

Summer Reading Fun By Santiago Vasquez

Explosions? Snakes? Dinosaurs? These are probably not the first things that come to mind when you think of the library. They, however, and much more, were part of the Summer Reading Program last year. Kids were inspired with special presentations by many local visitors. The Edgerton Explorit Center helped kids learn about some well-known and not-so-well-known scientists and finished off with an explosion that left the audience awing with excitement. The Magical Paradise Exotic Farm brought along some friendly creatures that participants could admire and even pet. The Omaha Children's Museum brought historic creatures to "life" with their dinosaur programming. Presentations like these lured guests in and filled the Children's Room jam packed to the point that many people had to stand and squeeze together in order to allow room for everyone. This year's program titled "On your mark, get set, READ!" also promises many engaging components. Opportunities like the Summer Reading Program help kids keep learning and reading through the summer months. Registration opens on May 31 and the program ends on July 29.

You don't have to wait until summer though, to have children get involved with reading. The Columbus Public Library is offering a wide array of activities in which children can currently participate in. Starting with "Monday Night Book Adventures" on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, kids can come from 6:30-7:30 PM to enjoy stories, crafts and even a bedtime snack. On Thursdays, there is "Story Time & Story Art" with Mr. H and Miss Peggy. There are two sessions kids can enjoy: 10:30am-12:00pm or 1:30-3:00pm. There are also two "Super Sensational Saturdays" left for the school year. On April 2 and May 14, children can stop by for some fun activities and snacks.

The Children's Room provides for some regular year-round enjoyment too. Visitors can enjoy reading a book at one of the several chairs and couches that are available. This is something I have done with my own children many times and seems to never get old. The Lego and the coloring tables provide an additional means of diversion for the smaller ones. Animals, both living and stuffed, make the environment more welcoming and friendly. The fish in the aquarium and the birds in the cage get that childhood wonder ready for an adventure!

Parents should take advantage of each one of these opportunities to help their children find their love for reading. For more information or if you have questions on these and other children's activities, please contact Brad Hruska (Mr. H), the Children's Librarian, at (402) 564-7116 option 4.