A New Approach to the Summer Library Program

by Gail Sheldon
APLS Library Consultant, Youth Services

It has been a long time (or it seems like it) since our last YAK issue went out. You must admit, it has been a crazy couple of months. We have been busy at APLS trying to keep up with everyone’s openings and closings, the services offered, coming up with plans to help you, and getting as much information to you as we can. We, too were working from home most of the past couple of months.

I know many of you and your directors may still be wondering, “What about summer? We’ve made all these plans and now we don’t know what to do?!” You are not alone. This is the first time any of us have dealt with something like this. And frankly, right now, we are all a bit crazy and not sure how all this is going to play out – now or in the future.

It is up to your board, stakeholders, and library director about whether or not you will be having in-person summer library program activities this year. Of course, should you decide to do so, your library should consider the guidelines of the Alabama Department of Public Health’s Guidelines for Safeguarding All Businesses, available here. Summer is also a particularly high traffic time for circulation, especially with children’s books. Please remember to follow any sanitation or quarantine guidelines for books. Resources for this topic can be found at apls.libguides.com/covidindex

So, what if you decide it is too much to have to monitor social distance with kids and parents in close quarters? What about those performers you booked way back when? You hear that some libraries are offering digital programs, but many in your community are without access – what then? That’s so many questions and so little time.

Many performers are offering their programs digitally this year via social media sites like Facebook. The Summer Library

See Approach continued on next page
Committee has done a lot of work coming up with great ideas for offline programs, such as BINGO cards for children, teens, and adults and Build-Your-Own-Quest cards for children/family and teens. Your participants can pick the cards up at the library or you can put them out amongst the community in places like grocery stores. Just be sure you have a count of how many you distribute so you will know how many are being picked up. Also, all of the cards are editable so you can personalize them with your library’s name and your own rules. The vast majority of the activities are offline. You can have people bring their completed cards in to the library, or leave them at the site where they picked them up. The Summer Library Committee also designed what we call “Grab ’n Go” cards which can be printed off (four to a page), put in a baggie with the necessary items, and put in the library or in those remote outlets. Kids can have someone take a picture of the completed activity and email it to the library or post it on Facebook. It is up to you.

But, you don’t have to design anything. We’ve done it all for you. APLS has completed a LibGuide just for the Summer Library Program. In addition to the activities the committee came up with there are CSLP activities as well, plus a host of other information. Go to the APLS website and look for this icon and click on it:

![APLS website](image)

It’s really that simple, and it’s all there!

Remember, nothing is the same this year. Statistics will likely go down across the board. Please don’t compare your library to others. We’ll probably ask the same type of statistical questions that we do every year – circulation, number of programs (virtual or in person), and number of participants in the programs. As the time draws closer, we’ll have specific guidance on how to count and report these numbers. One thing we do ask, however, is that you remember your impact stories – these stories are far more important to us than numbers.

As always, if you have questions, need help, or just need a shoulder to cry on (or someone to scream at) I’m here. gsheldon@apls.state.al.us or 334-213-3953.
YAKETY YAK

**SUMMER PLANS AROUND ALABAMA**

**Anniston - Calhoun**
Since the outbreak of Covid-19, our library has been posting virtual storytimes (including several that were bilingual and used/taught sign language) and crafts to Facebook. We have had a performer do a live stream on our Facebook page. We have hung an “I spy” collage on one of our windows and did a chalk obstacle course in the parking lot (the most popular non-virtual activity we have done). In addition to continuing virtual storytimes and performers, we are also preparing to offer take-home craft kits for summer reading.

