

Libraries host 'Oceans' summer reading program

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Scenic Regional Library and Washington Public Library have launched their separate summer reading programs, though with the same theme: Oceans of Possibilities.

Officials with both libraries said the events and challenges won't be limited for children — branches have teenage and adult prizes for reading goals and events all summer.

"Our summer reading program is designed, and of course our ultimate goal, is to create life long readers and library lovers," said Washington Children's Librarian Ruth McInnis.

McInnis said the purpose of Washington Library's summer reading incentive program, which includes prizes like Downtown Washington Inc. gift cards and T-shirts, is to encourage 20 minutes of daily reading for younger children and at least 30 for kids 9-17.

Scenic Regional is encouraging a similar amount. It's challenge to youth is to read for eight total hours during the summer, which is less than 20 minutes per day according to Christy Schink, who is the associate director of youth and outreach and summer reading program coordinator.

Scenic regional

has free books, ocean themed prizes and a gift basket raffle for prizes at each location. Schink said that at Scenic Regional, like at Washington, there are adult reading challenges too.

People can sign up to participate online or in person at Washington library or at Scenic Regional Branches throughout the summer. Scenic Regional's program runs through August 15 and Washington Library's ends July 31, before the Town & Country Fair.

McInnis and Schink said that, though traffic in the library had slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have been seeing more and more people utilize library services. Schink is expecting pre-pandemic numbers at events and to have about 3,000 people sign up for the reading challenge. McInnis said Washington Library had set a goal of having 1,200 readers complete a reading challenge, which would be a new high. Last year 800 children participated, she said.

But, the programs are not just about encouraging reading, both libraries are hosting events to get communities excited about their branch.

On June 3, Washington Library hosted a kickoff party featuring the Bubble Bus and outdoor activities and

on June 8 will celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee and will host the Mesner Puppet Theater for "How to Snag a Sea Monster" the week after.

In June Washington Library is doing a free artist-led adult painting night, and an afternoon for teens in July. Similar to paint and sip events, the events will include snacks, but not alcohol. The library is hosting New York Times bestselling author Wiley Cash later in the month in addition to The Friends of the Public Library and Neighborhood Reads' author series throughout the year.

For Scenic Regional, Schink said there are several events at every location this summer that kids should be excited about. On June 10 and 11 a group of Bright Star Touring Theatre actors will perform "The Little Mermaid" at the Scenic Regional Library in Sullivan, Union, Pacific, Warrenton and Owensville. In late July, a traveling zoo will visit every location and will feature kangaroos, lemurs, zebu, bison and other animals. An ocean-themed mad science show will visit six locations in August.

"There are going to be programs for kids, teens and adults every week at every branch," Schink said.