

Summer Reading Program 2024



Volunteers hold scale models of the planets during The Sun and Su Familia bilingual program with Horwitz Planetarium on July 10, 2024.

Overview

Total registrations: 1,100 (+100)

Readers who reached first check-in (10 books/200 minutes): 818 (+64)

Readers who reached second check-in (20 books/400 minutes): 762 (+50)

Readers who reached halfway (50 books/1,000 minutes): 521

Total completions: 392 (+54)

Number of programs: 53

Total attendance at summer events: 2,428

Total attendance at Wednesday performances: 1,600

Total passive program participation: 1,966

Summer Outreach visits: 4

People reached at outreach events: 694

Adventure Begins at Your Library! The 2024 Summer Reading Program brought renewed interest in the summer reading challenge and increased community enthusiasm for the library. Children of all ages and their caregivers enjoyed special events, daily activities in the Children's area, and participating in the reading challenge. We are pleased to end the summer with high attendance and participation totals and are looking forward to Summer Reading 2025.

Summer Reading Challenge

This summer, 1,100 children participated in the Summer Reading challenge and read a combined 1,395,712 minutes or 69,785 books. This was the highest registration total in at least 8 years and exceeded last year's reading by 97,851 minutes or 4,892 books.

Children could track their reading online through Beanstack, on paper logs, or both. We challenged children to read or listen to 100 books or 2,000 minutes between June 1 and September 6. Readers could choose to log minutes, books, or both. These logging and format options allowed readers to tailor the challenge to their interests. The paper logs continued to be the most popular format with readers, while Beanstack served as a useful tool for compiling reading challenge data.

Incentives

Our library continued to offer milestone incentives for children participating in the challenge. Readers earned two coupon prize packs at the 10 books/200 minute mark and the 20 books/400 minute mark. We were pleased to receive donated coupons from area businesses, organizations, and attractions. Providing reading incentives to children in our community is a priority in our department. We are grateful that so many businesses wish to partner with the library to support summer readers.

This summer we added a halfway prize for readers who reached 50 books/1,000 minutes. These readers chose a Summer Reading button. Our goal was to encourage readers to keep reading and returning to the library after they picked up their prize packs. In previous years, readers needed to log 80 books or 16,000 minutes between their second and third milestone prizes.

Readers also earned a completion prize when they reached 100 books or 2,000 minutes of reading. The prize included a bonus coupon for Marco's Pizza, a marshmallow for the Summer Reading S'more bulletin board, and a book of their choice to keep.

Milestone Prizes

Prize Pack #1: Wisconsin State Fair ticket, Cousins Subs, Pettit Center, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, Milwaukee Public Museum coupons

Prize Pack #2: Boerner Botanical Gardens, Milwaukee Brewers, Mitchell Park Domes, Admirals ticket voucher coupons

Halfway Prize: Summer Reading button

Completion Prize: Marco's Pizza coupon, marshmallow for the Summer Reading S'more bulletin board, and a paperback book

Milwaukee Public Library staff requested and distributed incentive coupons to MCFLS libraries. Unfortunately, they were several weeks behind schedule. We had advertised that prizes would be available starting on June 17 but did not receive the coupons until July 3. While most families were patient and understanding about the delay, some readers did not return to collect their prize packs or continue on with the challenge after leaving empty-handed. This experience demonstrates the importance of the incentives to West Allis families.

Grand Prizes

In addition to milestone incentives, readers earned tickets for grand prize drawings each time they read 10 books or logged 200 minutes. Readers who finished the challenge before September 6 could complete a second log, with the potential to earn up to 20 tickets for the drawings.

Readers could enter five grand prize drawings:

- #1: LEGO Gear Bots
- #2: National Geographic Geode Kit
- #3: Panda's Picnic Learning Game
- #4: Slappy Camper Game
- #5: Willoughby the Sage Green Possum Squishmallow

Summer readers entered 5,938 tickets in the drawings, representing 59,380 books or 1,187,600 minutes. The Squishmallow generated the most interest, with 2,208 tickets, followed by the National Geographic Geode kit, with 1,647 tickets.

Reading Challenge Participation



Readers added a marshmallow to the giant S'more board when they completed the reading challenge.

