Trent Reedy, Author of “Words in the Dust,” Visits Central Illinois Middle Schools

REEEC supported the 2014 Youth Literature Festival by sponsoring the appearance of young adult author Trent Reedy. This is Reedy’s second visit to the area, as REEEC brought him to Illinois in March 2013. Reedy related his life’s dream of becoming a writer and how it developed at an early age. He detailed his experiences as a soldier in Afghanistan and the events that led to publishing his first novel, Words in the Dust. At each assembly, he challenged students to live lives worthy of the soldiers’ sacrifices, especially those who did not come home.

Reedy spent two full days in four central Illinois middle schools – Tuscola East Prairie Middle School, Mattoon Middle School, Paxton-Buckley-Loda Junior High School and Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley Middle School – where he spoke at full school assemblies and also at smaller gatherings with students who had read his work. At each stop, Reedy took the time to sign copies of his books for students and teachers.

Held biennially, the Youth Literature Festival celebrates the value of literature in the lives of youth by bringing together local and national authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers to share their stories, their craft, and their enthusiasm with children, teens and adults. Authors visit area schools and a Community Day provides author presentations and special performances. The Festival is organized by the Center for Education in Small Urban Communities in the College of Education in partnership with the Graduate School of Library and Information Science and the University Library.