More than Books

Summer Reading at the Library

There's more at stake than the prizes for children who participate in summer reading programs. Research has shown that children who read four to six or more books during the summer maintain or improve their reading skills. On the other hand, children who do not read during summer vacation lose ground by September. This is why Freeport Library, along with so many public libraries across the United States, dedicates so much time and money planning summer reading programs.

Each year the Illinois Library Association creates summer reading program themes. This year, the theme is "Paws to Read!" Graphics are by author/illustrator Tad Hills, who wrote and illustrated the books "How Rocket Learned to Read" and "Rocket Writes a Story," and they couldn't be cuter.

Our summer reading programs kick off on Saturday, June 7 with a day-long opportunity to sign up for the programs and enjoy a special children's performance. At 1 p.m. Mr. E. and his sheepdog Maggie will be here to entertain families with "The Great Dog Race."

Preschoolers, elementary school children, and teens can join in the celebration this year by either reading alone, reading aloud to someone special, or by being read to by a "reading partner" such as, but not limited to, Mom, Dad, or a willing sibling or grandparent. Both readers and preschoolers get paperback book prizes, courtesy of the Freeport Public Library Foundation, just as soon as they sign up for the program.

Many of our Thursday afternoon children's programs will be connected to the "Paws to Read!" theme. Whatever the theme, our annual pet show is always one of the most popular Thursday afternoon specials. For the past several years, I've sponsored the pet show and provide prizes in memory of my beloved Standard Poodle, Charley the Wonder Dog. Local members of Therapy Dogs International will be show judges.

Don't get the impression that this is a dog-only affair, however. Last year, a cat took first place. One year, a bunny was selected for top honors, and another year it was, and I can still hardly believe it, a rat.

As you can probably tell, I think it is important to have fun with the program and to make it fun for kids. I couldn't be more serious, however, about the value of summer reading to Freeport children.

Coming soon: a library calendar listing all the summer events, including our Tuesday afternoon movie specials and activities for teens.

Not for Children Only

Thanks to our wonderful Library Foundation, not to mention generous local business support, we're able to offer all kinds of prizes and rewards as incentives. More and more libraries today, including Freeport Library, have summer programs for teens and adults. Children are not the only ones who can have fun reading over the summer!

Summer Hours Reminder

Please remember that, as of Memorial Day Weekend, the library will not be open on Sunday afternoon. Hours Monday through Thursday are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Expect to see those popular Sunday hours resume after Labor Day Weekend.

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