

THE NEWS *of* ORANGE COUNTY

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At the Library: Summer reading plants seeds for year-round literacy

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Summer Reading at Orange County Public Library concluded July 31, and as we reflect on this year's program, all library staff looks back with enthusiasm and encouragement at its success.

By the numbers

- About 850 children signed up for Summer Reading in June and July.
- Kids and their caregivers checked out more than 37,000 children's books in June and July, including graphic novels, audiobooks, board books, picture books and juvenile titles.
- Summer Reading participants read more than 5,200 hours.
- Nearly 1,700 kids and caregivers enjoyed 41 programs like a Rags to Riches Theatre presentation, magic shows, hands-on science and craft activities and a game day plus weekly storytimes.
- More than 350 people attended the Summer Reading Kick-off Celebration on June 14 at the main library for games, face painting, raffles, magic and more.
- Summer Reading participants donated more than 200 books to the Fairview Child and Family Center in Hillsborough.

"Libraries and museums are important partners in efforts to help children sustain learning during the summer months when too many children are losing ground as a result of not having access to resources," said a 2013 report from the Institute of Museum and Library Services called *Growing Young Minds*. "Public libraries have long been anchors for community-wide activities to address summer reading loss."

Reaping the benefits

Not only are libraries like OCPL focused on ways to reduce summer slide, we also promote lifelong learning, early literacy and family literacy.

In 2014, we added several new components to our Summer Reading program to keep kids reading while school was out and offer families achievable ways to make reading a part of their daily lives.

This year, we partnered with Read Aloud 15 Minutes, a national campaign to make reading every day the new standard in childcare.

We encouraged parents and caretakers participating in the Summer Reading Program to read to their kids for 15 minutes every day. This small daily investment reaps great rewards in language and brain development, literacy skill building, instilling a love of reading and bonding.

OCPL set a goal of 5,000 hours read by all participants through July 31. Results were recorded on a beaker-shaped graph—a nod to the science theme of Summer Reading—that hung in the Youth Services department. Participants were excited to see the bubbles rise in the beaker as more hours were recorded each week. On July 30, we met our goal.

Another popular feature of Summer Reading program was “Read to Give.” Each week, participants had the choice of receiving a prize or a Book Buck. Those who opted for the Book Buck then redeemed it and chose a book that would be donated to a child in the community.

The books were donated to the Fairview Child and Family Center in Hillsborough. The center made these books available for children to take home and keep. We want to continue to encourage families to read together, and the first way to achieve this is to make sure every home is filled with books.

We’re excited to continue the Summer Reading momentum by offering a new Saturday morning family storytime called Read Together. It will be offered twice a month through November. We are also introducing a new book club for ages 9 through 12 called “What are you reading?” This program will meet the first Thursday of each month through November. Please check the library’s event calendar at www.bit.ly/ocplcal for information about these and other weekly scheduled programs.

Special thank you

Thanks to the Friends of the Orange County Public Library’s generous support, we were able to raffle off two science kits at the Summer Reading Kick-off Celebration and provide numerous weekly incentive prizes throughout the summer. The Orange County Community Players also kindly donated two tickets to a production of “Seussical: the Musical.” Congratulations to prizewinners Caedmon Sethapathy, Levi Corle and Rodney Torain.

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The OCPL Main Library is located at 137 W. Margaret Lane in Hillsborough. Free parking is available in the Eno River Parking Deck. For more information, go to www.orangecountync.gov/library and www.facebook.com/ocnclibrary.