

**4CLS Youth Services Chat**  
**8 May 2020**

First of all, THANK YOU! The things that our member library staff have been doing to keep your patrons engaged while the libraries are closed is nothing short of inspiring. Your online events and your other ways of reaching out to patrons are so valuable. So many of you are going way out of your comfort zone to provide these things for your patrons—please know that you are seen and appreciated!

**Summer Reading Program**

- Sarah from 4CLS offered something that was shared by a colleague in the Nassau Library System: Keep it simple, and don't make yourself crazy! This summer we're going to be forced to do things differently—some of us reworking our previous plans from scratch—so don't feel like you have to be all things to all people.
  
- Reading Logs
  - For the reading logs, there is an option to go digital using READsquared. This is an online platform that the State Library provides to us at no cost—your library just needs to register. Kenneth Roman from Endicott will be providing a webinar just for 4CLS member libraries on Tuesday, May 19, 1:00pm. You can find signup information and archived webinars from the State Library for READsquared here: <http://www.summerreadingnys.org/readsquared/>
  
  - Something to consider, though, is that not everyone will have access to the internet. It might be a good idea to consider a paper reading log that can be picked up at the library or mailed or distributed through meal sites.
  
  - What will you do for incentives/rewards? (For a frame of reference, the Rochester Public Library is not doing any incentives this year.) But if you want to do incentives, consider books as an option, and if you have the budget to purchase gift certificates, consider your local community—locally-owned restaurants, stores, ice cream shops, tickets to meals at the fire hall/VFW/etc.
  
  - Another way to do incentives is to have a community goal. For example, one library says that they're going to give a donation to a community agency (animal shelter, fire department, etc), and when you finish your reading log, you get to vote which agency gets the money. (If you want to do this, though, be careful about how you do it—the donation should come from the Friends or another supporter—tax dollars can't really be used to make a donation to another agency.)
  
  - Other suggestions for incentives included coupons for prizes that can be picked up later, e-gift cards, and brag tags!

- These ideas can be used in the future, too. It's a good idea to consider supporting others in the community—the sustainability of your local community is directly related to the sustainability of your library.
  - If you have already purchased giveaways and/or prizes, don't worry! You can use those this summer or save them for another time.
- Programming
- This is going to be a bit tricky, since we're not really sure when or if we'll be able to have in-person programming this summer.
  - Some libraries are already exploring online storytimes, book groups, etc. There is some of our regular programming like that which could be adapted to an online setting. Some things to consider when doing the online programming:
    - Do you want to do live or prerecorded?
    - If you want programs where you are able to interact with the participants more easily and/or keep things more private, a platform like GoToMeeting or Zoom could work well. They're not terribly expensive.
  - Virtual performances from outside presenters
    - Some libraries have already been in touch with their performers—some will postpone to a later date, and some will provide a modified virtual program at a reduced fee.
    - Concern was expressed from some libraries about paying someone for a program that may have a very limited audience. Many of our libraries have lots of families without reliable internet access, and many kids (and caregivers!) are tired of being in front of screens.
    - If you do decide to go ahead with virtual performances, think about how you want to have it set up—how you want the contract to work. Make sure you and the performer have a clear understanding of how things will play out. Make sure a staff person attends the session to mitigate any issues with technology or participants.
    - Sarah at 4CLS has heard from several performers about the online programming that they are planning. She will start forwarding them along to the YS List for those that are interested.
  - For tweens and teens, they might just need a platform to connect. You can set it up as a craft or a book discussion, but it might end up being just a conversation—and that's ok!
    - Dungeons and Dragons and readers' theater/radio plays/etc. can also work well over Zoom-type platforms.

- There's a Facebook group called "Imagine Your Virtual Story," where librarians are sharing ideas about how to do this Summer Reading Program without in-person programs.
- Don't forget those who don't have access to the internet.
  - If you want to do a prerecorded call-in program, there's a platform called "Guide By Cell" (<https://guidebycell.com/>) that was recommended by another library system as a good option for recording a story or other audio. Here's another article with some options for recorded story platforms: <https://programminglibrarian.org/articles/old-fashioned-connection-phone-programming-pandemic>
  - Grab-and-go kits might be good options for crafts and STEM activities. These could be available at the library or at other sites like meal sites. Consider what precautions you might want to take in terms of keeping people safe—maybe put them together and let them sit for 72 hours before distribution.
  - Story walks would be a good way to partner with your local park or to utilize green space that you might have in front of your library. Here's another article that has some ideas for outdoor self-directed programming: <https://www.nrpa.org/blog/parks-and-recreation-and-libraries-working-together-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
  - Here's an article with some more ideas for offline programming: <https://yssevents.blogspot.com/2020/04/offline-and-feeling-fine-ideas-for.html>
- If you are able, it would be great to provide programming in multiple ways—dial-in, online, etc.—in order to include as many people as possible.
- It might be a good idea to find out what your patrons want—whether talking to them informally or doing an online survey.
- A couple of things Sarah at 4CLS learned from a call this morning (May 12) with the YS representative at the State Library:
  - CSLP has provided an addendum to its manual in light of the COVID-19 situation. It doesn't have a ton of new material, but it might be worth taking a look at. It's been uploaded to a Google Drive, and you can access it here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7rpy3cl>
  - The State Library still does not have good guidance to offer us in terms of keeping track of statistics for virtual and other types of programming that we'll be providing for patrons. Please continue to keep track of the numbers that make sense to you, and Sarah will provide information from the State Library as soon as she has it.

### **Things to consider for reopening in your YS area**

- In-person programming will start a while after libraries reopen. (In the 4CLS plan, it's Chapter 4.) Children are not really able to do social distancing, and asking them to wear a mask is also difficult.
- Furniture arrangement may need to be changed, as well as computer workstations and staff workstations.
- Unfortunately, it would probably be a good idea to remove toys for the time being, since those encourage gathering and have the potential to pass through multiple hands each day.

### **Other thoughts**

- Your Home Public Library (JC) is doing some interactive window displays to keep patrons engaged.
- Claire in Cherry Valley heard of an antimicrobial fabric spray from Tide, so that might be something that can be used with puppets and plush toys when the time comes to add them back into the mix in your libraries.
- Some libraries are looking at doing computer sessions by appointment when they reopen.
- A question was asked about having kids make videos and sharing them on the library's social media. This would be good content, but you will need to make sure that you have the correct permissions/consents in place from the childrens' caregivers.
- Sarah at 4CLS is happy to talk on the phone or by GoToMeeting with individuals about their ideas and plans, even just as a sounding board. Email [sreid@4cls.org](mailto:sreid@4cls.org), and we can get something set up!