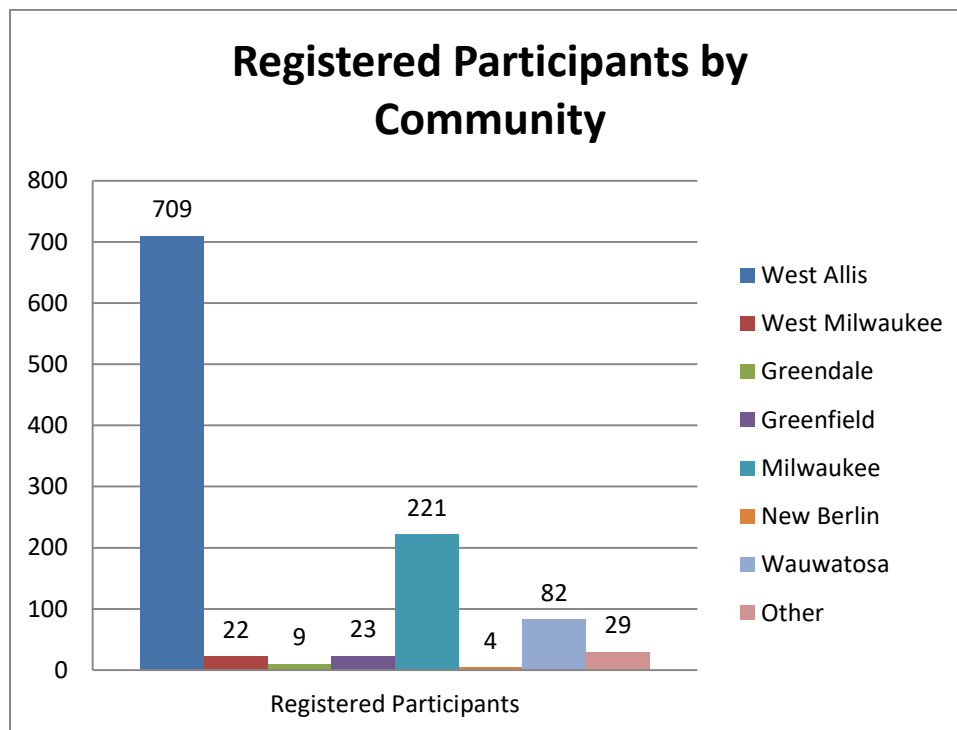
The 2024 participation totals and rates show positive trends.

Summer Reading Registration Totals	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Registrations	1,100	1,000	1,017	704	528	1,402
Prize Pack #1	818	754	676	524	269	no data
Prize Pack #2	762	712	no data	no data	no data	no data
Halfway Prize	521	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Completions	392	338	332	250	156	375

Participation Rates	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Prize Pack #1	74.36%	75.40%	66.47%	74.43%	50.95%	no data
Prize Pack #2	69.27%	71.20%	no data	no data	no data	no data
Halfway Prize	47.36%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Completions	35.64%	33.80%	32.65%	35.51%	29.55%	26.75%

2024 summer readers participated at a higher rate and logged more reading than in recent years. They read a total of 54,631 books and 303,762 minutes. Combined, that totaled 69,785 books or 1,395,712 minutes of reading in three months. Compared to last summer's total, readers increased their reading by 97,851 minutes or 4,892 books.

