate Shows How the 'Science of Reading' Movement Is Evolving by Sarah Schwartz \(August 13, 2026\)](#)

[The Policy Circle: Literacy](#)

[Wichita Public Schools Future Ready Centers](#)

[Storytime Village](#)

[Childstart](#)

[Headstart Locations in Kansas](#)

[Wichita Collective Impact Free Family Workbook: Building Bright Future \(Kindergarten Readiness manual\)](#)

[United Way of the Plains: Read to Succeed Program](#)

[Rotary Club of Wichita Community Involvement](#)

[Pizza Hut Book It! program](#)

[Left On Read bookstore](#)

[Revolutsia \(Wichita, KS\)](#)

[HopeNet Wichita](#)

[Mulberry Art Gallery](#)

[Fortune.com: 'Students Can't Reason': Teachers warn AI is Fueling a Crisis in Kids' Ability to Think by Eva Roytburg \(February 24, 2026\)](#)

[Wichita Public Library Book-A-Librarian service](#) (technology and research help)

[Link to episode transcript](#)

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Credits

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