A child won a cat-ear headband from a prize drawing during our summer reading program, which she qualified for by reading and logging 2 hours in one week. Her mother later posted a picture of her daughter on Facebook... asleep in her cat-ear headband, clutching a cat stuffed animal. Truly adorable!

A mother and child approached us at the info desk, handed us a bouquet of flowers, and said, "We had an extra bouquet of flowers so we thought of you guys at the library and how much we appreciate all you do, so we brought them for you! Thanks for a summer filled with so many great books!"

A nanny expressed that she loved the programs we had that she went to with the children she takes care of and that they are so educational. She said that was great.

As a part of our summer activities each year, we always include an animal visit. This year we invited the Wild Wonders Animal group which featured various creatures both tame and otherwise. While I was standing next to the facilitator in front of the audience, she suddenly got a call on her cell phone. Before I knew what happened, she said, "Excuse me, I've got to take this," and handed me the live tarantula she happened to be holding at the time. Handling tarantulas wasn't exactly part of my job-description, but after the initial panic wore off, I got through the program somehow intact. Mark A. Malcolm - Maynard Public Library

As I said above, the WMLA incentives are excitedly looked forward to every year. May they always be with us!

As part of the summer reading in the children’s room, the kids got a bead (we did read for a bead) if they taught a librarian how to do the "floss"! High hilarity!!!!! The kids loved it and we did too! Marianne Stanton Melrose Public Library

Author/illustrator Maddie Frost and I got to know each other via Twitter and she offered to visit the library. I had purchased two copies of her latest book "Once Upon A Zzzz" and had some of her other selections also available to patrons. Because we had so many books available, our kids really had a great idea of who she is and what her books were all about. Over 70 people came to Maddie's event, which was one of the biggest she's ever had! At the end, Keira, 6, walked up to Maddie with a sheet of mini-notebook paper and said, "May I please have your autograph?" It was a darling moment for me, Maddie, Keira and Keira's mom, Erin. - Danielle Masterson, Flint Memorial Library

Because of the "Libraries Rock" theme, we offered an evening line dancing class, open to all and planned for 4 sessions, but because it was so popular with 12 seniors, we held 6 sessions

Chickens from Winterberry Farm in New York were booked at our library for a July program. Chickens cannot check into a motel, so they camped out at a local camp ground overnight. Since they are early and noisy risers, owner Lynn Sprague took the chickens for a morning cluck and cock-a-doodle drive around the city. Social needs met, chickens and human companion were warmly welcomed at the library for a great program starring them.
Children decorated "book notes" (colorful musical notes) with the name of their favorite book or book character. Each time a child visited the library they could decorate a book note and hang it on our walls. Once the children reached the goal of 1,000 book notes the Friends of the Beverly Public Library made a donation to the local nonprofit group, Music & Youth, Changing Lives One Note at a Time https://www.musicandyouth.org/ . The walls were jumping with color and creativity!

Children loved learning about different instruments and enjoyed making noise.

Children showing us pictures they've made to go with stories they've read, or had read to them. Sometimes these are given to the librarian as "presents."

Dover Town Library experienced a 56% increase in children's summer reading program registrations!

Everyone enjoyed the Skype visit with author Shane Burcaw. Pizza-- Shane's favorite food-- was served, and the kids could go right up to the screen to ask Shane questions about his disability and the adaptations he makes.

For every 4 hours kids got to build a rock audience member and glue it on our concert stage to see the Rolling Stones (made out of rocks). Kids loved creating their person and we had a full audience by the end of the summer. It was also a great way to visualize all the reading done this summer.

For two years we have offered "Teacher Tales" during the SRP. Teachers and principals come in to do a story time for their future/past students. This is always a popular program. This year we had 8 sessions, with 118 people attending. We set up an online registration form so the teachers can select which session works with their summer plans. The largest attendances occurred in mid-August, after the new teacher assignments had been sent out (this happened a little later than usual this year). The Kindergarten kids are so excited to get to see their new teacher outside of school!