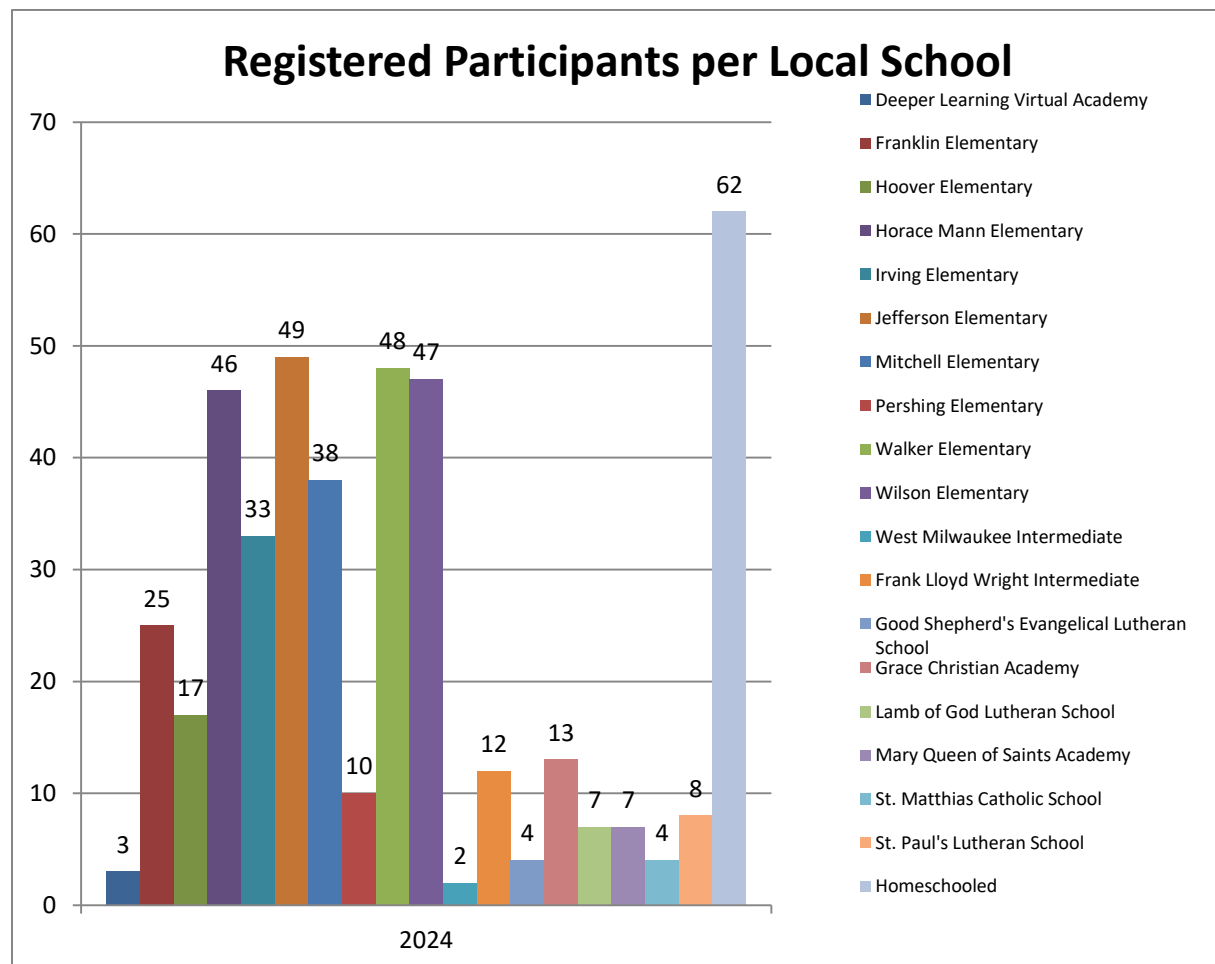
Community Involvement



The majority of Summer Reading participants reside in West Allis. Participation among West Allis and West Milwaukee residents increased by 57 readers. Like last year, we also saw increases in participants from Milwaukee and Wauwatosa. As neighboring libraries move away from incentive-based reading challenges, we anticipate higher participation from the communities they serve.

