

Librarian's Shelf by Brad Hruska

2014 Summer Reading Success!

Every year the Columbus Public Library (CPL) strives to provide a quality children's summer reading program to area youth and this year was no exception. "Fizz, Boom, Read @ Your Library" attracted 870 participants (this number does not reflect the 118 students who signed up for the teen program, the nearly 226 individuals involved with the Platte County Bookmobile, nor does it take into account the 183 participants of the newly established adult program).

To kick off this year's program, Magician Jeff Quinn was invited back to Columbus to perform for a packed house upstairs in the Children's Room. Quinn did a fantastic job incorporating fun, magic, and literacy awareness into his well-executed show.

Participants were then given the opportunity to partake in a wide range of activities throughout the eight-week program. Mondays were movie days at CPL. Parents and children gathered in the library's auditorium with their pillows and blankets to view fun, animated films like "The Incredibles," "Iron Giant," "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 1 & 2," "Up," "Chicken Little," and "Frozen." The movie goers were also provided with a tasty treat like peanut butter crackers or fruit snacks.

On Tuesdays numerous activities and presentations took place. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission helped children learn how to bait, cast, and reel in their first fish. Chad Johnson from NPPD conducted a presentation on the various forms of energy sources used in Nebraska. Jessica from the Edgerton Explorit Center piloted an interactive program on energy as well.

David from the infamous Magical Paradise Exotic Farm turned the library's children's space into an exotic petting zoo complete with an alligator, hedgehogs, parrots, and tortoises. Gifted volunteers, Lois Smith and Tammy Hempstead, and library staff conducted this year's successful Art in the Park event, allowing children to walk away with three creative art projects. Lucinda Fauce, aka "Mrs. Science," rocked the second floor of CPL with amazing hands-on science experiments for children of all ages to enjoy.

Seven talented, local celebrity storytellers (Riley Scott, Amy Sokol, Susan Littlefield, Alice Fraser, Tammy Hempstead, Jenny Meyer, and Cheryl Ferguson) read over 80 entertaining books to the children during Thursdays' two-session story time programs. Participants were also encouraged to attend "Library Time @ the Platte County Fair" on Friday, July 11.

To conclude this year's summer reading program, the library and bookmobile hosted a community pool party at the Pawnee Plunge. Summer reading families splashed around from 10-11:30 a.m. and then enjoyed a sloppy-Joe and hotdog luncheon served and sponsored by the Friends of the Columbus Public Library.

This year's program could not have taken place without contributions from the Friends of the Columbus Public Library, the Horn T Zoo, Super Saver, Applebee's, McDonald's, Pizza Hut, and Mrs. Connie Jansen, whose support and donations went to good use by helping encourage the children of Platte County to keep reading during the summer months!

I would also like to thank the 69 youth volunteers who donated 648.75 hours by helping register and distribute reading incentives to the children who came to the library for their summer fun!