Summer Learning Report-2018
Rochester Public Library
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Introduction
Summer reading programs have long been used in the U.S. to promote lifelong reading in children and teens. Public libraries encourage participation in these programs to reduce summer learning loss.¹ Summer learning loss is also known as *summer slide* or *setback*, wherein student achievement scores tend to be lower after summer than at the end of the previous school year.² This is more pronounced for historically underserved groups, such as children living in poverty or children from English-language learning households.³ Reading programs in libraries and schools have demonstrated effectiveness at helping students retain important reading skills over the summer.⁴

Abstract
This report provides background, description, and results of summer reading efforts developed by the Rochester Public Library (RPL) and Rochester City School District (RCSD). The report also includes information about current RPL literacy initiatives.

Results Summary - Literacy Aides
- RPL hired 20 Literacy Aides who worked at 10 library branches and the Central Library with elementary-aged children from July through August 2018.
- The total contacts made by Literacy Aides for the summer of 2018 was 32,714, compared to 23,017 in 2017.
- Literacy Aides made 10,260 contacts directly related to literacy support (reading with or to one child), while remaining contacts included computer assistance, activities, crafts and other activities requiring reading and comprehension skills.
- Three Literacy Aides were hired permanently by RPL.

RCSD Literacy Aides
The Literacy Aide position was created by RPL in 2008 in response to an increase in library use by students after school. Part-time Literacy Aides are funded year-round at eight branches, supported by the City of Rochester and private support. Literacy Aides help children develop literacy skills and practice reading. The RPL has several Literacy Aides who have continued to accept progressive RPL employment while attending higher education.

The RCSD funded 20 seasonal Literacy Aide positions deployed in the public library branches and at the Central Library. The Literacy Aides participated in a one-day orientation session on July 3, 2018, conducted by the MCLS Children’s Services Consultant, Tonia Burton. The orientation included:
- Child development stages and electing complementing materials
- Literacy engagement techniques through literature, art, and STEM
- Implementation of the summer reading program and documentation
- Implementation of diverse literature through activities and role play
During the orientation, students created and prepared an activity that they would implement at their sites.
During the summer, Literacy Aides provided direct reading support to children at their assigned sites; played educational games; worked with children on puzzles, activity sheets, story writing, arts and crafts and library computers, all of which involved the use of reading and comprehension skills. The RPL is pleased that three seasonal RCSD Literacy Aides accepted permanent part-time employment with the library. We find the program to be mutually beneficial for the following reasons:

The program provides meaningful engagement opportunities for children in grades K-6 by having dedicated reading, sharing and play time with older student role models.

Literacy Aides receive training and ongoing supervisory support, often providing a first employment opportunity that builds skills, responsibility and confidence.

Working in libraries and with City departments demonstrates to students possible career paths in Early Childhood Development and Education.

Literacy Aides are an invaluable part of summer learning support, as noted by several site supervisors:

- Marie Heeks-Heinlein, Site Supervisor, Sully Branch Library: Our literacy aides were wonderful this summer. They all had their own interests that they shared with the children throughout the summer. The literacy aides gave the children more opportunities to create lasting memories and relationships. We are so happy with this summer’s literacy aide program.
  1. Khajari Marshall-Hosier worked on a special project this summer. He attended all of the story walk sessions with the recreation center staff and children for future planning. He was very helpful and had a lot to contribute. We ended up hiring Khajari as a permanent Literacy Aide.
2. Jaequon Nesmith-Jaequon did a lot of gaming with the children, both electronic and old fashioned Uno. His friendly and laidback approach to working with our young patrons drew many of them to him. He participated in everything we asked him to do, including the Happy Pirates concert.

3. Yaumira Hernandez (Yami) brought a lot of energy to the library this summer. She was always looking for things to do with the children. Movies, crafts, games, and Karaoke were just a few of the things she did with them.

