



A spectacular year for our Summer Reading Programs. This issue is dedicated to articles and pictures of the adventures in the Western Library System. Thank you for your contributions. The featured libraries are in alphabetical order. Libraries with Ned and Nelly in the corner of the heading received \$50.00 or \$100.00 from the Western Library System to pay or enhance their funding for the program

We commemorated Flat Stanley's 60th anniversary with the Western Library System's own Ned and Nelly, The pair was created by Elaine Bleisch and traveled around the Western Library System meeting fabulous patrons and staff of all ages. Elaine along with committee members, Amelia Shada, Elaine Lake, Rossella Tesch and Sharon Schluterbusch (chair) designed creative, fun, educational content for the Summer Reading Workshops.

Alliance Public Library Cynthia Horn

We enjoyed our adventures with Ned and Nelly at Alliance Public Library. They joined Story Time Adventures, Watercolor and Artistic Adventures with Keep Alliance Beautiful plus our Road Trip Rescue Breakout Box!!



Information for the 2025 Color Our World summer reading theme is located on page 21.

Bayard Public Library Becky Henkel



We had a successful summer of adventure and fun here at Bayard Public Library. Our summer reading program started off with a funny magic show performed by Jeff Quinn, which brought an attendance of about ninety-five kids. To make the event extra sweet, a local snow cone bus stopped by and provided everyone a treat. Activities since then include Stuffed Puppy Adoption Day, Space Adventure, Hot Air Balloon Adventure, Play-Doh Free Play, as well as a visit from Riverside Discovery Center! One of our patrons' and staff's favorite activities was Smokey Bear Fire Prevention Day. We got a visit from Smokey Bear himself, accompanied by the Bayard Volunteer Fire Department! Our amazing fire department gave a demonstration on preventing wildfires. They started a fire, such as one you would enjoy on a camping trip and showed us how to put it out for good! The attendance that day reached about 50, kids and adults alike.

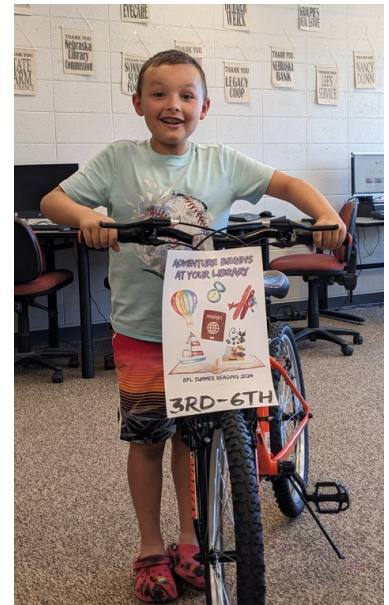


Bridgeport Public Library Melissa Butler



This year the Bridgeport Public Library celebrated Adventure Begins at Your Library by giving young patrons a "Choose Your Own Adventure" style program. Each attendee from PreK-6th grade were given a passport to stamp and two countries to choose to visit each week. In each country we learned interesting facts about the country while doing fun activities. They also were offered favorite snacks from these countries. At the end of the day, those who attended, and had their passport stamped, were entered in a drawing for a special grand prize in three different age categories. We also gifted free books to each participant to add to their personal libraries.

There are two reasons this program worked this year. First, we had a great deal of monetary support from businesses and individuals in our community and the Western Library System. Their support allowed us to purchase snacks, Reading is Fundamental books, activity supplies, and three bicycles for our grand prizes. Second, we had as many as 10 teens each week helping set-up, run, and tear down the adventure stations. We could not have had so many activities available without their volunteer time each week.