**Athens - Limestone**
We have been doing several things all on Facebook:
1. Virtual storytimes - some were live, some pre-recorded. Our patrons seem to enjoy live better. (This week, we will set up a craft kit station where they can grab a craft kit that goes along with the story)
2. Writer’s Challenge - weekly writing challenges for kids, teens, and adults.
3. Harry Potter virtual book club using Facebook Live (we just used the Scholastic Book Discussion sheets)

**Chilton - Clanton**
We shifted our youth services to an all-virtual format. Programs and/or performers we originally planned at the library have been reconfigured for virtual delivery, with some of the programs which don’t adapt well to a virtual format being changed or replaced. For example, we changed plans to have the local queens and 4-H attend programs because it doesn’t mesh with social distancing guidelines. While we don’t know at this time how long this will continue, one thing has been clear: The youth services and summer programs are more important for us to change the program delivery rather than cancelling them altogether!

**Decatur**
We are looking forward to a fun summer, although we will be learning READsquared! We are currently offering curbside pickup, and beginning with the Kickoff Day, we are preparing to give age-appropriate grab and go craft bags weekly for eight weeks. All programs will be virtual.

**Gardendale**
We’ve decided to use Google Docs and Google Classroom for logging reading logs, asking/answering questions, giving our ‘assignments’ etc. We decided to cancel all our performers and put the money towards gift card prizes and crafts. Two to three times a week, you can pick up a to-go craft and then join us on Facebook Live for a tutorial on that craft. We are also using the bingo cards made by APLS. I’d love to see what others are doing. I’m interested in issuing some type of challenge for the kids to do that’s fun and will provide learning opportunities. We’ll do our storytime live on Wednesdays and Fridays. Summer reading sign ups start May 26 and will go until the third week in August. We are also building a myriad of I spy boxes in our children’s windows that are done from outside the library.

**Guntersville**
We are trying READsquared for the first time this summer. We’re hoping it will be a good alternative to our usual all-paper method. We’re also going to use the make-and-take crafts Gail discussed during our last meeting at APLS. We plan to make demo videos and provide craft kits for our patrons to take home.

**Homewood**
The Homewood Public Library closed its doors on March 15 and is preparing to offer curbside service starting June 1, so at this writing our doors are technically still closed. However, during this time we’ve used our social media to reach out to our patrons with videos for kids (storytimes and movement activities), creative contests (book spine poetry, pet reading photos, six word story contest) and online reading challenges (using Beanstack our Spring Into Reading and Imagine Your Story Summer Reading).

**Huntsville - Madison County**
During the first days of shutdown, librarians began filming our programs and adding them to our YouTube channel. We put our puppet show that would have toured local schools online, and in general tried to keep spirits up by doing what we do best. We’re now offering take-and-make craft bags, grab bags of picture books, chapter books and teen books and offering them via curbside. On our first day, Roary the Reading Lion welcomed our friends back to the library.

**Montgomery City-County**
We’ve been focusing on how to make MCCPL’s web presence stand out in order to attract families and youth. When schools closed, we created a document dividing our databases into school subjects. The Youth Services (YS) team created programming videos for toddler time, storytime, STEAM, computer classes, exercise classes, and read-alouds. Storytime videos we created include a few songs and information on how to find a book on our databases or retelling folktales. The YS team worked together to develop a Discord and Roll 20 channel for teens. MCCPL’s YouTube channel has been updated so that playlist can be embedded into our website and shared with other organizations. We’re still working on finalizing MCCPL’s Summer Reading programs to engage our community online and offline.

**Oneonta**
For summer, we’re making handouts for all of our programs. We’re going to be doing some videos, some competitions for all ages to win prizes, some programs on Discord, and
some online escape rooms. We'll also have take-home craft kits. We're moving Summer Reading to July to make it easier (and give us more time) for things as well.

We're also doing an online tower escape room/choose your own adventure using Google Forms with multiple floors. Hopefully, we'll have one a week if it goes according to plan.

Our take-home kits will include those old school fortune tellers you make from paper in high school (we made a fairytale version and are including blank paper so they can make their own), popsicle stick & Q-tip bow and arrows, maybe a natural dying kit with a white cotton handkerchief and instructions for how to dye at home using things from the grocery store or your yard, etc.

Competitions include a Fix-a-Fairytale contest where participants rewrite tales, Pet Cosplay where they do a fairytale themed costume for a pet and take a photo, and a Build-a-Castle contest where they build a castle in Minecraft and take screenshots to share it.