I get a great deal of positive feedback about our summer programs, and we work very hard to bring them every year. I do a Monarch butterfly program here every year, and a number of folks have told me that it has changed their lives :) Lorraine Der, H-W Library

I had a parent who talked with me at the beginning of our program. Her son was really struggling with reading and it was becoming a chore at home to get any reading in. I gave some book recommendations but he also really liked logging his minutes for the program. It motivated him a lot. The parent touched base at the end of the summer and said he'd gone from complaining about reading for 10 minutes a day to willingly sitting down for 30 in part because of the book recs and the summer reading program!

I have 2 families that visit family in other countries during the summer. We corresponded during the summer, so that they could still participate.

I used the Read to Bead program for elementary schoolers for the first time and I was so touched by the level of engagement and excitement! Although our sign ups were similar to other years, engagement was higher. Kids were so excited to share their reading progress and pick out beads. They often begged to stay at the library to read for "just 15 more minutes!" to earn the bead they wanted. Many parents commented on how motivating the program was for their kids.
I was touched by a few families that fully participated together - reading, activities, programs. They really seemed to enjoy doing the whole program together.

I'm just floored that we managed to do 146 programs in 2 months and saw 2,332 people! That's amazing and explains why we are tired lol.

In Children's, we created our own Reading Log and it was very popular with children and parents. On requirement was to take out a joke book and tell the librarian a joke which was loads of fun for the kids and librarians. However, taking out a cookbook did not result in any goodies coming our way! :-)

In Somerville, we held a Stuffed Animal Sleepover. Even though many libraries have hosted this program in the past, ours happened the same week that the Forbes piece by Panos Mourdoukoutas, Amazon Should Replace Local Libraries to Save Taxpayers Money, was published. Local writer Juliet Kahn tweeted about the program and it went viral. On Thursday July 26th, there was an article in the Boston Globe, Metro section, and another in the Metro newspaper. we were even mentioned in Facebook by the Learning Channel's Little Couple. Proud of our 15 minutes of fame! Annamarie Almeida, Somerville Public Library

It was a wonderful surprise to me how much the boys enjoy the read and bead

It was our second year doing the read to bead program, and, once again, everyone loved it!!!

Jungle Jim kicked us off with the most hilarious, active, and engaging program! Seeing the kids laugh at his antics was priceless. Same thing with Toe Jam Puppet Band--they really rocked, and the kids went wild.

Many parents reported that siblings competed with each other to see who could read the most. We give books away for signing up and for completing and the kids like the books better than the toy prizes and special offers we give as grand prizes.

My teen group always amazes me. They show up and help out, and they appreciate their Teen Tuesdays!

nothing too exciting. our attendance at kids programs was down from other years. don't know why.

One of my younger patrons broke her leg this summer and was in a wheelchair. Her mother was so thankful for all our library programming because it was fun, engaging and she was able to get her child out of the house and able to be with other kids! - Kate,

One of our summer readers, a second grader, was SOOOO excited about participating in summer reading that she could barely contain herself. When her class came over to the library in June for its summer reading class visit, the school librarian whispered in my ear that this girl was beyond thrilled to do summer reading. Thanks to that great school librarian, I was able to talk to this enthusiastic child right then and also to help her to maintain her reading joy all summer. It was wonderful to see!
One of our Summer Reading challenges asked kids to invent their own book award, give it to a book, and notify the author/illustrator. A few kids got replies from their authors, but none have earned such an enthusiastic response as this one. First, Eli is a 5-year-old who loves the T. *Loves* it, as you’ll see in the link, and he wanted to give his "T" award to Beneath the Streets of Boston. His mom found the author's email address, and the author was so delighted by the award that he notified his publisher. The publisher immediately posted the news of the award to their website: http://www.godine.com/2018/08/22/9380/ A week or two later, Eli received an enormous envelope from the author in the mail with his name and address hand-painted on the outside. Inside was one of Mr. McKendry's watercolor paintings from the book, autographed and with a special note for Eli. It was a remarkable exchange of mutual adoration! (Bethany Klem, Bedford Free Public Library)

Our first morning of summer story time and activities saw 32 children along with their adults. Our library is very small, but we accommodated everyone with an old school vinyl & turntable musical kick-off and art activity. Great way to start summer!