The winners of the bicycles. Note the sponsor banners behind the winner of the 3rd-6th grade age

Cravath Memorial Library
Julie Rasmussen



Cravath Memorial Library SRP Wraps Up

Another adventurous session of Summer Reading with Cravath Memorial Library has come to a close. We kicked off our program with a visit from the amazing Jeff Quinn; always a favorite! This year the kids enjoyed listening to stories, singing, making rainbow rain, t-shirt bags, slime, ewwww, experimenting with magnets, a compass scavenger hunt and the wonderful balloon art of Jared Fernau! Thanks to all the kids and volunteers who made this excellent adventure a reality! Thanks also to Western Library System for the grant money which helped pay for STEM and craft materials as well as prizes. Teamwork makes the dream work!





Crawford Public Library Ashy Blacksheep



I'd like to offer the images of Ned & Nelly's visits and escapades at the Crawford Public Library. One of our events/activities is a Choose Your Own Adventure board starring Ned & Nelly with story choices made by summer reading program participants! Based on their votes, I write up and post a new story segment each week about the adventures of Nelly & Ned. Additional story segment images are available on [our library's Facebook page](#) should you like to see more.

Thanks so much for the fun and interactive way to connect our libraries over this summer reading program.



Ned and Nelly play Hide & Seek with Ashy

Choose Your Own Adventure!

Week One

You and your little sister, Nelly, have lived on the rolling prairie all your lives. Summer warms the afternoons, makes the days long, and anything feels possible. One day, you both decide to go to White Creek Park to catch tadpoles. Nelly crouches in the ankle-deep water scooping and splashing at the shiny black dots with tails.

"I can't catch 'em, Ned" Nelly complains to you.

"You have to be still and go slow, Nelly," you say.

Nelly holds still and watches the water. "This one's doing figure-eights!" She exclaims.

You look over, and there is a tadpole swimming round and crossing back, swimming round and crossing back, as if making an X. "Like an X marks the spot on a pirate map," you say.

Do you....

A.) Help Nelly catch the tadpole.

...or...

B.) Dig beneath the X.





Ned, Nelly and Ashy celebrate Smokey the Bear's birthday



Dorothy, from the Wizard of Oz performance at Fort Robinson Post Playhouse and the Adventure Stories.

Gering Public Library Youth Programs Hayley Grams



Nelly & Ned joined us on our adventure across the Oregon Trail! They prepared for their journey at the general store in St. Joseph Missouri, learned about wildlife along the trail, and practiced pulling a handcart like the folks on the Mormon Trail would have done. They passed a few grave markers along the way, but luckily no one died of dysentery before they finally made it to Oregon.



Gering Public Library Adult Program Sherry Preston



June was a lively month for the Gering Public Library's adult summer reading program. We offered a Cricut class and Nebraska author Bruce Arant taught us how to draw cute little faces. Genealogist Robert Zemanek taught a class on how to search old newspapers for our ancestors. We discussed "The Fortune Cookie Chronicles" by Jennifer 8. Lee in our regular book discussion group. Alex at the Emporium Express Bean & Bottle taught us about champagne at our ever-popular Wine 201 class.

Finally, our Life-Sized Oregon Trail game was a huge hit for pioneers of all ages. A total of 167 people attend the program over the two days. Participants started with a passport, a small compass and \$4 to spend at the St Joe store. At St Joe for \$1 each they could select water, bullets, a blanket, food, or a small first aid kit. Because they had only \$4 and five items to choose from, each wagon train had to make a choice of which item to not purchase. Pioneers then set out on the trail to get their passport stamped at eight stations, and risk their lives as the Western Nebraska Pioneers baseball team distributed calamities like snakebite and dysentery.

Partners along the trail included the Army National Guard, Nebraska Game & Parks, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the National Park Service from Scotts Bluff National Monument, the Lakota Sioux in conjunction with the National Park Service from Agate Fossil Beds, the Legacy of the Plains Museum, the Friends of the Gering Library as well as many volunteers.

A teacher from the Minatare Summer School had this to say about our Life-Sized Oregon Trail, "The kids loved that activity. We stopped by Rebecca Winters' gravesite on the way back to the school. The whole thing was a great experience." This program was made possible through a generous grant from the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation.



Hayes Center Public Library
Deb Lawson



Children at the Hayes Center Library shared their Summer Reading Program activities with Ned and Nelly.

