Family Read with Heidi Schutt
Thursday, September 26 – 11am-12pm – Workshops – Session #1 – Wyoming Room

❖ Introduction of Family Read project:
  ➢ The objective of a Family Read program is to encourage and support families to take time to read together and discuss what they’ve read.

❖ Background/History:
  ➢ Traverse des Sioux Library Cooperative – federated library system made up of 35+ individual libraries in south-central Minnesota
  ➢ September 2012 – started conversation about a family program
  ➢ January 2013 – met and created a “plan”
  ➢ March 2013 – shared plan with the rest of the staff planning a summer reading program
  ➢ June – present – organizing programs at our libraries
  ➢ Each library was encouraged to participate as much as they wanted and in whatever ways the staff thought the families would be most participatory

❖ Planning a Family Program at your library:
  ➢ Is there a need for something more than a summer reading program?
  ➢ Does your staff have time to change it up?
  ➢ Are you ready to be the place parents learn to interact with their children and books?

❖ Promoting:
  ➢ “Traveling Treasure” that mysteriously ends up in families’ yards during the night – spreading the word about the library
  ➢ Ask teachers to encourage their former/future students to participate
  ➢ Poster to spread around town
  ➢ Bookmarks to hand out to everyone! (Keep some in your purse for lines at the store)
  ➢ Use your library’s Facebook page to create a Facebook event and invite your followers to it
  ➢ Create a Facebook Ad and send to local target demographics
  ➢ Use your church bulletins/websites
  ➢ Mention at other library events – fair booths, parades, etc.
  ➢ Send letters/emails to local daycares

❖ Participating:
  ➢ Reading
    ▪ Book Kits with comprehension activities, games and questions
    ▪ Suggested titles that are good for reading out loud
    ▪ A special place IN the library just for families to read together
  ➢ Programs
    ▪ Staff-led Programs (our goal was to find something for boys and girls of different ages)
• Dr. Seuss Party
• Elephant and Piggie Party
• Puff the Magic Dragon Party
• Family Carnival at the Library – set up different carnival games inside/outside of the library and invite families to come and have fun
  ◆ Bean Bag Toss
  ◆ Musical Chairs
  ◆ Bobbing for Apples or “Find a Duck”

• On-Your-Own Activities at the Library
  • Create a Family Pennant or Create a Family Tree
    ◆ Dianne Pinney suggests using Fadeless Art Paper: http://www.ssww.com/item/fadeless-art-paper-PF392/cmc=SRCH/v=ZmFkZnVuce3MgyXj0iIHBheGVy/p=1/
  • Find-Its Around the Library
    ◆ Ahead of time: hide 25 numbered “copies” around the library
    ◆ Invite families to see how many they can find during their time at the library.
    ◆ You can have a worksheet for them to write where they find the “copies” and maybe provide a few clues (I’m reading a biography of Abraham Lincoln – I’m spending time with my friend, Fancy Nancy – I’m finding something to watch for Movie Night!)
  • Egg Drop Experiment
    ◆ Challenge families to design a container to hold an egg so it won’t break when the egg is dropped from the top of a ladder. http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/projects/eggdrop.html
  • Solve a puzzle
    ◆ Place a couple of different 50-100 piece puzzles around the library for families to come in and work on. When a family completes one, take a picture of them and the puzzle and post it on your bulletin board, website, or Facebook page.
• Chalk the parking lot or sidewalks

➢ Incentives
Ask local businesses or your Friends organization for Family-Oriented Incentives to give to participants.
  • Pizza Party for families
  • Donate a book or movie in the Family’s name – let them choose
  • Family Swim Pass for 2014
  • Local Orchard/Fair/Carnival Gift Card or Tickets
  • Magnets
  • Picnic Baskets (kid-friendly snacks and beverages)
What happened at libraries this summer? (Highlights)

- 6 libraries recognized families reading together this summer

- **Janesville Public Library — population 2,256**
  - 3 families participated
  - Program was run during August
  - 6 parents, 11 children under the age of 9 participated
  - 3 programs at the library for families
    - Game night
    - Chalk the sidewalk with book characters
    - Scavenger Hunt

- **New Ulm Public Library — population 13,522**
  - Programs for families
    - Weekly movies
    - Kids’ Concert in the park
    - Mother Goose Storytime
  - Family Challenge Sheet (families who completed and returned sheet were given a package of Kool-aid)
  - Became a member of the Family of Bookworms display
  - 19 families participated
  - All were entered into drawing for a picnic prize pack (hacky sack, boomerang, Kool-aid, Pringles, etc.)
  - Plan to do more family events next year and throughout the year

- **Wells Public Library — population 2,343**
  - Family Fun Pages – new page each week (crossword, maze, word search, etc.)
  - If the families completed 5 (8 total), they received a special prize (coupon books)
  - 24 families received coupon books
  - Plan to do another Family program next year (with small changes from this year)

- **Martin County Library – Fairmont – population 10,666**
  - 50 families participated
  - Program was run during August
  - Created a pamphlet with suggested family read titles for different ages
  - At sign-up, the families decorated a family “car” and it was hung up in the library.
  - Families filled out a “mini car” to suggest books to other families
  - Staff was hesitant to promote the program because it was so new…
Le Sueur Public Library – population 4,050

- 66 families participated
- Each family put their name on a bright colored pennant and it was added to the FamilyRead string of lights in the children's room.
- Each family was given a sheet on which they could keep track of their reading and library activity.
  They counted:
  (1) time they read quietly together, parents reading their books, kids reading their own books,
  (2) time they read out loud together
  (3) time they spent going to the library or participating in library activities, of which they were MANY during the summer, including family friendly activities like "Where's Gnorman?" Gnorman was the library gnome and he moved up and down Main Street every Monday morning, hiding out in business windows. Families took time, each week, to take a walk as a family to GO FIND GNORMAN!
- Dots were added to family banners for each of the above activities family’s turned in.
- Dots were added up and prizes (purchased by the Friends of the Library) were given to EVERY family that participated: librarian's favorite read alouds and family games and activities.

Muir Library – Winnebago – population 1,437

- 9 families participated (total of 43 people)
- Program run during the month of August
- 20 book kits were checked out during the month
- 4 family activities were held
  - Find-Its (ants)
  - Salsa Making Contest (each family was invited to make salsa and patrons taste-tested them and voted on their favorites. The winning salsa earned the family a kid-friendly cookbook)
  - Family Tree Making
  - Puzzles (we also pulled out the I Spy books and Where’s Waldo)
- Each family made a Family Pennant which was hung on our bulletin board in the entryway
- Prizes were distributed through a random drawing and included:
  - Gift certificates to 2 local family-friendly restaurants
  - Family Swim Pass for local pool for next summer
  - Tickets to Renaissance Festival
- Hope to do another Family month during winter to get families out of the house
Resources


Preparing for next year

- Hope to provide more training/brainstorming time for library staff when we meet
- Hope to receive a grant to fund more incentives for families
- Hope to have more support from teachers
- Hope to have a list of performers/presenters who are family-oriented to visit libraries in the area

AT THE PRESENTATION, I WILL HAVE AVAILABLE TO VIEW:

- Samples of book kits including gameboard, questions, activities, talking points, etc.
- Actual Family Pennants from Muir Library
- Samples of Family challenge sheets
- Pictures of activities

What are your ideas?