



## International Storyline Project

- Hathaway Brown, Cleveland, Ohio USA

- Skutskar, Sweden

For a period of five-months, classrooms in Cleveland, Ohio in the U.S.A. and Skutskar, Sweden shared a literature-based Storyline using the book *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* by Astrid Lindgren. Mary Boutton, a teacher at Hathaway Brown School in Cleveland, Ohio, and Michael Haglof, a teacher at Alvboda Friskola in Skutskar, Sweden jointly developed this international collaboration between the two groups of students as an outgrowth of their pen pal relationship that began after the International Storyline Conference in Portland, Oregon. The teachers and students used a variety of methods to communicate, including e-mail, Skype, Wordpress, Dropbox, and regular mail. A blog on Wordpress.com was the focal point and showcase for their work.



The project gradually expanded and took on a life of its own as the students read and discussed *Ronia*, and explored its themes of friendship, peace, respect, hunger, poverty, hopes and dreams, homes, and family relationships.

The students carried out service projects in their communities to address the social issues discussed in the book, including raising money for a school in Nairobi, Kenya (Alvboda Friskola) and Empty Bowls (Hathaway Brown School). They exchanged photos of their homes and neighborhoods, videotaped presentations about their hopes and dreams for the future, and shared their daily lives in a diary section of the blog, posting short videos and pictures of events and projects at their schools.



### Ronia Storyline 2011



HATHAWAY BROWN  
CLEVELAND, OHIO USA

ÄLBODA FRISKOLA  
SKUTSKÅR, SWEDEN

As part of developing the setting of the story, the students at Hathaway Brown School (under the direction of art teacher Carol Sphar) made *Ronia's* half of the castle and the students at Alvboda Friskola made *Birk's* side of the castle. They started with a large piece of canvas that was cut into two pieces with jagged edges, symbolizing the splitting of the castle in the storm and the rift between the two robber families. On May 30 through June 1, 2001, Mary flew to Sweden and personally delivered Hathaway Brown's half of the castle to Michael's



classroom and the two classes watched through a live video conference as the castle was united, symbolizing the unity of Ronia and Birk's families and the unity between the schools in Ohio and Sweden. Each of class also exchanged life sized characters of Ronia and Birk, and Hathaway Brown sent specially designed Ronia T-shirts featuring the castle and the names of their schools for each student as well. During the video conference, the students reflected on their project and discussed how sharing the story and related activities made their learning more meaningful and interesting. One student commented, "It seemed like we were really one class working together as friends." Michael and his wife, Maria Haglof, will be visiting Hathaway Brown School in October, 2011, to continue their Storyline collaboration during the next school year. Mary and Michael will be submitting a proposal to present their work on this project at the next International Conference in Iceland and hope to help bring together other classes that may want to try a similar project.