Hemingford Public Library
Colleen Garner



Nelly and Ned traveled to several counties, learning about cultures and traditions. They met a couple of our summer reading participants and had a snack with them. I think they all had fun.



Hooker County Library Julie Pfeiffer



The Hooker County Library held its Summer Reading Program on June 6th.

There was a small attendance but we had a great time. The book was "Something to Tell the Grandcows" by Eileen Spinelli followed by "Pecos Bill" for the movie. We had snacks and played some theme-related games. Our craft was making the cows from Noah's Ark Workshop, this is looked forward to every year. Children who were unable to attend picked up a kit to take home. We challenge the children to read books for the rest of the summer to win prizes from our treasure chest. There are many participants in this challenge and 350 books have been read so far. On July 15th we hosted the magician Adam White. This was a first for us but we had a great turn-out, he was an awesome entertainer. His program was designed to be part of the summer reading program, he was enjoyed by the children and adults who attended. Thanks to the grant money from our library system we can do these extra things!



Lied Scottsbluff Public Library Elaine Bleisch



The Summer Reading Program has come to a successful end at the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library. We had a great time with the "Adventure Begins at your Library" theme. For décor, we focused on local tie-ins, with hot air balloons and the Oregon Trail. Our program began with a registration event on Tuesday, June 4 and ended with a wrap-up party on Tuesday, July 23 and Teen Library Olympics on July 25.

Over the eight-weeks of our summer reading program, 1,463 children and 193 teens registered; the children read 62,641 books and the teens read 2,104 books. Nine hundred twenty-six people attended 20 in-person programs. One of our more popular programs was the Adventure Fair. The fair featured tables around the park in front of the library that families could participate in various activities or learn something new. Participants included community groups such as Sixpence and Kiwanis; city departments including the police, fire, and parks; and local attractions such as the Riverside Discovering Center, Scottsbluff National Monument, and Wildcat Hills. Participants could explore a fire truck or police car, get their face painted, listen to a book, handle a snake, engage in parachute play, and more.

This year, we decided to try two take-home craft kits. For the first, we made a rocket that flew using straws and pipettes, and the other was a bookmark using wood medallions cut on the library's laser cutter. The kits were very popular and we gave out around 600 over three weeks. We also set up an Oregon Trail themed scavenger hunt around the library. The hunt took them not only around the library, but also through the trail from Missouri to Oregon, learning what life was like for the pioneers along the way.



1st day of registration



Adventure Fair!



Adventures in Theater

Theatre West

Wilde Thing Youth Theater

Lyman Public Library Kathrine Rupe



Lyman Public Library wrapped up their Summer Program on July 8th, with a presentation from Colleen and Mike Johnson of High Plains Hot Air Balloon Company. Children and adults all had a great time, and even got to get inside of a hot air balloon basket and pull the burner cord! Thank you to the Western Library System for the extra \$100, which allowed the library to purchase craft supplies to make items like galaxies in a jar, slime, and paper mâché hot air balloons. We even got to have a barbeque at our final party with hot dogs and snacks! With your support, this year was a great success. Thank you.



Minatare Public Library Caryle Covalt



The Minatare Public Library Summer Reading Program began July 1st and ended July 31st. Three readers participated in the Summer Reading program.

During the month of July, if a reader read five books, the reader was rewarded with a \$5.00 Dairy Queen gift card. The reader who read the most books during the month of July would receive a \$50.00 Roblox card.

Parker is a fifth grader at Minatare Elementary School. Parker read 54 books and she earned ten Dairy Queen gift cards. Zai is also a fifth grader at Minatare Elementary School. Zai read 58 books and he earned eleven Dairy Queen gift cards. Eli is a fourth grader at Northfield Elementary. Eli read five books and he earned one Dairy Queen gift card.

The top two readers, Parker and Zai, were fierce competitors. They challenged and dared each other to read.

