Four County Library System – Youth Services
Summer Reading Program Overview Session
8 February 2021 – Via GoToMeeting

<u>Libraries represented</u>: AF, BA, BCPL, CV, ED, EN, FE, FR, JC, MG, NI, ONA, OT, RS, SH, SID, SM, SNB, VE, WA, WO, WP

Why do we do summer reading?
- For many years, public libraries did these programs to encourage young people to read over the summer, believing that they were avoiding learning loss during the summer. However, a few recent studies have called into question whether or not the Summer Reading Program (SRP) really has a strong effect for at-risk kids.
- However, the grand and lofty goal of combating the summer slide doesn't have to be our <u>only</u> reason for doing Summer Reading!
- This document from the SRP manual gives some additional ideas for goals that your library might consider: www.tinyurl.com/1d5cgy3b
- Meeting participants shared some of their goals for their respective SRPs:
    o Motivate reluctant readers and promote reading in general
    o Keep the library fun and exciting for kids
    o Give families something to do
    o Get more people involved with the library and visiting the library, especially young people
    o Create a sense of unity for the community
    o Connect and partner with community organizations, e.g. parks departments and farms
    o Increase visibility of the library in the community
    o Continue successful programs into the summer

Typical components of a Summer Reading Program
- <u>Reading/activity logs</u>
    o People who sign up for logs are what the State Library considers to be "registered" for the Summer Reading Program.
    o This is also how libraries often incentivize reading and educational activities. (For example, libraries often offer prizes for completing a reading log.)
    o Questions to consider if you're going to do a reading/activity log:
        ▪ *What will you ask people to count?* (Books, minutes, pages, activities, etc.)
        ▪ *How will you structure the log?* (List, chart, bingo board, thermometer, etc.)
        ▪ *Will you do paper, online, or both?* (The NY State Library provides an online platform at no charge, if that's something you want to consider.)
        ▪ *Will you have different logs for different age groups?* (Children, teens, families, etc.)

- ▪ *Will you even have a log?*

- Incentives
    - o Libraries often offer incentives/prizes for participants to complete their logs.
    - o Questions to consider if you're going to offer incentives:
        - ▪ *Do prizes need to be objects?*
        - ▪ *Can you get donations?* (Money, gift certificates, etc.)
        - ▪ *Can you offer coupons for fine reduction or free holds?*
        - ▪ *Will you have a special end-of-summer celebration?* (This one might be a little bit trickier this summer, depending on the pandemic situation.)

- Programming
    - o We're going to dive into this more thoroughly in the other three sessions:
        - ▪ Thursday, February 18, 1:00pm - Virtual/Asynchronous/Grab-and-Go
        - ▪ Monday, February 22, 1:00pm - Children's Idea Sharing
        - ▪ Wednesday, March 3, 10:00am - Tween/Teen Idea Sharing
    - o A couple of good places to get ideas for programs and activities were shared:
        - ▪ Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) Official Summer Library Programming Facebook Group - www.facebook.com/groups/cslp.planning
        - ▪ Programming Library Interest Facebook Group - www.facebook.com/groups/ProgrammingLibrarianInterestGroup

- Publicity
    - o Social media
        - ▪ The CSLP Social Media Toolkit has some ideas. (This can be found on your orange USB manual.)
        - ▪ CSLP graphics work well for creating social media posts. These are included on the USB, in the Art folders.
    - o Press releases
        - ▪ Here's a sort of a sample press release to give you an idea of some things you could include: www.tinyurl.com/13z6uysl
        - ▪ If you know of a specific reporter/contact at a news outlet, it sometimes produces better results to email that person directly. (You can often find a listing of staff and contact information on the station/newspaper's website.)
        - ▪ CSLP has generic video PSAs if you have connections with local tv – or to share on your social media: https://www.cslpreads.org/2019-psas/
        - ▪ You can invite a reporter to interview you—sometimes if you connect with a specific reporter, you can get a more robust story.
    - o Community calendars – Many newspapers, radio stations, and tv new stations have online calendars. Submit to as many as you can, including the 4CLS calendar!

- Partnerships
    - Schools – If you have a connection to your local school district, this is an extremely valuable way to connect with a whole lot of kids and teens at once!
        - Possible people to connect with at the school include the school librarian, a building secretary, or an individual teacher. Whoever you might already know would be a great place to start—once you're "in," you can build your connections from there.
    - Free lunch programs through Hunger Solutions NY – Because of pandemic protocols, this year might prove tricky in terms of serving lunches at the library, but it's something to keep in mind for the future.
    - Cornell Cooperative Extension – Often the best person to contact at your local CCE office would be the 4H educator. If they have the time, they have a wealth of program possibilities that they can offer!
    - Parks & Rec Departments – Taking into consideration the pandemic situation, many libraries will be looking to do more outdoor programming this summer. It would be great to see if your local parks have facilities that you might be able to utilize.
    - Other community organizations and nonprofits – Every one of our communities has a unique set of organizations that support the residents of the area. Take a look at what's around, and reach out to the ones who you think might be able to support your work (and vice versa!).

Summer Reading Program Manual – "Tails & Tales"
- These files are all available on the USB drive that was sent to member libraries:
    - Art folder
        - Graphics that can be used for flyers, social media, and websites.
        - Printable posters
    - Programming Manual folder
        - Book lists
        - Program/activity ideas for all age groups
        - Printables for program activities
- We also have two print copies of the SRP manual available to be borrowed by member library staff. You can put a hold on it in Workflows (the title is "Tails and Tales"), or you can contact Sarah (sreid@4cls.org or 607-723-8236, ext. 350) to ask for it to be sent.

If you have any questions about the Summer Reading Program, or if you just want to talk anything through, please feel free to get in touch with me (Sarah)! I'm happy to connect via email, phone, GoToMeeting, or a library visit—whatever you like best.