Our partnership with the YMCA Summer Lunch program brought in a lot more families and I had activities/crafts/storytimes before and after the lunches.

Our plan worked in the sense that our new program encouraged families to read together and they could all keep track the same way. One family would come in each day to our Mason Square branch and find books, magazines or comic books and would gather around a table and read together. It was wonderful to see!

Our summer kick-off event, an after hours All Ages Prom Night, was inspired by 2018's musical theme, "Libraries Rock". This was such a fun night to bring the community together and show our patrons that libraries offer different experiences and programs than they might expect. It was also a nice opportunity to bring our various library departments together for a collaboration on an all-ages program. To get patrons excited to attend, staff members posted our own prom photos on Facebook and invited patrons to submit their song requests to us. We hired a local DJ, decorated our meeting room with vinyl records and streamers, obtained donated pizza and desserts from a local business, and purchased a photo booth to commemorate the night. Not only did patrons have a blast, but staff also had an amazing evening that left us feeling energized to begin an eventful summer. Patrons are still talking about Library Prom Night and many have requested that we make it an annual event.

Our summer kick-off party was pretty well-attended! I started as Youth Services Librarian halfway into Summer Reading, so my director had made it really simple this year. It will definitely be more exciting next year!

Our summer reading grand prize winner won a backpack full of about a dozen books purchased just for her. She spent most of her summer reading and logging her hours so that she could enter more raffle tickets into the jar, and every week she would come in to the library to check out a stack of new books to read. (Caitlyn Clark - Oak Bluffs Public Library).

Our summer reading program raffle winner (tickets for completing reading hours and coming to events) won a ride to school on the first day in the town fire truck. very exciting!

Our visit from the Bruins team and Blades!!
Part of our Summer Reading Program, we offer a STEM session for elementary age children. One of our favorite events was creating oobleck, then using it on a speaker with a bass the guitar and making it "dance". We even made it glow in the dark-- lots of laughter and fun.

Patrons were very fond of the geode and microscope work offered by our summer intern. Children danced and sang along with a Friend of the Paige Library who donated her time and brought her guitar, ukulele and teenage helpers. Fairy houses created as a creative activity were placed in a village outside the library during the Hardwick Fair, the oldest agricultural fair in the US. The end of the Summer Reading event featured a drum circle and donated ice cream sundaes and was very well received.

People loved the posters, bookmarks, and booklogs.

Robin's Candy store always donates a huge glass jar filled with candy that patrons guess the quantity all summer long, the winner is announced at our end ice cream party. This time the winner didn't know until I said his name in front of everyone. He was so shocked & SO happy! His mom is a elementary school teacher, so this was good advertising for the library.

Student patrons loved coming into the library to complete the summer reading scavenger hunt. They eagerly would ask for the scavenger hunt form. One of our programs that we hosted brought in 78 participants. This was huge for a small library like Millbury. Hoping to continue to grow summer reading program numbers and participants in future summers. Ann Dallair, Millbury Public Library

Teen volunteers were faithful about coming to help at weekly programs. They interacted beautifully with the younger kids. They also did quite a bit of pleasure reading. There were a few beginning readers who were very excited about the programs, and about the new books they were discovering. One 6 year old especially impressed me when she told me that the library was "an inspiration."

Teens had an amazing cupcake wars program--Libraries Rock was the theme, and the participants took it in many directions.

The Boston Bruins visit was a real treat for us and made the summer even more special and spectacular.

The children's librarian during her school visits challenged the kids to outread her during the summer. Since our library did the beading program, it was an easy, visual way for the kids to see how they were doing in comparison to the children's librarian. There was quite a bit of good humored taunting. It was a lot of fun for everyone and the kids were very motivated in their reading goals.

