



**CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION**  
*A SAMHSA Supported Drug-Free Community Coalition*  
*Led By Centre County Drug and Alcohol*



**July 1, 2009 - Summer Reading**

Anita Ditz is the Children's Librarian at Schlow Centre Region Library. This weekly column, published on Wednesdays, is a collaboration of Centre County *Communities That Care* serving Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg-Osceola Area School Districts, and Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care* serving the State College Area School District.

Visit any public library in the county and you will find children who want to "*Be Creative!*" – the theme for the 2009 summer reading club. Being creative implies doing things in a new way – and Centre County libraries are certainly doing that. For the first time, children can join an on-line summer reading program. There are even teen and adult on-line summer reading programs at some libraries. Simply go the library website and click on the summer reading icon to register. In addition to the on-line program, Schlow users are also asked to pick up a printed booklet which provides other information and more ways to earn prizes.

Children's staff at libraries throughout the county have been busy buying books and "being creative" for months. Since the beginning of June, hundreds of children and their parents have visited Aaronsburg, Bellefonte, Centre Hall, Philipsburg and State College where library staff have decorated the children's areas and planned exciting events to encourage children to read books and participate in library programs throughout the summer. Puppet shows, craft activities, storytimes and a variety of performances are presented at each site.

Summer reading programs began in the 1890s as a way to encourage school children, particularly those in urban areas and not needed for farm work, to read during their summer vacation, use the library and develop the habit of reading.

Numerous studies have shown that summer programs help ensure that school children retain reading and learning skills over the summer recess. More than any other public institution, including schools, the public library contributes to the intellectual growth of children during the summer.

Librarians are partners with parents and teachers keeping children and teens reading throughout the year. There are a variety of ways that parents can help children develop a love of reading:

- Start sharing books when your child is born, and don't forget to keep reading with children into their teen years.
- Make a time and a place for reading in your home and encourage talking about reading in your family.
- Take advantage of "waiting" time to share books: on trips, at the doctor's office, in line at the grocery store.
- Set a good example – read on your own.
- Allow your child to select books to read and be aware of your child's reading interests.
- Give books as presents.
- Register your child for a library card. Get the one free card that brings you a world of opportunity – no matter what your age.
- When preparing for family road trips, stock up on audio books from your library. Let your children choose some stories to listen to in the car.

Summer reading programs are geared for reading for the fun of it. If you can read, thank a teacher. If you love to read, thank a librarian. Libraries are in the business of creating a new generation of readers – people who are curious and love to read.

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