

Summer Reading Stations Encourage Literacy

BY LAURA DOUGLASS Staff Writer

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Clare Ruggles (left), executive director of Northern Moore Family Resource Center; Sara Britt; Jackie Hernandez; Carolina Rivero; Stuart Mills, executive director of the Moore County Literacy Council; and Naye Campuzano (holding a Dolly Parton cut-out) set up a reading station.

TED FITZGERALD/The Pilot

Children don't read as much during the summer. Educators use the term "summer slide" to describe this predictable seasonal pattern when students, especially from low-income families, tend to lose some of the achievement gains they made during the previous school year.

The rapid, unexpected switchover from classroom to distance learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March will likely make these losses even more pronounced when children resume studies this fall.

Want to Go?

To help bridge the gap, the Growing Moore Readers Summer Reading Station program is an intensive two-week outreach that will serve pre-K to eighth-grade children at 16 outdoor locations.

Beginning Monday, July 27, and running through Aug. 8, children may drop by daily to pick out a book to read and take home. Free lunch will be served, and parent resource materials will also be available. Each participating child should be accompanied by a caregiver.

“We feel this is a very low risk way to do this for a very important cause,” says Stuart Mills, executive director of the Moore County Literacy Council. “The difference in reading achievement between an average student and a low income student would be more than made-up-for if we could successfully address summer slide.”

The 16 outdoor program sites target communities around Moore County, including Aberdeen, Carthage, Eagle Springs, Pinehurst, Robbins, Southern Pines, Taylortown, Vass, West End and Westmoore.

Each station is staffed by a teacher and a teaching assistant. MCLC has some paid internship positions available, and volunteers are welcome.

The program was prepared with input from the MCLC, Northern Moore Family Resource Center, Given Memorial Library and Partners for Children and Families. Sponsors include the Duke Energy Foundation, Dollar General Foundation, United Way of Moore County and the Moore County Community Foundation.

In addition, the Toys for Tots Foundation donated 1,950 books to support the Summer Reading Stations, and grant funding was used to purchase 1,000 books from The Country

JOIN US
10AM-NOON
MONDAY-SATURDAY
JULY 27 - AUGUST 8
**Summer Reading
Stations in your
neighborhood!**

LOOK FOR ONE NEAR **YOU**
FREE LUNCH, FREE BOOKS
& FREE PARENT RESOURCES

- ABERDEEN LAKE PARK, ABERDEEN
- BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, S. PINES
- POOL PARK, S. PINES
- BROOKSIDE PARK APTS., SHAW AVE., S. PINES
- VILLAGE GREEN, PINEHURST
- FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CARTHAGE
- 129 BURCH DR., TAYLORTOWN
- CHRIST WAY DELIVERANCE CDC, WEST END
- PINEHILL COUNTRY LIVING MOBILE HOME PARK, BRUCES RD., VASS
- ROBBINS GREENSPACE STAGE, ROBBINS
- SUNSET TRAILER PARK, SUNNY LN., ROBBINS
- TYLER LN. TRAILER PARK, ROBBINS
- HUEY LN. TRAILER PARK, ROBBINS
- ETA BELL ST. TRAILER PK., EAGLE SPRINGS
- COMMUNITY RD., EAGLE SPRINGS
- WESTMOORE ELEMENTARY, SEAGROVE

PRE-K TO GRADE 8

Bookshop.

Mills credits Kimberly Daniels Taws and her staff at The Country Bookshop with coming up with a list of books that are popular with children and cover a range of topics.

“We have loved working with the Literacy Council,” says Taws. “These stations are a fantastic feat, and we hope lots of people will take advantage of them. Our children’s manager, Angie Tally, and I worked with the council to figure out how to build a collection that would encompass multiple perspectives, languages, races and for different age groups.”

Some of the curated books include “Ghost,” by Jason Reynolds, “Rock Star #1,” from the Jada Jones series, two of the Hidden Figures young

readers, early readers like “I Survived Hurricane Katrina,” from the I Survived series, and engaging picture books in English and Spanish.

The Country Bookshop staff also consulted the list of winning titles from the nation’s premier reading awards, including The Caldecott, Newbery, The Coretta Scott King and the Pura Belpre, as well reading lists published by the We Need Diverse Books nonprofit organization.

“All of these books are titles that we love at the bookshop, and we are so excited to help the literacy council get these books into kids’ hands,” says Taws.

The intensive two-week Summer Reading Station program is shorter than a typical summer camp, but will provide a “pop-up” style outreach that targets specific areas.

“This program is a little old school. Instead of using technology, we are going out to be near where children live,” Mills says. “The program is very tailored to the population we have here in Moore County, where not every child may have access to a computer.”

MCLC also worked closely with the Moore County Health Department to develop safety guidelines for the outdoor Summer Reading Stations. Social distancing will be strictly adhered to and face masks are highly encouraged.

According to the National Summer Learning Association, most students lose two months of math skills every summer, and children from low-income families typically lose another two or three months in reading skills. It is estimated that summer reading loss during elementary school accounts

for two-thirds of the achievement gap in reading between children from low-income families and their peers from middle-income families by ninth grade.

“We hope the children will return each day and build up a little library of books thanks to our wonderful partners,” says Mills. “We’ve had a lot of good support for this program.”

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