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SUMMER READING CHALLENGE MAKING A 'SPLASH'

FOX CHAPEL & SHARPSBURG, PA – The annual Summer Reading Challenge has returned to Cooper-Siegel (CSCL) and Sharpsburg (SCL) community libraries and runs through Aug. 9.

The program's goal, which is open to readers of all ages, is to encourage citizens to read, learn and engage with library programming all summer long. This year's challenge theme is "Color Our World."

CSCL Youth Services Department Head Megan Fogt said more than 800 patrons participated in the 2024 Summer Reading Challenge, and she hopes to surpass 900 registrations this year.

"We're encouraging everyone to exercise their brains by reading every day this summer," Fogt said. "We know that some folks might just read for a short time, and some might read for hours – but that's OK. The goal is to encourage folks to keep reading, so any amount of time counts and all types of reading materials count."

In addition to traditional books, reading materials can include audiobooks, webcomics, instruction manuals, periodicals, e-resources, graphic novels, shared family reading, fan fiction, books read at library programs and much more.

"Did you know that reading every day increases empathy, reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, decreases depression, prevents cognitive decline and boosts vocabulary?" Fogt said. "Make reading a habit this summer – no matter your age. If you're already in the habit of daily reading, you can easily qualify for our weekly Summer Reading Challenge raffles."

Participants who log at least one day of reading each week are automatically entered into weekly raffles for a chance to win a variety of age-based prizes, including LEGO grab bags, \$15 Barnes & Noble gift cards, stacks of rainbow-themed books and more.

As part of the annual program, both libraries are hosting free Summer Splash events this month. SCL Branch Manager Sara Mariacher said their Summer Splash is part of the second quarterly neighborhood crawl organized by the Sharpsburg Business Group.

"Businesses and organizations will have activities for all ages on Main Street, and the library is excited to kick off summer reading at our event," Mariacher said. "We're hosting a 'T-party,' where participants can color a Color Our World t-shirt with fabric markers."

SCL's Summer Splash will be led by branch Education and Engagement Coordinator Alison Babusci, who recently led a workshop for library staff to tie-dye their own summer reading shirts.

"I'm super excited to 'Color Our World' because I'm a colorful character," Babusci said. "I like color and art best of all."

Sharpsburg's event takes place this Saturday, June 21, and Cooper-Siegel's is slated for June 28. Both take place from noon to 2 p.m. and include free Color Our World shirts (while supplies last, sizes youth small to adult 3X) and all materials needed to customize them.

Patrons should arrive by no later than 1:30 p.m. to participate, and young children must be accompanied by an adult. All ages are welcome.

In addition to the free t-shirts available through both Summer Splash events, all kids and teens will receive a free book just for registering for the Summer Reading Challenge, while adults will receive reading log bookmarks and access to an exclusive Good Reads Group.

At CSCL, participants are invited to add LEGO blocks to a community-built display or help create a summer reading rainbow out of sticky notes by sharing what they're reading.

Both branches are also offering a full slate of weekly and monthly summer reading programming, including story times, kids club meetings, art activities and more. For a complete calendar of upcoming events, visit www.coopersiegel.librarycalendar.com.

"The summer is our busiest time of year," Mariacher said. "It's exciting to see so many folks of all ages hyped for our programs."

Patrons can register for the 2025 Color Our World Summer Reading Challenge by:

- Stopping by either library during operating hours for assistance or visiting our website;
- Downloading the Beanstack app on any mobile device or tablet;
- Visiting the Beanstack website through the following Carnegie North link:
www.carnegienorth.beanstack.org/users/sign_in.

Paper versions are also available for those patrons who prefer to track their reading manually. More information is available at www.coopersiegelcommunitylibrary.org/summerreading2025/.

For more information about Cooper-Siegel or Sharpsburg community libraries, including upcoming programming, visit www.coopersiegelcommunitylibrary.org.

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For media inquiries, contact Communications & Marketing Specialist Kaylie Glaze at 412-828-9520, ext. 5012, or glazek@coopersiegelcommunitylibrary.org. Cooper-Siegel and Sharpsburg community libraries serve all Fox Chapel School District communities.