- Bruce Tehan, Site Supervisor, Arnett Branch Library: The Arnett Branch Library's RCSD literacy aides spent the summer engaging children in fun learning and reading activities. One of Arnett's summer literacy aides, Joniah Anderson accepted a permanent Page position with the library.
• Sarah Ngo, Children’s Librarian, Frederick Douglass Community Library: Our two literacy aides, Shadrick Lawrence and Cadeeja Tanksley, were great with the children. Cadeeja made crafts with the girls and Shadrick liked to play Candyland with the younger ones. They were always coloring or helping the kids log onto the computers to play Roblox. We had a busy summer with a very large group from the R-Center every day. Uno and Spot It card games were very popular. The kids always wanted to beat the literacy aides. Also, I taught both Cadeeja and Shadrick basic library operations in the children area and they assisted me with some book projects and story time preparation.

Current State – RPL Literacy Initiatives

Currently, RPL has several literacy initiatives focused on early childhood development, parent engagement, digital literacy, health literacy, computer literacy and financial literacy. In addition, RPL offers several programs and services for youth in music, audio and video production and digital photography. These programs help youth improve their skills, provide mentorship and career pathways. Areas of literacy development that directly impact RCSD students include the following initiatives:

Raising A Reader: Raising A Reader is a national, evidence-based early literacy and parent engagement program for reading readiness from birth to age four. The program provides resources for caregivers to help children develop early literacy skills. Since
2012, RPL has provided engagement directly to parents through childcare providers and distributed developmentally appropriate reading materials in a range of languages for families to bring home from their daycare setting, without cost for loan or loss of items.

Raising A Reader has grown from serving 29 families in 2012 to serving 456 families in 2017 through the Flower City AmeriCorps Program (FCAC) and the members we have been able to utilize. Currently, there are over 460 families across the City of Rochester that patriciate in the Raising A Reader program. During the 2017-18 school year, RPL served several sites which included childcare centers, with Early Headstart (Joseph and North Street), ABC Headstart, Pathways to Success, Hillside Peter Castle Family Resource Center, Hillside Southwest Family Resource Center, School #53, Ora’s Place Day Care Center, A Mother’s Love, Learn and Play Day Care Center, Rochester Childfirst Network (Center City) and Ibero’s Early Childhood Center, School #57 and Volunteers of America.

**RCSD Success**

During the 2018-2019 school year, Principal Eva Thomas asked RPL to increase the number of families we serve at School #57 from 65 to 220. School #33 has also requested that we serve their K – 1st grade classes. This was the first year School #57 participated in Raising A Reader, and from the very beginning we knew it was just the start of a wonderful partnership. Throughout the school year we were invited to many family events. The staff at School #57 is so warm and welcoming; it’s been a pleasure collaborating with them. In June, MCLS Children’s Services Consultant Tonia Burton attended ESL Family Night at School #57. We had dinner with families and talked about the past school year, students displayed projects they worked on, and organizations presented on summer learning opportunities. The parents also shared how grateful they were for Raising A Reader and having books written in their first language. We were also invited to attend the grade level graduations. Burton attended and handed out blue bags and signed the students up for summer reading. This is an example of the power of Raising A Reader and how the program can help the library extend its reach into the community and grow our services.
Youth Materials Fine Elimination: The fines elimination on materials for children and teens was made permanent in June 2018. RPL saw a smaller increase in circulation from July 2017 to June 2018 than in previous years, but an increase nonetheless of 7%. We did not see an increase in the number of library cards issued. As a result, materials owned by RPL coded for children and young adults will not accrue daily overdue fines. During the two-year pilot phase, RPL saw a 10% increase in circulation of materials. The program was well received by the community and praised by Mayor Lovely Warren. The pilot reflected a change in philosophy and direction for RPL away from policies that have adversely affected the ability of City residents to take full advantage of their libraries. The primary goal is to increase circulation of children’s and young adult materials by City residents, followed by a secondary result of an increase in active RPL borrower cards for children and young adults. RPL staff is exploring new ways to reach City youth with expired borrower cards and blocked cards; we are interested in any recommendations or assistance from the RCSD to improve our outreach regarding this pilot. Note that a 2013 RPL program for RCSD students to provide fine/fee waivers, with goals of bringing cardholders back to good standing, is still in place.

