



Summer Reading Program 2021

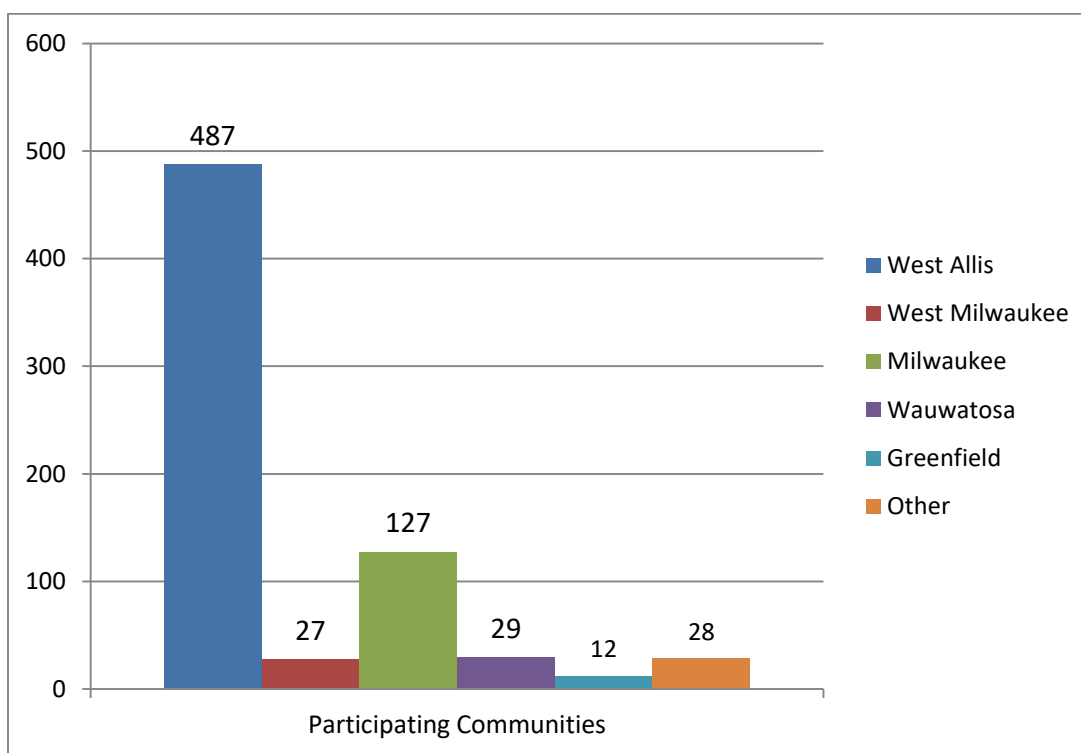
Number registered: 704 (+176)

Number who reached first check-in (10 books/200 minutes): 524 (+255)

Number of finishers: 250 (+94)

Number of programs: 39

Attendance at programs: 1985



Summer 2021: we continued to inch our way back toward normalcy by offering in-person [outdoor] programs and our summer reading program!

When looking at the number of kids who registered for the summer reading program, we were up 25% from summer 2020. We still have a ways to go before we return to pre-COVID19 number, but we are trending in the correct direction. A really positive statistic is that we had a 74% return rate this summer. So, of all the kids who signed up for the program, 74% came back to the library at least once to turn in their reading log.

One of the biggest things we will be able to do to get those registration and participation numbers back up is outreach. Once we can safely visit schools and offer summer registration, I believe our numbers will rebound.



Kids, who read 100 books or 2000 minutes, were able to add their names to our wall of finishers.

After signing up for our summer reading program, kids could choose to track either how many books they read or how many minutes—or bounce back and forth between the two. For example, an older child will typically count how many minutes read because they are reading longer books, but we encourage them to read to younger siblings, in which case they would count books. Once a child reaches 10 books and/or 200 minutes read, they receive their first coupon prize pack. After the subsequent 10 books and/or 200 minutes read, they receive a second prize pack.