The winner of the contest wasn't determined until the hour before the library closed on July 31, when it was decided that both Parker and Zai should receive prizes of \$50.00 Roblox cards.

The Minatare Library is grateful to the Western Nebraska Library System for their grant of \$100.00 for our summer reading program.



MINATARE LIBRARY SUMMER READING

DURING THE MONTH OF
JULY, 2024:

Read five books,
win a \$5.00 gift card from
Dairy Queen

**\$50.00 ROBLOX GIFT CARD
FOR MOST BOOKS READ
DURING JULY**

Library Hours
Monday through Friday
2:30 pm to 6:00 pm



Mitchell Public Library Priscilla Plasencio

Ned & Nelly ventured into the Mitchell Public Library's jungle themed summer reading program where they encountered many dangerous animals. Not only did they learn about these animals and their natural environment but Ned and Nelly also learned very important life lessons, such as reading a map, understanding its legend and its compass rose.. they learned directions using nature. They also learned how to read a compass and how start a fire using a flint.



Nancy Fawcett Memorial Library Dana Hill



This year's summer reading program was a hit! We had so many fun activities for the kids, including group reading sessions, scavenger and treasure hunts, and even planting sunflower seeds. The kids were thrilled, especially with the incentive prizes like bubbles, toys, and weekly goody bags. Whenever we had extra time, the librarian and intern would join in on games like sharks and minnows. The kids had an absolute blast and were sad to see it end!





Oshkosh Public Library Brittany Waltman



The Summer Reading Program is one of our busiest times of the year for libraries. Oshkosh is a small community, and it is pivotal that we continue to provide fun activities for children to attend. Our Summer Reading Program lasted 6 weeks beginning on the first Tuesday of June and lasted until July 16th, 2024.

The Oshkosh Public Library received funds from the Western Library System that was used towards our craft supplies, prizes for our scavenger hunt and this summer's Interactive Display Campsite showcasing this year's theme; The Adventure Begins at Your Library. We had such positive feedback towards this year's theme and activities!

The scavenger hunt helped the library by also familiarizing our patrons young and old to the location of items within the library materials while hunting for the scavenger hunt items all over the building. Our two most successful events the Oshkosh Public library hosted were the Build Your Own Superhero Craft and the Meet & Greet with Smokey the Bear. (see attached photos.)

Thank you to the Western Nebraska Library Commission with their generous grant that we used to help fund this summer's adventures!



Meet & Greet with Smokey got a tour of the firetruck with our local firefighters!

Oshkosh Public Director & Assistant & Volunteer posing with Smokey the Bear





Three Photos of our Interactive Display Campsite with child playing "camping."

Picture below: Storytime:



Collage of Summer Reading Activities



Palisade Public Library

Kate Parrish



This year's Summer Reading Program theme is "Watch Us Grow". It involved kids learning how and why growing food is important and why learning how to do it from home is important as well. Through a variety of crafts and group activities, younger patrons know how to properly take care of a garden. The goal was to give the opportunity to learn easy and simple ways to grow plants whether it is in a garden or at home while being involved in group activities!

Age groups were split up K-3rd from 10:30am-11:10am, 4th-7th from 11:50 am-12:30 PM. The program was held every Monday through June and July. Both groups received the opportunity to plant a variety of plants in our Palisade Community Garden. Kids kept track of their plant they had been assigned to and tracked the plant's progress during the program. They participated in our planned crafts and activities! During activities, snack time was included as well!!



Palisade Public Library's Summer Reading Program walking in the Palisade Pioneer Days parade.



The Summer Reading Program starts off the community garden.



The Summer Reading Program fixes up the community garden.



Librarian- Kate Parrish, helping one of the kids with their garden plant.

Paxton Public Library

Dianne Jay



For Adventure Begins at Your Library we started at the library and traveled to the businesses in Paxton. Our first visit was to the newest business "City Bakery" then we visited: Western Nebraska Bank, Windy Gap, The Legion, Hehnke's, Ole's, Party Girl Creations and the Post Office.