Flower City AmeriCorps (FCAC) Throughout the summer the Community Navigator AmeriCorps program continued to focus on serving patrons one-on-one in the branches, ESOL classes at the Maplewood Branch Library and financial literacy programs. Our primary focus was to increase the amount of programs and services we offered outside the library buildings. We had programs at Cameron Ministries, Open Door Mission and Summer of Opportunity program for the City of Rochester (including two different training sessions to groups of over 90 students each). We also held a weekly series throughout the month of July at the Sully Branch Library called ‘Money Mondays.’
We offered a monthly lesson on financial literacy and conversational English around personal finance topics to ESOL students at the Maplewood Branch Library.

The Community Navigator AmeriCorps program ended in August. Throughout June, July and August we had a total of 21 programs at various branches and community organizations with 308 attendees. In total for the year, we had 557 attendees to programs with 88% of attendees either showing an improved score on pre/post testing or reporting an increase in confidence in their financial literacy knowledge and skills.

**imagineYOU Media Lab:** In May 2017, the newly renovated teen space and imagineYOU lab opened at the Central Library. imagineYOU is an innovative, 21st century teen digital learning space for teens with an emphasis on digital media. Teens engage in projects across a variety of core content areas including graphic design, digital photography, audio, video, and music. imagineYOU connects young adults to media, mentors and institutions throughout Rochester in artistic spaces designed to inspire collaboration and creativity. Youth have the opportunity to work with mentors and develop a career pathway.

During this past summer, imagineYOU partnered with Action for a Better Community (ABC) to implement their EPIC and AIMM programs. ABC used the space for classroom instruction, video and audio production. The youth were assigned group projects and met regularly for six weeks. Library staff taught several classes and gave in-depth advice on writing scripts, creating videos, audio, and video production. One of their final projects was “In and Out”, a video production about gang violence. The “In and Out” video was developed, created, and edited by the students. The video was created using library staff, space, and materials.
In addition, the staff in Teen Central worked with all forty students from ABC to create resumes, cover letters, and conduct job searches.

### Statistics and Performance Indicators

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Summer Theme: Libraries Rock!</th>
<th>City Branches</th>
<th>Central Library</th>
<th>Total RPL 2018</th>
<th>Total RPL 2017</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Children registered</td>
<td>1225</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>2140</td>
<td>1598</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Teens registered</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>304</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total registered</td>
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<td>1000</td>
<td>2488</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>586</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Children who recorded by minutes read</td>
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<td>915</td>
<td>2140</td>
<td>1153</td>
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<td>Total minutes read by these Children, above</td>
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<td>43520</td>
<td>258610</td>
<td>554247</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Teens who recorded by books read</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>184</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number books read by Teens</td>
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<td>108</td>
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<td>1571</td>
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<td>Total Children’s programs offered</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>597</td>
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<td>2045</td>
<td>12080</td>
<td>11529</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<td>3348</td>
<td>14495</td>
<td>13451</td>
<td>1044</td>
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### Recommendations for Summer 2019
- Recruit literacy aides directly through the Rochester City School District. Since inception, the RCSD has identified high performing students for direct hire by the RPL. In 2019 RPL will work directly with RCSD to identify and recruit students for hire.
- Rochester Public Library will interview and train literacy aides in June 2019.
- Provide literacy aides with a pre/post survey to evaluate learning experiences.
- Conduct an exit meeting to solicit feedback to plan for the upcoming year.
• RPL is recommending $38,000 in funding to continue to support RCSD student summer employment. The funding cost includes staffing and supplies.

Conclusion
We believe the RPL is a natural partner for the RCSD, with the facilities, professional staff and enthusiasm to support student learning outside the classroom. We recommend the continuation of this program without reservation, and are open to a range of 15-20 students for summer 2018.

RPL management and staff wish to express sincere gratitude to the RCSD and City for their continued support of the RPL’s literacy initiatives, and look forward to the continued dialogue on how best to serve the interests of children and families in the City of Rochester.

References