We're using two 11x17 pages folded in half for our handouts and they'll include the online events and competitions, along with some activities and a list of our sponsors. Take-home kits will be bagged and available for people to grab as they'd like at the library. (At least that's the plan.)

**Parnell (Montevallo)**

We're launching our first-ever virtual summer reading program with Beanstack. This will include badges for reading and activity challenges, as well as entries into prize drawings throughout the process.

We're also creating activity take-home kits for kids and teens with crafts and STEAM activities. For our teens, in addition to take-home kits, we've posted a virtual Harry Potter escape room that another library created and generously allowed us to put on our summer reading program site.

**Pelham**

This summer our library is using READsquared, which we are pretty pleased with so far. During this Summer Reading, teens will read to earn badges through READsquared that will make them eligible for weekly gift card drawings ($10 gift cards (Barnes & Noble or Nintendo Switch eShop). Teens have their choice of logging their reading time in either pages or minutes. You must earn each week's badge in order to be eligible for the drawing. The goal is for each student to have read either 1,000 pages, or 1,000 minutes by the end of the summer. The goal is attainable by reading 20 minutes a day. There's no grand prize this year, but as long as they continue towards their overall goal, teens will have plenty of opportunities throughout the summer to win a gift card.

In regards to programs, we will be having a Harry Potter-themed digital escape room, a virtual art class conducted over Zoom, a Zoom self defense class, a Q&A Zoom session for high school students about careers in nursing, and several online Nintendo Switch tournaments (folks are free to email me if they are interested in how to set these up – there seems to be very little info online on how to do so). We may also have a few Netflix party programs later in the summer, which students can do from home if their parents have both a Netflix subscription and the NetflixParty plug in (see www.netflixparty.com/ for more info).

**Tuscaloosa**

At the Tuscaloosa Public Library, we will be doing all of our in-house programming virtually this summer. We will have a variety of storytimes every morning except Sundays, and offer tons of programming for all ages, including virtual yoga for children, Make-it Lab, Musical instrument storytimes, book reviews, at-home crafts and experiments, watch-and-make, and much more. While all of our programming is going to be virtual, our doors open on June 1 and we'll offer limited services to our community.
Book Reviews of Picture, Juvenile, and Young Adult Fiction and Non-Fiction

YAKETY YAK
June 2020

The Nixie of the Mill-Pond and Other European Stories

by Mary Cagle, K. C. Green, Kate Ashwin, Katie & Shaggy Shanahan, Ovens, Carla Speed McNeil, Kory Bing, Kel McDonald, and Jose Pimienta

Release date: May 26, 2020

The Nixie of Mill-Pond is the third of a series of graphic novels collecting various comic artists’ adaptations of fairy tales. I love fairy tales, and with our Summer Reading theme I thought I’d check it out. It collects the stories of Jack and the Beanstalk, The Singing Bone, Puss in Boots, Tatterhood, Rapunzel, Kid Brother, The Nixie of the Mill-Pond, Biaslavret, and Hamelin’s Piper together. Some of these are well known, others less common.

Overall, I’ve mixed feelings about this compilation. But that’s not too surprising given the graphic storytelling sampler platter that is this book. Each artist/author has such a distinct style that while every reader may like at least one or more retellings in the book, it is equally likely they’ll dislike another. Jack in the Beanstalk, the first story in the book, was drawn with a charming art style and included a lot of comedic elements. At one point, Jack is drawn with literal dollar signs for eyes. It was a light-hearted retelling with Jack’s only guilt resting in his theft, as the giant’s weight in his pursuit of the thief lead to his downfall, causing the beanstalk to break. Very kid-friendly.

That is immediately followed by The Singing Bone, which featured an art style reminiscent of darkly comedic TV cartoons. The main characters are rabbits in a world of humans. As expected from the original fairy tale, one character murders the other in order to steal the prize they earned, and is only eventually found out due to a musician coming across the remains – the remains singing the tale of the murder, and the song being sung at court. The prize the two characters had been fighting over was the hand of the king’s daughter…and a lifetime supply of carrots. As seen on TV (like, the king made an announcement on TV in an otherwise medieval seeming setting).

