

Dream Big - Read! and Own the Night:

Mercer County's Summer Reading Program Beginning June 18

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TRENTON, N.J.—The Mercer County Library System (MCLS) is a great place for families to spend time this summer, learn and be inspired, thanks to the 2012 New Jersey statewide summer reading programs *Dream Big - READ!* and *Own the Night*.

Reading programs are a free, efficient, fun way to incorporate reading and related activities into summer family time. Having access to books and library programs throughout the summer can lead to more reading and improved reading skills. Interactive library programs, which include story hours, creative arts, performances and other special events, enhance the reading experience and encourage youth and their families to become library users and lifelong readers.

Mercer County Library System's Summer Reading Program is an annual program that brings attendance of more than 18,000 patrons into its nine branches for reading-related activities. Branch locations are located in member municipalities as follows: Ewing, Hickory Corner, Hightstown, Hollowbrook, Hopewell, Lawrence, Robbinsville, Twin Rivers and West Windsor.

"Research has shown that children will maintain or improve their reading skills if they participate in some kind of summer reading program," said Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes. "That's why the Mercer County Library System's Summer Reading Program is so important, because it puts books in the hands of children."

Last year, throughout summer 2011, children and teens reported reading 86,140 books as part of this program.

Free registration begins Monday, June 18, at all branches throughout the library system, and the program runs through Friday, Aug. 3, for children 11 and under. Teen registration begins on Monday, June 18, and ends on Friday, Aug. 17. Fun, educational activities and contests are planned from June through early August. All branches of the Library System will launch the six-week program with free, special registration events. Certain programs require pre-registration with a valid MCLS library card.

Children 11 and under are encouraged to visit their local branch anytime beginning Monday, June 18. They should stop at the registration table to receive a reading log to keep track of the books they will read on their own or with an adult. Incentive prizes are awarded on a weekly basis to children who return to the library with their log to report the number of titles or chapters they have completed. Prizes are offered to encourage children to keep reading over the summer. Teen volunteers and library staff will assist children in the registration process at each branch and are available to answer questions. Library staff can assist children in choosing books.

The teen summer reading program is online for 2012 and runs from June 18 through Aug. 17. The theme is "Own the Night" and teens 12-18 can participate online with Internet access to the Library's website. They can register with a user name and password, returning to the Library's website to record the books they have read. Teens are also encouraged to participate in the variety of teen events, workshops and activities taking place throughout the Library System. Programs include book-themed events, song lyric writing, scavenger hunts, current and classic movie showings, gaming sessions, creative writing, stage makeup instruction, crafts, test preparation, cooking and photography. Each branch will hold its own set of events, prizes and contests. Check local branch publicity for specifics and registration details. Certain programs require pre-registration with a valid MCLS library card.

Programs are free and are generously sponsored by the Friends of the Library or local library association or advisory committee supporting programming at each branch. Additional sponsorship is received by the New Jersey Statewide

Summer Reading Program and various local businesses and organizations that have donated prizes. Most programs are intended for individual family attendance. Groups or organizations that are located within a member municipality should contact their local branch to find out which programs are appropriate for the attendance of a large group, or which months of the year groups can best be accommodated.

Mercer County Library System is part of the National Collaborative Summer Reading Program, which prepares children for continued success through the development of early language skills and integrates differentiated literacy activities to motivate young adults to read and discuss books.

Visit the [library's website](#) in early June for a complete listing of programs and events. Printed calendars and registration details will also be available at each branch in early June.