



NEWPORT BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Date: September 4, 2013
To: Board of Library Trustees
From: Debbie Walker, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator
Re: SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Theme: Reading is Soooo Delicious
Duration: Saturday, June 22 – Friday, August 9 (7 weeks)
Levels: Children's Program – Babies to those entering 6th grade in September
Teen Program – Entering 7th grade in Sept - graduating from high school in June
Adult Program – Graduated from high school and above
Funding: Friends of the Library (almost 100%)
Grand prizes for Adult SRP donated by the NBPL Foundation and the Newport Theatre Arts Center

Summer Reading Program (SRP) kicked off at all locations on June 22. All locations offered face painting, special prizes and a chance to win a prize package for coming in on that first day.

Children's Program: This year the focus of how we registered and tracked participants differed from previous summers. In the past we created a registration card that was filled out online or at each of the libraries. We would track those registrants and finishers for the duration of the program. This year we participated in the California Library Association's program: California Summer Reading Outcomes. This meant that we shifted our focus from just counting the children who participate by coming into the library, to the larger community. Specifically this year we focused on those students (K – 5th) attending elementary schools located in Newport Beach.

Based on the model presented by CLA, and other library systems we researched leading up to SRP, every child at each school visit was considered "a participant" in SRP. Katherine, our Marketing Specialist was able to combine the registration game-sheet and all of the pertinent information about SRP (rules, special events, locations, etc.) in one colorful tri-fold folder. A total of 10,000 of these folders were printed. After the school visits and SRP actually began, game-sheet/folder distribution was tracked at each branch location. Based on this model of tracking participants, a total of 9521 children received the flyer during the seven weeks of SRP. At least 1221 finished the game-sheet— up from 1004 in 2012. Central Library in particular had almost more than 200 finishers than last year.

We also shifted the focus from awarding prizes for the amount of time read, to the number of books/chapters read. Once five books (for those being read to or the younger readers) or five

chapters (for those kids tackling things like Harry Potter or Percy Jackson) were read and recorded, a prize was awarded, another one for the next five and finally after a total of 15, a book to keep and a chance for the grand prize entry. An ambitious reader could keep reading for two more chances to enter the grand prize drawing.

In addition to the shift in outreach that the CLA initiative presented this year, a new emphasis for us was surveying our participants for basic information that we might use in planning and presenting future SRP programs. Heather Hart, the Branch Manager at Mariners was a huge proponent to making this happen. Working with the rest of the Youth Services staff, she came up with a list of pertinent questions and a painless way to collect the information. The survey was attached to the first grand prize entry form which means that we collected well over 1200.

The general results are listed in a table below:

2013 Summer Reading Survey Results					
	Central	Mariners	Balboa	CdM	Totals
1. Are you a boy/girl?					
Boy	286	187	36	30	539
Girl	380	233	45	31	689
2. How old are you?					1228
0-3	79	31	12	15	137
4	55	37	10	5	107
5	72	44	9	5	130
6	84	49	5	3	141
7	100	58	17	13	188
8	74	60	8	6	148
9	84	59	7	7	157
10	62	51	10	3	126
11+	52	31	3	4	90
3. How many years have you taken part in the library's summer reading program, including this summer?					
First time	326	149	27	23	525
Two years or more	336	270	54	37	697
4. How did you hear about Summer Reading this year?					
School	116	98	18	17	249
Library	487	278	57	42	864
Other	76	56	9	7	148
Both School and Library	15	13	2	8	38

Programming is always a huge component of SRP including a combination of paid performers and staff created craft programs. In past years we have had at least three to four paid performers throughout the weeks of SRP. This year we also decided to do things differently and only had performers for the first and last weeks of the program. All other events were created and presented by staff. These included a cookie decorating event, a visit from Curious George, a cheese-tasting party, and a challenge to build all kinds of creations from marshmallows. Total program attendance for all locations was 2957, with the craft programs drawing much higher numbers than in the past.

Teen enrollment also was up from last year (233 in 2013/162 in 2012) and also reflected a big jump in participants at Central. All registrants in the teen program received a little goody bag and were given review forms for each item read. After submitting five reviews, the participant would receive a paperback book and a form to enter the grand prize drawing. Everyone was encouraged to read and submit reviews as these were used to select winners for weekly drawings which included gift cards to local businesses, restaurants, movie theaters and book stores.

The adult plan was patterned along the lines of the Teen program. Adult enrollment was down this year but there was actually a higher number of finishers this year (26 in 2012, 46 in 2013). During the final week of SRP a small reception was held at Central to give adult readers the chance to come together, enjoy some light refreshments and talk about their favorite books of the summer. A small loyal group has been attending this event for the last four years and came away from the event with a free paperback and a gift card to either Peets or Sprinkles.

Final Analysis: Staff and customers alike felt very positive about SRP this year. The food theme was very appealing and the Youth Services staff was very creative regarding the ideas for programming and planning in general. Meetings will be held in mid-September with all Youth Services staff to assess and evaluate the whole program. A customer comment received at the end of the program summed it up well for all of us:

On behalf of my daughter and myself, we wanted to say thank you for your summer reading program. We had a lot of fun with the 'reading is delicious' program. Not only did it keep us reading all summer, the incentives were fun.