The Harry Potter Birthday Party and 20th Anniversary Celebration was a lot of fun and really appreciated by the Harry Potter fans who participated. A father who visits with his children and extended family from Connecticut and New Jersey thanked me several times for putting on such a great program. His children and nieces and nephews are such big fans so they wore Harry Potter t-shirts and enjoyed the crafts, games, food, decorations, photo ops, etc. - Mary Bianco, Hyannis Public Library

The kids in our little town read over 1,132,000 minutes - on a par with cities like Worcester and Boston! We are so proud of them. (Sara Truog, Milton Public Library)
The library held a scavenger hunt each week for children to find our cardboard mascot, Buzzy the Bee in the storefronts of local businesses. Buzzy had a secret code word that changed each week relating to the theme Libraries Rock. Hundreds of children earned extra raffle tickets by guessing the secret code. The scavenger hunt was so popular that a local businessman walked across the street and asked if Buzzy could visit his shop, too. Luckily, Buzzy had a little spare time... (Nancy Sheehan, Beebe Library, Wakefield)

The look on a first-time weekly raffle winner’s face when she understood that the book she chose from all the books in the book raffle box was going to be one she didn't have to bring back- like library books. Her little face just lit up that she got to have her very own book! Rosemarie Borsody, Public Services Librarian, Lee Library Association, Lee, MA.

The most touching aspect of the summer reading club occurred when a struggling reader was awarded a prize for the amount of time spent reading.

There were lots of nice moments. Magician Fran Ferry incorporated a painted rock into his magic show. The child who had painted it had left it behind because the paint was wet. When Fran pulled it out of the velvet bag, this boy's eyes were as wide as saucers and he said, "Hey! That's my rock!" Real magic there. We had a family visiting for the summer from Hong Kong to attend a summer camp program at the Bement School, and they wanted to use the library for their seven-year-old twin girls, and their sons ages 9 and 12. They found activities for all of their children, all of whom made beautiful art and truly appreciated the free library programs. They brought the 12 year old to a read-aloud and craft with a dinosaur theme. I was reading "I Want That Love" by Miyanishi and the boy had his eyes closed. I thought he was bored, but when the story was over he said, "I am so glad you read this book. It is my favorite. I find it very emotional." How about that?

There were several parts who enjoyed going to our storytimes with their kids/grandkids. And there were several occasions when parents came up to me and said that the book I recommended for their kid sparked a loves for reading.

This is our second year of doing a "Read 'n' Bead" program where kids earn beads for time spent reading. Many of the kids who participated last year saved their Read 'n' Bead necklaces and added on to them this year! Kate Tigue, Morrill Memorial Library

This summer through the help of Project Bread, the USDA, the Monson Public Schools Food Service staff, a wonderful group of volunteers and an incredible staff we were able to serve over 700 lunches this summer. We saw an increase in our program attendance, and our lunch count on Wednesdays when we bring in special performers. This lunch program just keeps growing, and we have so many happy families attending our program/lunch afternoons. -Stephanie Maher, Palmer Public Library

This summer we gave out free lunches to children 1-18. It was a great experience for our community as we had a lot of volunteers and children had something to eat during the summer. It was nice to see so much support for those in need in Dedham. -Laura Connell, Dedham Public Library
This year I was amazed at the community involvement with our programs - both the fire and police departments brought over vehicles and did story times, the local baseball league did story times, a couple of patrons did some special story times, a recent local high school graduate ran our weekly craft program, we hosted a wonderful musical story time with two classically trained musicians funded by our local LCC and arranged by the Cape Cod Chamber Music festival. Busy, but fun!

This year, we saw a more registrations and stronger participation across the board. We also saw many more middle school students participate than ever before, an age group that we have found difficult to capture in the past. I know this is frowned upon by many librarians, but I think our weekly raffle prizes helped to engage this age group. As soon as a 7th grader learned that they could win a kindle, they signed up. Several middle school students made weekly visits to the library to show their reading progress, so they could receive raffle tickets. It was great to see so much reading happening across the age-groups.