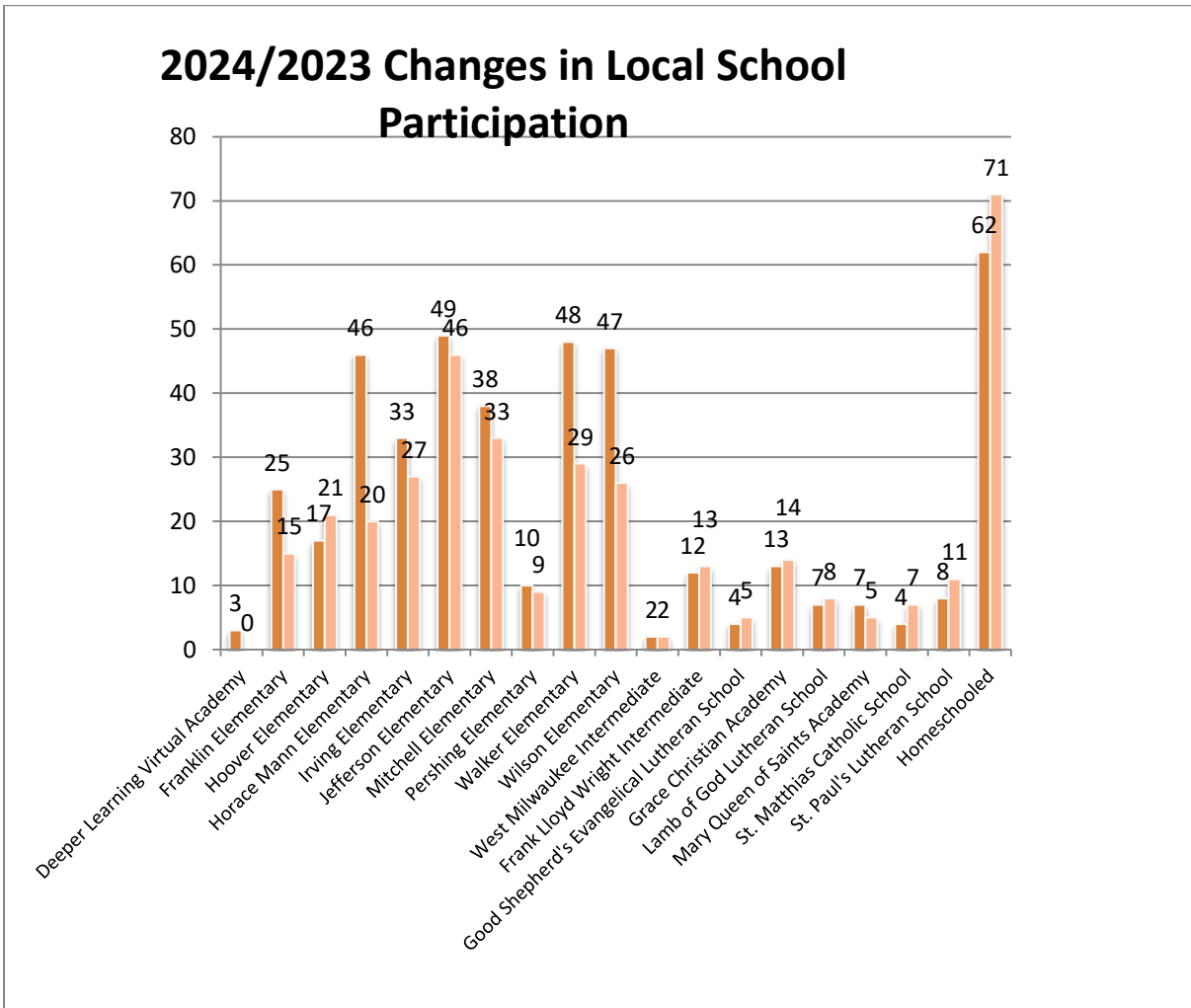
Participant Age and School Profiles

This spring, Julia and I prioritized school visits to promote the Summer Reading Challenge and library programming. We visited Franklin, Jefferson, Irving, Walker, Horace Mann, and Hoover elementary schools and met with about 1,300 students. Participation increased at all but one West Allis West Milwaukee elementary school. It especially jumped at Franklin (+10), Horace Mann (+26), Walker (+19), and Wilson (+21). Our goal is to visit all West Allis West Milwaukee elementary schools in 2025.

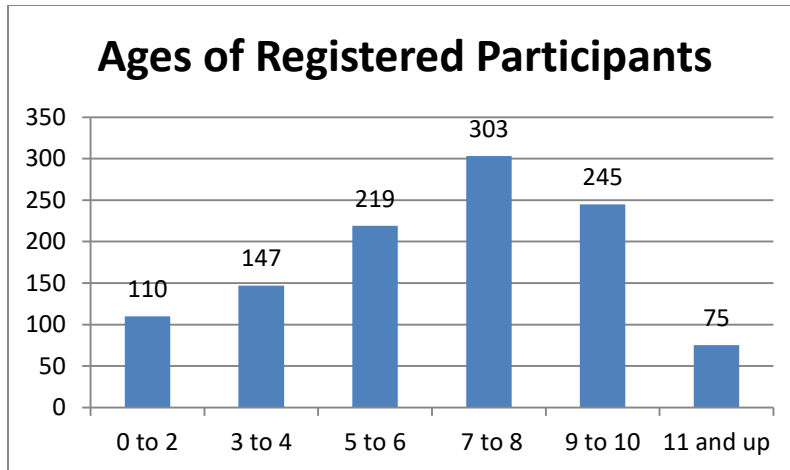


We saw positive effects from school visits, both in the higher participation totals in the Summer Reading challenge and in children coming to the library to attend programs and utilize

resources. Many of the kids who visited the library this summer made a point of telling us they had seen us at their schools.