Honestly, the contrast between those first two stories illustrates the almost jarring differences at times while reading through the book. I personally would have reorganized the tales, going from the ones that are lighter and more geared to kids, like Jack and the Beanstalk and Tatterhood, to the darker ones like The Singing Bone and Hamelin’s Piper. Essentially, they started and ended with the stories I would have chosen, but I’d have mixed up the ones in-between. Hamelin’s Piper, coincidentally, was beautifully done. It was completely visual with no words, but even someone unfamiliar with the story could follow it easily.

I have different thoughts on each of the adaptations and that is what makes it so difficult to write a cohesive review of a book that has such varying pieces of content. Overall, the order is jarring on a straight read-through. The cover and title is not the tale I would have focused on to draw readers in, but there were good adaptations in there, and ones I didn’t like that others might. If you have spare money lying around it’s an ok addition to a library’s graphic novel collection, but it is definitely not a must have even with this year’s Summer Reading theme.

Recommended for: Fans of fairy tales and graphic novels.

Things to watch out for: Fairy tales aren’t always rated for kids. Death, murder, execution, some violence, harm to animals (rats in Hamelin’s Piper), and implied sex (in Rapunzel).
Raindrop Suncatchers
courtesy of pre-kpages.com

Materials
Blue crayons with sharpener
Wax paper
Iron
Scissors
Blue string or embroidery floss

Directions
Begin by peeling paper off of the crayons. Next, spread a sheet of wax paper on a table. Using the sharpener, make crayon shavings fall over the wax paper. You can use different shades of blue and mix them together. Spread shavings, then cut another piece of wax paper (same size as before) and place it atop the crayon shavings. With the iron set on the lowest setting, press it on top of the wax paper to melt the crayon shavings. Finish by drawing raindrop shapes on the paper and cutting out the shapes. Poke a hole in the top of the drop (or use a hole punch) and thread it to hang on a window.

How Well Do You Wash Your Hands?
courtesy of sciencebuddies.org

Materials
Wash basin
Washable paint
Soap
Hand towel

Directions
Start by covering both of your hands in paint, as if you were using hand lotion. Cover the backs of hands, in-between fingers, and around the nails. Then hold out your hands and let the paint dry for a few minutes. Next, rinse your hands briefly with only warm water. How much paint is left on your hands? Then, rub your hands together briefly under running water. How much paint is left now? This time, use soap and count to five. How much much paint is left? Finally, continue to use soap and wash your hands for another 15 seconds. Examine your hands. If needed, continue to wash your hands until all of the paint is gone.

You probably found that rinsing, or even scrubbing, your hands with only water did a poor job of removing the paint. Soap helps break up the paint and other dirt on your hands, making it easier to remove, along with germs (bacteria and viruses). But even with soap, you have to do a good job washing your hands to remove all the paint. This includes washing them for more than just a few seconds, and getting into all the nooks and crannies where the paint (and germs) can hide.
Something to Consider ...

In general, kids and teens can be pretty nervous, down, depressed, or upset right now. They’ve been secluded, out of school, learning from home, absent from sports, and missing school activities they were looking forward to. As we all know, just getting thrown out of a regular routine can be distressing.

In the past few years, librarians have been asked to do more social work. We work with patrons experiencing homelessness and food insecurities as well as people navigating their own emotional and mental health issues, often by themselves.

During the COVID-19 crisis, a host of businesses and organizations were/are closed, including schools. We think, I bet those kids are going to love that (even if they do have to do schoolwork from home.) What we seldom think about or even consider are those children and teens for whom school is a refuge. These are the kids who experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) on a regular basis. COVID-19 has thrown these kids into a bad situation 24/7 instead of only part of a day. It may be neglect, abuse (physical, mental, emotional, sexual), food insecurity, parental mental illness and/or substance abuse, and domestic violence. It is important to stress that people with traumatic histories are not choosing to lash out, behave confrontationally, etc. Their trauma has literally rewired their brain.