This year’s summer reading program attracted about 70 more children than last year and everyone seemed very appreciative of the programs we ran in conjunction with "Reading Rocks." We even had some really nice posts on Facebook! We ran baby, toddler and preschool story times, plus family story times. We also had the Fun Bus where kids could tumble and climb, STEM programming, LEGO club and lots of crafts. Finally 2 nights a week we ran a "Reading Buddies" program where we paired struggling readers with teen and adult volunteers. This program attracted 20 to 25 children each session.

Through a generous donation from Knights of Pythias we were able to raffle off 6 brand new kids bikes again this summer! It was wonderful to be have that visual incentive for the kids when they came to visit the library. Of course the best part was the look on the children's faces when they found out they won! It was very heartwarming! Kate Godwin Hanson Public Library

To kick off the summer program in Ipswich we worked with a local dance instructor who choreographed a flash mob dance performed by the entire fourth grade at the end-of-the-year all-school assembly. The students danced with a book in their hands. The other students and teachers were totally surprised, but all were up and dancing by the end. Laurie Collins Ipswich

We had a successful baking program which included the attendance of four brothers who EVENTUALLY learned to share their results.

We expanded the "Rock" idea to include rockets and geology as well as music. It reached some of the children who needed to do a lot of running around as well as listening.

We explored another side of "rock" with a geology hike to a special gorge with a local naturalist. It was enjoyed by multiple generations. At a music themed program I brought in a record player so the kids could listen to old children's records. They were fascinated by it and kept asking if they were big CD's! The kids seemed to enjoy learning about the Beatles at our sing-along.

We gave away free books to get kids started with their summer reading and so many were pleasantly surprised that they could get a book to keep forever. It seemed to mean a lot to the kids (and some parents) that they could have access to a free book they didn't have to return. (Peabody Library - Al Hayden)

We had a "Wall of Fame" - divided into 4 sections: Alto, Soprano, Bass, Tenor, to recognize milestones in achievements.
We had a concert - the band donated their time and the Lions Club brought their food truck. Over 100 people attended on a hot Friday evening and had a great time. We also held an Open Mic to go along with the rock music theme and the over 100 performers and attendees loved it (a lot of prep work, though). The local YMCA donated a rock wall climbing session as one of our grand prizes.

We had a cutout of The Rock to compliment the "Libraries Rock" theme. He was a HUGE hit! Everyone wanted to take pictures of him and we attached a talk bubble next to him so he could help us promote all our summer events!

We had a group of college kids come in and do music based programs all summer. Harmonica lesson, musical crafts and a musical petting zoo. It was great fun. Plus we had the RI Bucket Drummers. They were great.

We had a really fun program thanks to a retired custodian. He donated a very large number of rubber ducks of all kinds and we decided to have a duck hunt (like an Easter egg hunt). While I read duck stories and sang duck songs staff members hid the ducks all over the library lawn. Each child got a small bag and were allowed to collect 5 ducks. The kids were incredibly excited and very good about keeping to the limits to make it fair for all. Some even traded their ducks after the program. Beth Coughlin, Swampscott

We had a science program from the Berkshire museum which was very successful. We were lucky to have two programs sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council (Ed the Wizard rocketry and MaryJo Maichack and we had a local talent perform a songwriting workshop.

We had an ImagArena program and held it at our Council on Aging and it turned out to be an inter-generational program which included several generations working together. The Cupcake Wars program for Teens featured some really outstanding and remarkable tie-ins to the Library Rocks theme.

We had Harmonica Lessons with Rob Fletcher. The program was funded by an LCC grant so we decided to open it to all ages. We had a full-circle multi-generational experience with one family; the child, mother and both grandparents were able to come, they learned how to play and shared their musical family heritage with the group!

We had many families that wanted to win one of the grand prizes. The winners got to spend an hour at the library, after hours, reading in their blanket/pillow tent. We also had many children that collected lots of beads in the read & bead incentive.

We had many parents, grandparents, caregivers and children thank us for a great Summer Reading Program this year. One nanny had her charges make cookies for us. They came to the library almost every day and they made us cards telling us what their favorite things were about the program this summer. It was very sweet - and so were the cookies!

