

What is
Summer
Reading Loss
and
Why Should I Care?



DISCOVERY SUMMER — 2008



What is summer reading loss and why should I care?

“Summer reading loss refers to the amount of vocabulary and comprehension lost from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next. . . **Reading achievement relies on access and opportunity** (emphasis added). Studies show that lower-income kids may have fewer opportunities than affluent classmates to practice reading skills over the summer, because a limited budget often means fewer books in the home, fewer extracurricular learning experiences, and less access to bookstores and libraries. While middle-class kids might ride their bikes to the library, poorer kids may not be allowed on dangerous streets by themselves, the authors say.¹”

The Discovery Summer Project Field Trips are intended to compensate for summer reading loss by:

1. Encouraging kids and parents to use the library
2. By associating good experiences with the library
3. By making each field trip a learning opportunity (e.g. attendees were escorted through the zoo and offered information about animals and their ecosystems)
4. By providing books on the bus and providing bibliographies of reading materials related to each visit (see addendum)

This year Hazard Branch library was added to the participating libraries. Therefore, in all there were six: Beauchamp, Central, Hazard, Mundy, Soule, and White.

In all, 481 children, adults and staff attended the three trips.

The zoo trip, held on August 13th, was attended by 174 people. The threat of rain did not dampen the excitement or diminish attendance.

On August 21st, 186 people attended the MOST field trip. The children enjoyed the climbing maze and other new exhibits creating a din that only stopped when it was movie time. They viewed the IMAX movie *Ring of Fire*, about the volcanoes that ring the world. You could feel the heat from the rivers of hot, molten lava!!

The Beauchamp Branch sent 42 children and adults on this trip, of which 31 said they had never visited.

August 27th was the final trip and brought the six buses to Beaver Lake. The naturalists and volunteers did a splendid job of awakening interest in our environment and nature's other creatures. Of the 15 attendees to Beaver Lake from Soule Branch, 14 had never been there.

1. Benson, Katie, "Summer Reading Loss", OCPL Newsletter, summer 2004, pp.1-2

Gary Jones, Librarian at Soule wrote as follows, "... I also brought a number of books on beavers, rodents, etc. which the kids enjoyed on the return trip; while I handed them out I was asked a number of questions about library materials on different subjects, i.e. hawks and other birds of prey, probably prompted by the presentation by a Beaver lake naturalist of one of the hawks that live on site. All agreed that they enjoyed the outing and thanked the library/county for sponsoring the summer field trip."



Conclusion

Over the past three years, the Discovery Summer Project has helped hundreds of children in the central neighborhoods of Syracuse overcome a disturbing national trend by experiencing a summer reading gain, giving them an edge in school and, ultimately, in life. In the process, these young people have come to know their neighborhood library, become comfortable among its books and materials, and now understand the library is a portal to a world that is suddenly within their reach. This world doesn't consist only of books, but to wonderful places—places that might be just down the street—that ignite imaginations and stimulate a cycle of learning.

This year, 481 participants who might have otherwise spent the summer in front of a TV or video game instead participated in a Discovery Summer Project that now includes six of the eight city branch libraries. They entered school this fall with their literacy skills enhanced, rather than eroded, and with minds engaged and enriched by new experiences.

Next year, we will do even better.

In the future, we expect to include sites, including the William Seward house, and Harriet Tubman house. The life of Harriet Tubman is particularly instructive in that, as a slave, she was not allowed to learn to read! What is so powerful about reading that oppressors have frequently prohibited the oppressed from learning to do it??





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ADDENDA:

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2. Reading list for each trip

Rosamond Gifford Zoo

Stories and Picture Books

365 Penguins
by Jean-Luc Fromental and Joelle Jolivet

Orange Pear Apple Bear
by Emily Gravett

I Am Pangoo the Penguin
by Satomi Ichikawa

Ten Naughty Little Monkeys
by Suzanne Williams; illustrated by Suzanne Watts

Informational Books

Wolves (J 599.773 GRE)
by Daniel A. Greenberg

Penguins! Strange and Wonderful (J 598.47 PRI)
by Laurence Pringle; illustrated by Meryl Henderson

Elephants (J 599.67 SCH)
by Gloria G. Schlaepfer

Wild Bears (READER J 599.78 SIM)
by Seymour Simon

Tigers (J 599.746 STE)
by Rebecca Stefoff

To browse for books about different kinds of wildlife, look in the J 590s on your library's shelves.

Museum of Science & Technology

George Washington Carver
by Tonya Bolden (J BIO CARVER)

Earthquakes
by Franklyn M. Branley; illustrated by Megan Lloyd (J 551.22 BRA)

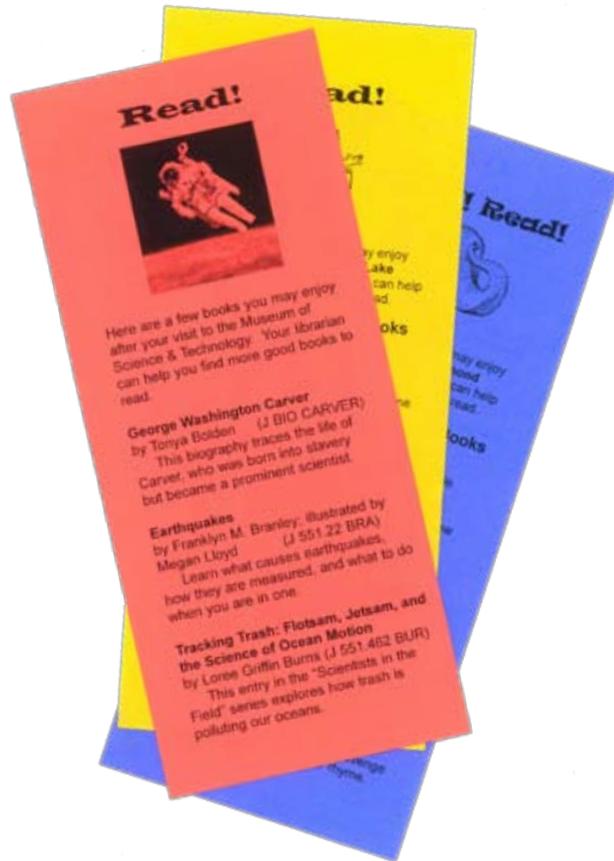
Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science of Ocean Motion
by Loree Griffin Burns (J 551.462 BUR)

Comets, Stars, the Moon, and Mars: Space Poems and Paintings
by Douglas Florian (J 811.54 FLO)

Why Are the Ice Caps Melting?: The Dangers of Global Warming
by Anne F. Rockwell (J 363.738 ROC)

Janice VanCleave's Guide to More of the Best Science Fair Projects
by Janice VanCleave (J 507.8 VAN)

Did a Dinosaur Drink This Water?
by Robert E. Wells (J 598.92 SAY)



Beaver Lake Nature Center

Stories and Picture Books

Fox
by Kate Banks; pictures by Georg Hallensleben (J E BANKS)

Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?
by Bill Martin, Jr.; illustrated by Eric Carle (J E MARTIN)

Leaves
by David Ezra Stein (J E STEIN)

The Busy Little Squirrel
by Nancy Tafuri (J E TAFURI)

Informational Books

All about Deer
by Jim Arnosky (J 599.735 ARN)

Frogs
by Nic Bishop (J 597.89 BIS)

Foxes
by Marc Tyler Nobleman (J 599.775 NOB)

Turtles and Tortoises
by Renee C. Rebman (J 597.924 REB)

Vulture View
by April Pulley Sayre; illustrated by Steve Jenkins (J 598.92 SAY)