The Summer Reading Challenge continues to be most popular among school-aged children. Compared to 2023, we saw a 27% increase in participants ages 7 to 8 and a 22% increase in participants ages 9 to 10. These gains likely correspond with our increased school-age programming and outreach visits to West Allis West Milwaukee schools.



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Summer Programs



Children dance along with musician David Landau on July 17, 2024.

Overview

Summer Programs	Quantity	Attendance
Wednesday Performers	21	1600
Summer Storytime	7	335
Parachute Play	4	118
LEGO Club	3	34
Programs for School-Age Kids	5	122
Book Clubs for Children	4	33
Tween Programs	3	52
Friday Kids' Flicks	3	86
Health Department Partner Events	3	48
Total	53	2428

Summer programming centered on Wednesday performances by juggler Steve Girman, naturalist David Stokes, Horwitz Planetarium's The Sun and Su Familia, musician David Landau, magicienne Julie Sobanski, Miss Kim's Animals, and Schlitz Audubon Nature Center reptiles. We hosted three performances each Wednesday at 10:00am, 11:30am, and 1:00pm. The weather

was beautiful for outdoor shows during most weeks and participants were enthusiastic about the performers. Many families and groups came back week after week.

Julia presented seven Summer Storytimes for 335 children and caregivers. Her outdoor storytimes were extremely popular and well-received by patrons.

In addition, we presented four Parachute Play active storytimes for 118 children ages 2-5 and their caregivers. Participants listened to a story and played with the library's 16' parachute.

Library staff also offered monthly LEGO Club programs and Friday Kids' Flicks movie matinees. The showing of Kung Fu Panda 4 set a recent record attendance with 49 people. We added craft projects, refreshments, and BINGO cards to the summer movie showings. Kids especially enjoyed the BINGO sheets and paid close attention to the movies to spot the pictures on their cards.

Our summer programming for school aged children was inspired by the theme, Adventure Begins at Your Library. Children going into grades 5K to 5th grade were invited to the library for a DIY Zip Line LEGO adventure, Camp Crafts, Tie Dye Day, Choose Your Own Adventure Day, and a Squishmallow Art painting project. These events brought 122 participants to the library.

Tweens provided input on summer programming specific to 3rd through 5th graders and overwhelmingly requested more opportunities to come to the library to play the Switch. We offered three Tween Switch Parties during the summer. The kids enjoyed being together, the friendly competition, and making game-inspired craft projects.

Overall, book clubs for children drew fewer participants in the summer. However, the July Beginner Book Club for 5K to 2nd graders brought 22 children and caregivers to read a book together, discuss, play games, and make an art project.

The West Allis Health Department partnered with the library again this summer to offer two more Popsicles & Paint programs for children and their caregivers. They also added a Summer Slime Workshop for 6 to 11 year-olds, which was one of the highlights of the summer. These free programs connected 48 children and their caregivers with the Health Department and the library. This continued partnership demonstrates the success of departmental collaborations and the library's unique position to be a hub for family programming.

Passive Programming

Each week, library staff provided a new Creation Station project for kids to complete at the library or take home to make later. Between June 3 and September 1, library visitors made 977 projects.

We also offered weekly scavenger hunts. The success of the all-ages Sasquatch scavenger hunt during Summer Reading kick-off generated a lot of interest in the weekly scavenger hunts. Over the summer, kids turned in 989 completed Children's department scavenger hunts.

Passive programming has helped to increase engagement between patrons and library staff, increased enthusiasm for visiting the library, and appealed to a broad age range. We often saw kids and whole families working together on Creation Station projects and scavenger hunts. Some patrons even made special trips just to see what the new scavenger hunt would be each week.

Summer Outreach

Overview

2 visits to local daycares	90
2 large community events	604

Julia visited Ebenezer Daycare in July. She presented storytimes to multiple classes at both locations, talked about the library, and provided library card information for the children to take home with them. She also visited Living Hope Lutheran Church's summer program to provide storytimes and activities for their students. We hope to be invited back to both sites next summer.

Library staff was also invited to attend West Allis Night Out at the Farmers Market and West Allis West Milwaukee's Back to School Bash. These were fantastic opportunities to connect with community members and promote library services and resources.

Looking ahead to Summer Reading 2025, we hope to build on the successes and enthusiasm of Summer Reading 2024. We will continue to seek opportunities to connect across the city, encourage strong literacy skills, and provide children and families with a dynamic, inviting, and enriching library experience.