We had our first joint children's/adults end of summer Barbeque and Ice Cream Social (we've had separate ice cream events in the past) and it was so popular we ran out of food the first hour of a two hour event! The mayor came, the weather cooperated and everyone had a good time. It's definitely becoming an annual event. Framingham Public Library

We had Rick Goldin perform a concert one Thursday afternoon. He had us all jumping up and down, including a mom holding her toddler and this librarian! We also hosted Library Mini-Golf for the first time. It was sooo fun. And we had a record number of teens this year, in part due to clarification that those entering 7th grade should sign up for the teen program, as well as great promotion efforts on the part of Brent, our awesome staff member in charge of teen programming. - Erin Daly, Chicopee Public Library
We had some great photos of kids reading their favorite books for one of the Challenges. We had a "Check out a joke book and tell the librarian a joke from it" as a challenge. As a result, we talked to quite a few kids who were normally reluctant to talk to staff.

We have over 125 volunteers 5th grade and up work our summer program. Each child signs up for a 2 hour slot with up to 5 kids working in each of the 2 hours. They make sure patrons sign up (help them when needed), help with the games we have going on each week, help with the art project we have going on each week. The child and families really take it very seriously - its the child's first job many of them say. Our library has been doing this for years it's a very successful program that our community loves that we offer.

We held a six-week concert series on our back lawn. Originally, it was advertised for our deck, but after over 60 people turned up the first week, we knew we needed a bigger space. By the end of summer, some people were joking around and saying we'd need a bigger lawn next year. Yes, it was such a hit that we will need to bring a music series back again next year. Our community will be expecting it!

We held our program in a temporary, which made it difficult to get parents and children to come.

We hosted a Make-Your-Own-Instrument program using materials from around the house (donations of cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, etc) and then hosted a parade around the library. It was very cute to see the kids marching around, and it was in keeping with the Libraries Rock theme! (Woods Memorial Library, Barre MA)

We hosted a visit from the Springfield Symphony Orchestra's Musical Petting Zoo and it was awesome! The kids got to learn about, touch, and then play instruments from all four orchestral families. To see their faces light up when they were able to get musical sounds to come out of the instruments was terrific!

We offered a Drum Circle for our adults, everyone loved it, including the staff! We also offered a drum lesson for our older elementary children and they thought it was fantastic! Zac Field from Newburyport was awesome with both adults and children and brought all his supplies! He even set up the chairs! - Kati Bourque, Newbury Town Library

We purchased the StickTogether "mosaic" and the sticker reading records. Participants were given reading records and a page of stickers. When they visited the library to share their progress on their reading records, they earned color tiles for the StickTogether mosaic. In house library activities, events, and checking out books earned stickers/tiles. Goal - fill all 4000 squares of the mosaic and the Friends of Plumb Library (and other donors) would donate $ to Rochester Memorial School Music. We were only about 250ish squares short! Everyone is still donating for all the efforts made!

We run a candy estimate raffle each summer that is hugely popular. A small jar each week.

We started the Reading and Beading program and found it to be very successful.

We tried Edible Insects with entomologist, Larry Dapsis from the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension. Children and adults tried eating some of them afterward. We also had some amazing author visits, including Judy Schachner and David Levithan. Truro Public Library

We tweaked the theme to be about how libraries 'rock' the dewey decimal system and gave kids an extra raffle ticket if they read a non-fiction book. There were hundreds of non-fiction books that got read this summer that normally wouldn't have and many of our kids are still looking in the non-fiction section to read for entertainment now that summer is over.
We wanted to show the kids what the number of books read looked like. We put up paper "shelves" cut paper to look the side of a book and for every book read, staff put the child's first name on a paper "book" and we put the "books" on the "shelf". These shelves of books wound around the library, as the numbers went up. We finished with 1,602 books read by 96 summer readers. The visual was amazing for everyone that came into the Avon Library.

We won the Coveted Roudenbowl for best parade float (see pictures on our Facebook page).