In 2021, we made a strong effort to reach out to more West Allis businesses that might be interested in participating and making a donation toward the summer reading program. Because of this, we were able to offer many new incentives for our prize packs, including:

Pete's Pops, Peanut Butter & Jelly Deli, Jane's Popcorn, WAWM Rec. Department, and Transaction Skate Shop

We also continued to offer incentives that we received by working with other MCFLS libraries:

Cousins Subs, Wendy's, WI State Fair, Milwaukee Brewers, Milwaukee Public Museum, Festival City Symphony, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, First Stage, and Springs Water Park

The Library also received generous gift card donations from Aggie's Bakery and Kater2Kidz Salon.

In addition to earning the prizes listed above, children also earned a raffle ticket for every 10 books/200 minutes read (up to 20 raffle tickets total per child). We had four themed grand prizes—Mario Lego set, Balloon Robot Dog, Fort kit and Unicorn Squishmallow, and Arts and Craft kit with coloring books. Kids were able to select which grand prize drawing they wanted to enter their tickets in. After the 4 grand prizes were drawn, everyone was eligible for a drawing to win one of the gift cards from Aggie's or Kater2Kidz Salon.

Once again, when a child reached 100 books or 2000 minutes read, they received a book that was theirs to keep.

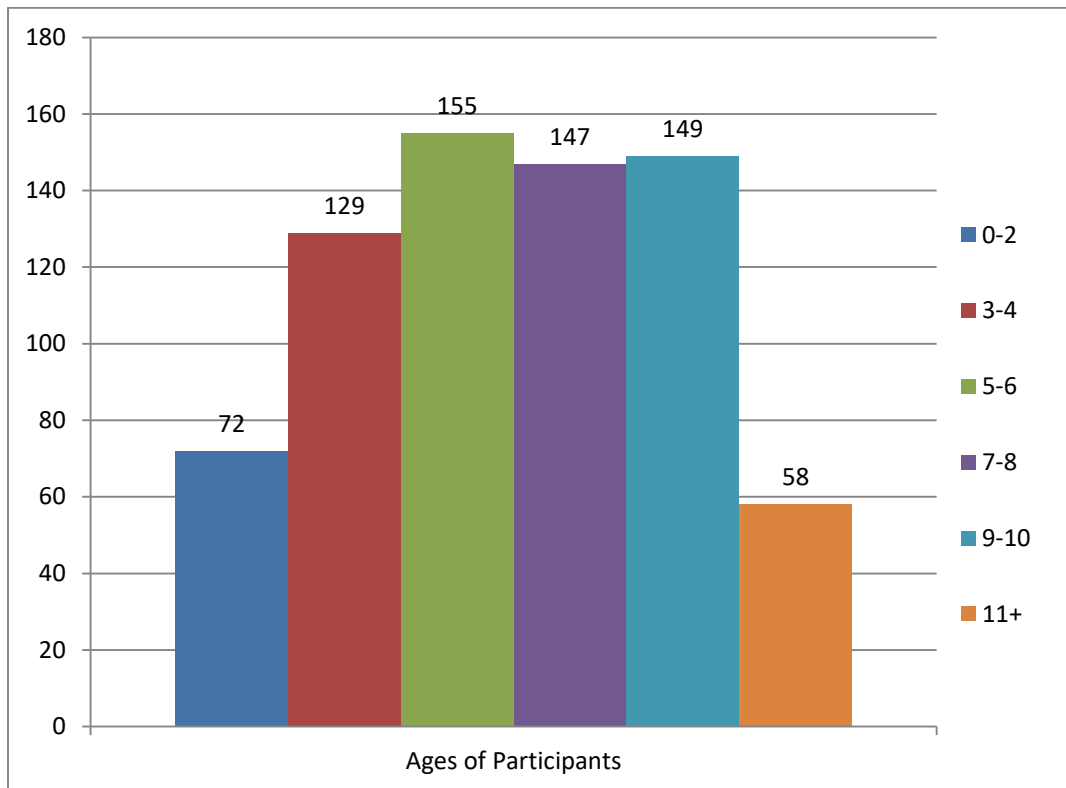
This summer in total:

There were 3970 raffle tickets entered

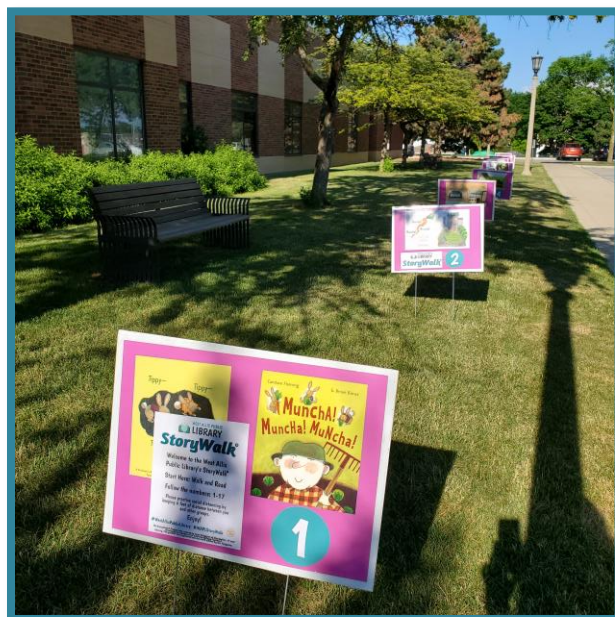
Kids read 28,870 books and 334,791 minutes

