Summer Reading Adventures at the Anderson County Public Library

The Anderson County Library System took many different adventures during the summer of 2017. Here are a few of the highlights.

First of all, we decided to capitalize on the use of local performers to get the most out of our Summer Reading budget. We got ideas from local news shows, newspaper articles, a “Meet and Geek” in Greenville, as well as street fairs, post cards sent by the performers, and staff recommendations if they saw someone interesting around town. Some of the local talent we used included Chuck Alberding, The Wildlife Geek, who brought his rescued animals and did an educational program on wildlife conservation; Carl Woody of Joy Set, who does a version of Where the Wild Things Are with monster heads made out of twisted balloons; Ronald McDonald, whose literacy shows for libraries are free; Jack Clark of Jack’s Drum Shack brought his advanced percussion students and really entertained us at the Lander Memorial Library in Williamston; Park Sterling Bank did a Financial Literacy for Kids at no cost; graphic artist J. Chris Campbell of Greenville did a “Rockets and Robots” art lesson that was almost standing room only; a local church has a “pirate ministry” that tells stories with a good moral and does magic tricks; Roper Mountain Science Center brought the Starlab Portable Planetarium to teach us about the night sky and the coming eclipse. Having local talent doing programs in the branches freed staff time to provide outreach programming to Summer Reading Camp students in the public schools.

This year we applied for and received a grant from Dollar General Literacy that allowed us more freedom and flexibility to do outreach in the public schools. Three of the five school districts in Anderson County had library staff members doing weekly programs at their camps that frontloaded rising third graders with South Carolina history, followed by a craft to help reinforce the book. While there, the library staffer promoted events at the library and handed out quarter page flyers to invite and remind the children to come. This is our eighth year working with the local BARK program (http://www.scdogs.org/index.htm), which allows children a chance to read out loud to therapy dogs. We start signups at the beginning of June for each child’s 15-minute reading session. By Friday, June 16, every Friday was booked through the end of July. Dogs in the library?? At no cost?? Oh yeah!!!

We used elements of the CSLP theme “Build a Better World” to do some great STEM construction programs with KEVA planks. If you don’t know what these are, research them now! http://www.kevaplanks.com/ We got ours with the LSTA grant from the State Library, then partnered with Tri-County Technical College, who led the programs with some extra construction ideas. Not only did the school age kids love these KEVA planks, the parents were joining their kids in the fun, and then the teen librarian got hold of them and the teens were building with KEVA planks too! These are universal in appeal and, in my opinion, are well worth the investment for your programs.

Finally, we also incorporated the theme of “Space” (Out of this World) this year because Anderson was in the path of totality of the historic solar eclipse of August 2017. Working with the nationwide trend of painting and hiding “kindness rocks”, we hosted a “rock painting party” (with Sharpies, not paint) at all nine libraries on August 21 (eclipse day). “We will provide the rocks” and the library will give the “sharpsies” to the participants. While we were doing this, we also strengthened our Summer Reading Adventures, with “Where the Wild Things Are” and a NASA Science Kit. The idea was generate interest in the library to people with children who may not otherwise come in or know what we have to offer. Lots of parents are painting rocks with their children and hiding them in parks for others to find. When you hide some, you post on the Facebook page where you’re going to hide them, then other folks go to that location to try to find and hide more. I jumped into the Facebook conversations and began painting rocks, hiding them on library grounds, and posting so people would come and find them. The first three I hid were gone 20 minutes after I posted that I hid them!!

We hashtagged ours #AndersonEclipseRocks, and much of the promotion was done on the Facebook pages:

Anderson Rocks https://www.facebook.com/groups/160359874486497/
And Anderson County SC Rocks!! https://www.facebook.com/groups/1365992600115312/

Article by Jennifer Simmons, YSS Secretary
Spotlight on Youth Services at the SCLA Conference

Just for YSS members, a preview of the youth services programs that will be presented at the annual SCLA conference in October.

Adventures in Preschool STEAM

Books, flannel and songs, plus STEAM activity stations where parents and children work together. Devon Andrews from Charleston County Public Library will talk about what has made her preschool storytime re-vamp a success.

SC Plants the Seed

SC Plants the Seed is a partnership between SCSL, public libraries, SCDHEC, SC DSS, and End Child Hunger SC to bring local SC farmers to public libraries, encourages SNAP recipients to make produce purchases with Healthy Bucks, gives families recipe books, and offers free books to children.

Serving Rural, Suburban and Urban Teens

Hear library staff from three different public library settings talk about the challenges and successes they have faced. Library staff from Spartanburg County Public Library, Chapin Memorial Library, and Berkeley County Public Library will talk about the different perspectives required to serve their populations.

Richland Library’s Reading Studio: Serving Struggling Readers in Our Community

Join Laura Rogers and Emily Johansson from Richland Library Children’s Room to learn how to select appropriate books and materials for all types of readers and develop programming to serve emerging readers and their families. Experience dyslexia through a learning simulation and explore strategies to help young readers to improve their reading skills.

Third General Session & Luncheon

The session will feature Pam Sandlian Smith, Anythink Libraries Director. Anythink Libraries is located in Adams County, Colorado and in 2006, they underwent some radical changes. Plan to stay for this speaker!