

## New Year Message from IBBY President

Dear IBBY friends and colleagues,

The new year has begun and we are looking forward to so many good things ahead for our IBBY community. Last year, 2023, brought significant challenges for IBBY, but we have weathered them together. Our Special General Assembly in November was successful and we are moving forward with our statutes reform committee. We continue to mourn with our colleagues who are in the midst of war in Ukraine and in the Middle East. We worry for our colleagues who work in the face of extreme poverty, conflict, famine, and disasters. But we have also been active in supporting those colleagues with Children in Crisis funds, including recent grants to IBBY Lebanon, IBBY Turkey, and IBBY Ukraine. We work together and look with hope towards the future.

Our IBBY community is also growing. We have new IBBY sections in the Philippines, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Morocco and Laos. We also look forward with enthusiasm to the announcements of our international awards, including the Hans Christian Andersen Award, the Asahi Reading Promotion Award and the IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award, all at the next Bologna Children's Book Fair in April. Meanwhile, we continue with all our regular activities, developing the next IBBY Honour List, the next IBBY Selection of Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities, and more IBBY Silent Books selections. We were so pleased to present the 2023 Jella Lepman Medal to Patrick Sullivan (USA) in recognition of his extraordinary work for the IBBY REFORMA Children in Crisis project.

As we look back, we acknowledge with sadness the passing of **Anne Pellowski**, longtime IBBY member, writer, storyteller and a major witness of IBBY's history—having worked with Jella Lepman herself when she spent the academic year of 1955–56 at the International Youth Library. We also honor the passing of renowned Czech artist **Květa Pacovská**, recipient of the Hans Christian Andersen Award in Illustration in 1992 for her immeasurable contribution to picture book art, as well as the creator of our beloved 'IBBY cat'. Finally, we also remember **Evangeline Ledi Barongo**, long-time president of IBBY Uganda and admired member of our community who passed away in 2023.

As we look forward, we anticipate with great excitement the IBBY Congress due to take place in the beautiful city of Trieste, Italy, August 30–September 1, with the compelling

theme of “Join the Revolution: Giving Every Child Good Books”. It will be wonderful to gather in person for all the planned sessions, award presentations, and informal conversations that make a Congress so memorable. For more information and registration, check the [Congress website](#): early bird registration ends March 31 and the call for papers will be closing in just a few days.

We are also so very grateful for the continued support of our generous sponsors which is more than ever necessary. We wish to sincerely thank Nami Island Inc., the Asahi Shimbun, the Shenzhen iRead Foundation, the Yamada Bee Farm, CCPPG, Anhui Children’s Publishing House, our publisher Friends and all the individuals, companies and organizations that have supported IBBY and its programmes. Your support is so important to us!

The IBBY office is working hard to continue promoting the work of our members across the world and managing the many programmes that make IBBY a global force in the field of children’s literature. We look forward to celebrating International Children’s Book Day on April 2 with the beautiful poster created by our IBBY section in Japan with the theme, “Cross the seas on the wings of your imagination.” We also extend our thanks to IBBY Greece for their beautiful poster and message created for International Children’s Book Day 2023 by writer Vagelis Iliopoulos and illustrator Photini Stephanidi.

Our beautiful journal, *Bookbird*, continues to be published quarterly under the careful editorship of Chrysogonus Siddha Malilang. We are also excited to celebrate the recent launch of the Spanish online edition, *Bookbird en Español*, published by Jacarandá Editoras in Argentina.

As we look to the new year, we anticipate with excitement all the IBBY activities ahead, especially our World Congress, but we also worry with our IBBY colleagues who are struggling or suffering in difficult circumstances. We continue to be hopeful that working together we can prevail and continue our mission of bringing good books to children around the world.

With all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sylvia Vardell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sylvia Vardell  
IBBY President