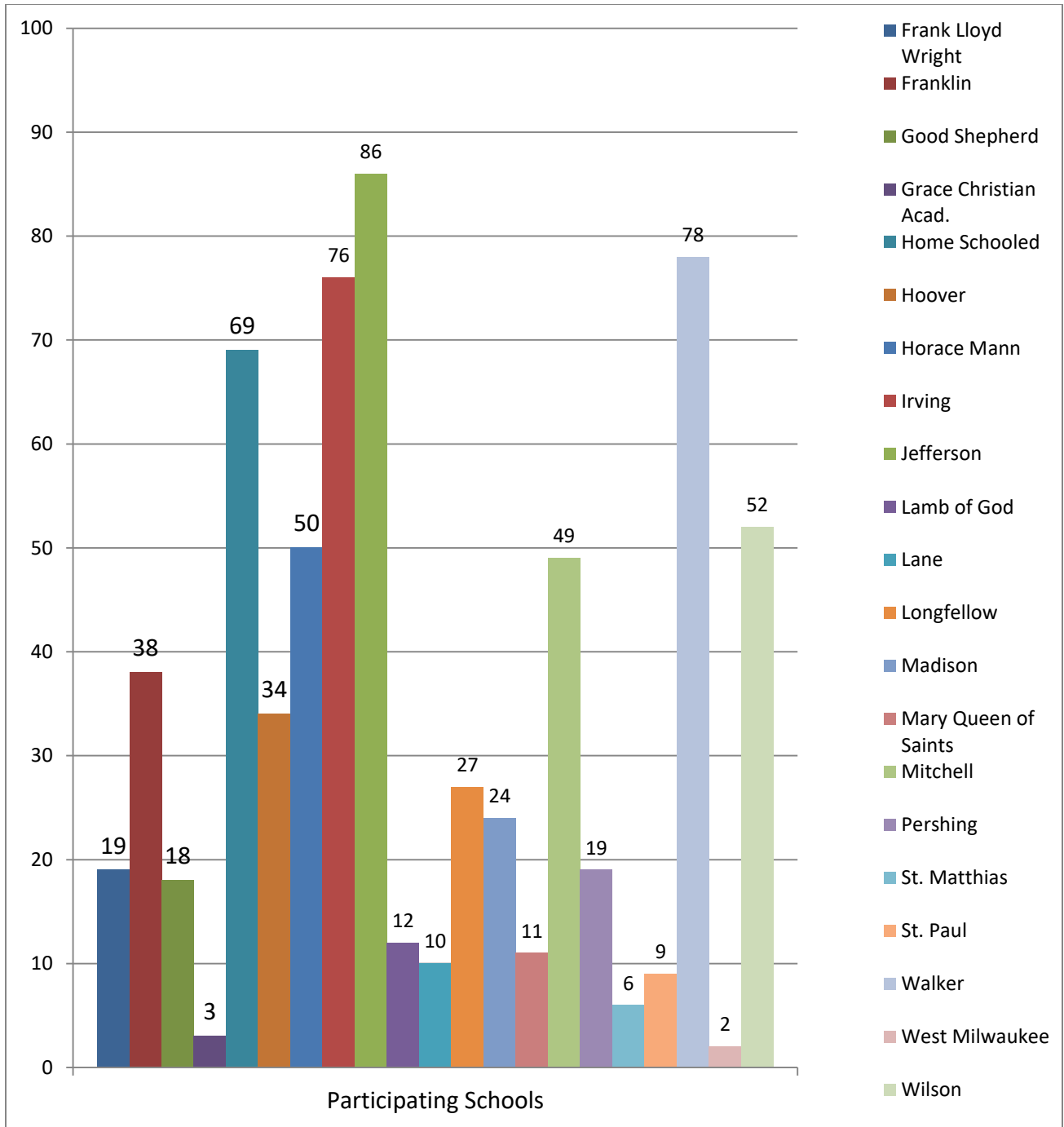


A few of our grand prize winners



We brought back the StoryWalk on the south side of the library, on the grass between the building and the parking lot. The books were switched out every 4-6 weeks. They offered a great opportunity for children and their adults to engage with a picture book, while enjoying the beautiful summer weather.





Programs

18 Family programs	1266
7 Storytimes	130
7 Take & Make crafts	350
4 Sensory Play programs	164
3 Library Maker programs	75

One of the silver linings of this summer was being able to do outdoor programming. We had contingency plans in the event of inclement weather, but we really lucked out with nice weather this summer. Only one of our thirty-two in-person programs had to be moved to a digital format.

The outdoor programs were held on the south side of the parking lot, next to Library Square. The largest benefit of being outside was having plenty of space—both for social distancing and the number of patrons that could attend. In previous years, we had to limit the number of attendees to 100 per show because of the capacity limit of the Constitution Room. This summer, our biggest single show had 160+ people in attendance. Families brought blankets and picnic lunches, and were able to enjoy both the beautiful summer and our library programming.



Schlitz Audubon Nature Center program

We also took advantage of the outdoor space by offering messier programs than usual. There were four Sensory Play programs held this summer. This was an opportunity for kids to both make and play with a different concoction at each session. We made snow foam, moon sand, cloud dough, and kinetic sand.



Sensory Play

We took the same messy approach to our school age Library Makers program. We offered 3 messy sessions that included chalk paint, grass heads (similar to chia pets), and the messiest of them all: glitter slime! Many of these programs, I would not have attempted if we were indoors.

Summer storytimes moved outside as well. Librarians used either big books or multiple copies of a book to make sure the illustrations were visible to all. While one librarian read a book, another staff member walked around with a second copy of the book that was being read. It was wonderful to be able to see many of our storytime families again.



Storytime

Finally, we continued to offer our very popular Take & Make Craft kits. Every Tuesday, there was a new craft kit available in the Children's Department for patrons to take on a first come, first serve basis. We had families visit the library on a weekly basis, always on Tuesdays, just to make sure they received that week's craft kit. This has been such a

popular activity, that we are continuing it this fall—along with our Storytimes, Library Makers, and Sensory Play.



Library Makers: Grass head program (left), Glitter slime program (above)

Overall, we had a really great summer. We learned a lot about outdoor programming and look forward to continuing into next summer (in addition to this fall and spring!). While our overall numbers were down from 2019, we made progress compared to last summer. As we inch back toward normalcy, I am confident our numbers will do the same.

Looking to next summer:

- Continue offering outdoor programming, but utilize the Constitution Room as a weather contingency.
- Return to outreach! Getting into the schools to both market the program and (ideally) registration. Work with the WAWM Rec Department to offer sign-up and logging at Summer Playground sites. Have a presence at events throughout the City to promote the library and summer reading.

