

Denise Gary

Denise Gary is Executive Director and Co-founder of Kids Need to Read. During her service as founding chairman (2008-2009), Denise organized the fledgling project into a nonprofit foundation. She currently oversees all activities of Kids Need to Read, bringing thirty years of office management and customer service experience to the daily operations and management of the foundation. She also participates in community service work as a member of the Mesa Host Lions Club. Denise is the author of *The Little Flame*, a children's picture book of self discovery and peace, due to be published in 2012. She was a home school teacher for her two sons during their junior high and high school years, successfully teaching one son with Asperger's syndrome who was passed through the elementary public education system. This fuels her desire to help reluctant readers learn the power and joy reading can bring to their lives.

Nathan Fillion

Widely recognized for being adept at both drama and comedy, actor Nathan Fillion commanded the screen as the beloved anti-hero, Captain Malcolm Reynolds, in the critically-acclaimed television series, *Firefly* (2002), and its big-screen spin-off, *Serenity* (2005). He is currently starring in the ABC television series, *Castle*. Nathan's parents are both English teachers, giving him a profound respect for the importance of literacy. He was instrumental in the founding of Kids Need to Read and continues to enthusiastically support the foundation.

PJ Haarsma

PJ Haarsma was inspired to found Kids Need to Read after experiencing sparse library shelves during school presentations. He has the gift of firing up and inspiring youngsters to pick up a book and actually read it, many of whom have never even owned a book before. His social media game, *Rings of Orbis*, based on his *Softwire* series, is an online first, featured on the front page of the New York Times for pioneering the use of video games to attract reluctant readers. He lives in Southern California with his wife Marisa and two daughters, Sky and Zoe.