

History of the Ohio Reading Program

As far back as 1978, the State Library of Ohio has coordinated a summer reading program. One hundred and fifty-seven master packets of materials were sent to libraries and regional systems in 1978. The theme that year was “Millions of Cats”, chosen to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the childhood classic written by Wanda Gag.

“Passport to Adventure” was the 1979 slogan chosen to coordinate with the UNICEF sponsored “International Year of the Child”.

In 1980, the State Library partnered with Akron Summit County Public Library for the theme, “Summer Reading Program Olympics”. Despite the boycott of the 1980 Olympic games in Russia, Ohio used the program. The following three years’ themes were:

- 1981 – “Mythical, Magical, Mystical, Monsters”
- 1982 – “Reading, Riding, Rodeo”
- 1983 – “QE’s Quest”

In 1984 we continued to work with Akron Summit County Public Library and did the program “Have a Bearable Summer”. Themes for the next few years were:

- 1985 – “Reading is Cool”
- 1986 – “Reading: The Heart of it All”

In 1986, an editorial board was formed to expand the manual, soliciting program ideas from around the state. The manual was divided into age levels from preschool to upper elementary and included a public relations section in addition to crafts, games, and program ideas.

“Summer Splash” was the program for 1987 and was a very popular program which combined detective and water fun themes.

The following slogans were used from 1988 through 1996:

- 1988 – “A Sendak Celebration: Let the Reading Begin!”
- 1989 – “Hungry For Books? Check our Menu!”
- 1990 – “Read For the Fun of It!”
- 1991 – “Hats Off To Books!”
- 1992 – “Ticket To Read”
- 1993 – “Spinning Yarns! Telling Tales!”
- 1994 – “Step Into the Spotlight: Read!”
- 1995 – “Rally Round Rugged Readers”
- 1996 – “Read for the Gold!”

One of the most popular of these themes was the Sendak Celebration theme in 1988. Two years of negotiations with Mr. Sendak’s attorneys proved fruitful and once copyright restrictions were worked out, this theme was well received.

In 1997 we worked with Paul Brett Johnson on a Western theme called “Ride A Wild Book!” Themes for the next six years were:

- 1998 – “Drop Anchor in a Good Book”
- 1999 – “The Incredible Library Time Machine”
- 2000 – “Into Books and Out of This World”
- 2001 – “Where in the World Are You Reading”
- 2002 – “Your Library: The Greatest Show in Town”
- 2003 – “Celebrate Ohio”

In 2004 the State Library decided to join the national Collaborative Summer Library Program – www.csllpreads.org This group began in 1987 when ten Minnesota regional library systems developed a

summer library program for children—choosing a theme, creating artwork and selecting incentives that public libraries in the regions could purchase and use. Currently, there are forty-six states and regional systems participating in CSLP. Themes are chosen two years in advance. Themes the State Library has participated in include:

- 2004 – “Discover New Trails @ Your Library”
- 2005 – “Dragons, Dreams, and Daring Deeds”
- 2006 – “Paws, Claws, Scales, and Tales”
- 2007 – “Get A Clue @ Your Library”
- 2008 – “Catch the Reading Bug”

Future themes are:

- 2009 – “Be Creative @ Your Library”
- 2010 – General water theme

The State Library of Ohio joined CSLP because we wanted to continue to offer high quality resources to children’s librarians in our state. There is strength in numbers and our membership allows us more buying power to purchase posters, reading logs, bookmarks, certificates and a variety of reading incentives at significant savings.

As a CSLP member we are able to access the same artwork, incentives and publicity, in addition to an extensive manual of programming and promotional ideas.

The guiding principle of CSLP fits well with the State Library’s philosophy of service to Ohio – to offer a high-quality summer reading program at a significant savings to our librarians.

Questions on the Ohio summer reading program may be directed to:

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