The participants, including Ned and Nelly, carried their suitcases with them during their adventures.





Adventure Close to Home

The Potter Public Library held their summer reading program early this year, beginning the week after school was dismissed. Children entering Kindergarten through 3rd grade listened to stories, discussed important parts, played games, made crafts based on the theme of the day, and were encouraged to check out books following the theme. Beginning with “Adventure Begins in Your Library”, we examined *Library Mouse* by Daniel Kirk and rotated through centers exploring a circuit board, marble run, Lego challenges and other adventures found in our library. The next theme, “Adventure on Vacation” took students with *Mr. Magee and the Camping Spree* by Chris VanDusen, along with a ride on a virtual roller coaster. Children then created “staycation” wish books which included all the fun things they could do right at home for little or no cost. The third theme focused on “Adventures in Nature” as children heard *Why Should I Protect Nature?* By Jen Green and Mike Gordon. Students had a great adventure that day at the Potter Art Loft creating a nature craft. During our final theme, “Adventure in Our Town” children heard *The Boy Who Loved Maps* by Kari Allen and G. Brian Karas, practiced reading a map of downtown Potter, and rolled their way to our final adventure in our town’s own Duck Pin Bowling Alley. The children were great students and learned about all the adventure that is waiting for them close to home.



← Games are a part of the summer adventure.



→ Creating a house for the *Library Mouse*



← Creating a nature craft at the Potter Art Loft.



→ Adventure at the Potter Duck Pin Bowling Alley



Sidney Public Library Showcases the importance of music and song while educating through literature

Kelsey Arrington and photo, Sidney Sun-Telegraph | Jul 25, 2024

Guest performer, Aaron Fowler, a musician, author and educator from Wichita, Kansas delights a young audience Monday, July 15 at the West Elementary auditorium with his engaging sing-along songs.

As part of Sidney Public Library's Summer entertainment, guest musician, author, and educator Aaron Fowler delighted a young audience on Monday, July 15th in the West Elementary auditorium. Open to public and local daycares, the family-friendly show is delightful and informative.

Fowler, who traveled from his home in Wichita, Kansas for the Sidney show, prides himself in fostering a creative atmosphere in rural and disadvantaged communities.

In 1995, Fowler made the commitment to transition from teaching middle school to songwriting and touring. As a certified National Teaching Artist, Fowler aims to work towards integrating the arts into science, math, and language arts. "It is a wonderful way to inspire kids to use the creative space in their heads to think about the world they live in," Fowler says.

A highlight of the SPL's Sidney Summer, Fowler's sing-a-long "call and response" songs delighted the young participants while educating them on the importance of telling stories of common people

bringing uncommon tales to life. As a featured guest, he brought his classroom therapy pet, his beloved dog a black lab named Kumba. Fowler made a lifestyle out of the things he loves most, his pets being one of those. His book series, "The Adventures of Bella and Choco" features endearing stories of his two adventurous companions. The book's keynotes include teaching character traits and a variety of life lessons, as well as the importance of Mother Earth and our impact on the planet. Unfortunately, Bella and Choco, passed away in late 2022 in a traffic accident. As a way of creating a lasting legacy, Fowler continues to spread their stories and write about the duo.

The Sidney Public Library offers a special guest performer each Summer reading season, "The kids always have fun, and me too," Eileen Nightingale mentions with a kind smile.



Party in The Park: Sidney Public Library Checks Out for Summer

Kelsey Arrington, Sidney Sun-Telegraph, August 1, 2024

Sidney-- As part of a way to celebrate the end of the Summer reading program with community involvement, the Sidney Public Library, with the help of the Friends of the Library, hosted a "Wrap-Up Party" in Legion Park on Saturday, July 27th. A summer day filled with a cake walk, bake sale, s'mores station, free will donation lunch, dunk tank, games, story hour and take home craft. The opportunity to pick up Summer reading program prizes while enjoying the party in the park was a hit for all who attended.

