

SUMMER LEARNING AT THE LIBRARY: REALLY FUN, BUT ALSO REALLY IMPORTANT!

Over the last few years, Redwood City Public Library's beloved Summer Reading Program has grown and expanded into the Summer Learning Challenge. While reading is still an absolutely critical component of the challenge, we have expanded the focus to incorporate all kinds of learning activities to help combat the summer slide.

The National Summer Learning Association has documented that children, especially from low-income families, can experience losses in academic growth over the summer. However, with participation in fun and engaging summer learning activities like those offered by the library and Redwood City School District, kids can even experience academic growth during summer break instead of losing ground.

The 2017 Summer Learning Challenge begins on June 1, and kids of all ages can sign up at any Redwood City Public Library location (downtown, Fair Oaks, Redwood Shores or Schaberg) or through the library website at www.redwoodcity.org/library. All four libraries have weekly events all summer long, including music (Dave the Horn Guy, José Luis Orozco and the percussion and dance of Onye), animals (Wild Things, falconer Kenny Ervin and Happy Birds performing parrots), bubble magic, illusions, storytelling and more! Check the online events calendar on the website for details.

But that's not all! Other special events will include STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) activities like Curious Scientists, Library Coding Club, Creative Crafts, shadow puppets with FUSE Theater and a solar eclipse viewing on Aug. 21. Finally, the summer will come to a close with a circus-themed extravaganza at the downtown library on Aug. 26 featuring crafts, face painting, popcorn, jugglers and a special appearance by a character known only as Derek the Ringleader.

All of these fabulous programs are made possible by the generous support of the Friends of Redwood City Public Library, who have sponsored summer reading/summer learning activities for many, many years.

Last summer, over 14,000 children from Redwood

City and North Fair Oaks participated in the Summer Learning Challenge at Redwood City Public Library, which is extraordinary. However, we're not content with that number — our goal over the next few years is to get up to 50 percent of the kids 0–14 in Redwood City and North Fair Oaks to enjoy the benefits of the program. That would require about 20,000 kids to sign up. So tell your friends, family, kids, grandkids, great grandkids, school connections, members of your church: The library looks forward to seeing everyone during the 2017 Summer Learning Challenge!

Over the last couple of summers, Redwood City Public Library has also hosted a Big Lift Inspiring Summers camp at the Fair Oaks Library. This year, the camp is being delivered by the Redwood City School District, although Redwood City Public Library staff will still play a role in developing enrichment activities and helping kids enjoy the learning experiences of the camp. This summer's camp will be held at Roosevelt School starting June 19 and is open to students entering kindergarten in the fall. Visit www.thebiglift.org/register for more information or to sign up.

Editor's note: This article and information is supplied by Derek Wolfgram, library director at the Redwood City Public Library. Look for similar articles in upcoming Spectrum Magazine issues.