Sidney Police Department was on the scene, in a different way, contributing to the fun. Three officers put on their swimsuits and sunglasses for a chance to be dunked in the tank. "Watching the kids hootin' and hollerin' and having so much fun while giving them something to do on a hot Summer day was rewarding," Amanda Eastin, SPL Director had to say about the event in the park, "Our staff worked so hard to put on this event, and the Friends of the Library were a big help as well. We're also thankful to the Police Department for participating in all the fun.

"The donations raised during the event will go towards the Bookmobile fund. In total, \$422 was raised.

If you want to donate to the Library Bookmobile fund, you can contact them at: (308)-254-3110 or visit them directly at 1112 12th Avenue



Library Director, Amanda Eastin, helps a child aim his throw at one of Sidney's newest police officers. The dunk tank helped to raise funds for the Bookmobile at the Library's "Wrap-Up" Reading party in Legion Park on Saturday, July 27th.

Sioux County Library Sarah Sanderson



Sioux County Public Library had a very busy summer! Our Summer Reading began May 8th and recently wrapped up on July 10th. We had a total of 25 kids actively participating in Summer Reading and they collectively read a whopping 1,100 books! I'm very proud to see these kids demonstrate a love for reading and hope this carries with them throughout the years.

We would also like to give a huge thank you to the Western Library System (WLS) for their generosity of the Summer Reading Grant. With that grant the kids were able to plant flowers in the Butterfly Garden, have a night paint, and enjoy a movie night! In addition, Katherine Crawley from the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies taught us all about bird watching and Amanda Fillipi from the Wildcat Hills Nature Center made fish prints with us. We even had Smokey Bear come and teach us all about wildfire safety! Bedtime Buddy Sleepover was a new program this year and it was a hit; the kids loved putting their buddies to bed with a bedtime story. I also can't forget Jeff Quinn! Once again, he showed us all about the world of magic - he does such a fantastic show!

Thank you again to WLS and their generosity that has given our local kids additional access to summer learning and activities!



Planting time in the Butterfly Garden.



Pictures from left clockwise: Group photo with Smokey The Bear; Pick a Book Blindfolded; Making Fish prints; Bedtime Buddy Sleepover;

Stratton Public Library Teri Faimon



Adventures at the Stratton Public Library

During the month of June, the library was full of kids venturing through Nursery Rhymes, Tall Tales, Fables and Fairytales! As they learned about the differences between each genre, they also enjoyed listening to stories from the different literature areas. Each Monday a variety of activities such as Humpty Dumpty Egg Drop, building homes for the Three Little Pigs, helping the crow reach water in The Crow and the Pitcher, making Paul Bunyan pancakes and Johnny Appleseed bird feeders were enjoyed by all. The week ended with a Nursery Rhyme Olympics and outside water fun as well as root beer floats.

During the month the readers moved their car through Fables Lane, Nursery Rhyme Village, Tall Tale Forest and finally to Fairytale Castle by reading books to fill their map. Depending on how far they ventured coupons were earned to be spent in town for their reading efforts.

Harrison Renfro and Rachel Kollmorgen won the book drawings.

There was a total of 15 active readers and 1 young adult reader who read a total of 175 books during the month of June!

Top coupon winners were:

Young Readers- 1st Bella Bohochik, 2nd Philip Hedrick, 3rd Harrison Renfro

Intermediate Readers- 1st Rachel Kollmorgen, 2nd Joslyn Kollmorgen, 3rd Rylan Arthur

A great time was had by all. I would like to Thank the parents of our readers for taking the time to get your children to the Summer Reading Program. Keeping your children READING is a very worthwhile investment of your time and energy, plus it is a whole lot of fun! Those who read more during the summer months have a jump start on the coming school year! Hope to keep seeing our kid readers at the library as we have a challenge to beat last year's record of 701 books checked out. We are now at 455 and have until October 1st to beat the record!

Mark your calendars for next summers program JUNE 2025 (every Monday)

The theme is Artful Readers!