“MRI studies have shown that the higher an individual’s ACES score, the less gray matter they have in key areas of the brain, including the prefrontal cortex (an area related to decision-making and self-regulatory skills) and the amygdala (the fear-processing center of the brain). Scientists have also found that when the developing brain is chronically stressed, as it is when one experiences a number of ACES, the hippocampus (the area of the brain that processes emotion and memory, and manages stress) shrinks. So ACES can impact brain development, which in turn impacts functions such as decision-making, self-regulation, fear-processing, memory and stress management. This understanding helps us to grasp the complexity of the effects of trauma.” Maryland Coalition of Families, 2018

Before COVID-19, these were the kids and teens who might have come into the library as a secondary means of escape from home after school. It may not be our job as librarians to fix the situation, but I think it is our job to provide a safe place for all. You can help by recognizing the signs of increased trauma, which are more often than not the opposite of the way things were before or more extreme than before. For instance, if a child (includes teens, too) was quiet prior to the outbreak, they might act out, OR they could be even more reserved or turned into themselves. The key is just to recognize that and know what to do. If they are acting out, matter-of-factly reiterate the rules, and remind them that they may have to leave for the day. Or if they are even more reserved, make that special effort to speak to them just to let them know you are there. If they want to talk, listen. Take a look at your libraries behavior-focused policies and procedures and work towards ways to deal with these issues without creating more of the same stress and trauma. A great way to look at these types of interactions is to watch “A Teen Walks into the Library,” by the Colorado State Library and practice with your coworkers.

Again, you might be saying, “This is NOT
“The essential statement is that libraries are about books, not solving social problems, addressing trauma, etc. To this I say that books, music, research, and media in general are all available online through our own collections, google, Amazon, Netflix, etc. so if libraries are about books and not people, why do we still have our physical buildings? If libraries are essential but physical books are no longer essential to libraries, why not just sell off our buildings and land, move our work 100% online, and save the taxpayers a great amount of money? For me, the answer is that we maintain our buildings and spaces because libraries are now about people, not books.” Patrick Lloyd, LMSW, Georgetown (Texas) Public Library.

It may not be our job, but it is our responsibility to make sure that our libraries are safe spaces for all.

Additional Resources...

Trauma Informed Librarianship YALSA Handouts. This is an easy to read series of documents that explain the impact of any sort of trauma on kids and teens.


CNN Town Hall for Kid’s and Families about COVID-19 with Sesame Street

How to Support Children (and Yourself) During the COVID-19 Outbreak from the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child (available in English and Spanish)

Resources to Help Families during COVID-19 from Fred Rogers Productions (also available in Spanish).

Supporting Families During COVID-19 from Child Mind Institute (also available in Spanish).


Resources for Coping with School Shootings and Other Traumatic Events. Minnesota Association for Children’s Mental Health.

Helping Children Cope With Trauma-Related Anxiety. Mental Health America.

When Disaster Strikes: Talking to Children About Traumatic Events. The Center for Parenting Education

Trauma-Informed Early Education Classroom Design: Designing Child and Family-Friendly Spaces for Recovery from Trauma. Early Childhood Investigations Webinars. (requires registration)

But I Work in a Library! How Trauma Affects Us and What We Can Do About It by Elissa Hardy, LCSW, Denver (CO) Public Library.


From Facilities to Trauma: Disaster Planning and Community Resiliency at Your Library. Webjunction Webinar.


Comforting Reads for Difficult Times Booklist. ALSC.

50 Books about Grief and Loss. CCBC.

Recommended Books for Children Coping With Loss or Trauma. National Association of School Psychologists.

APLS LibGuide on Mental Health

LibGuide from Delaware Libraries: Helping Children Cope with a Tragedy


Helping Children Cope with Tragic Events. The Indianapolis Public Library, November 6, 2017.

Two Resources, One Goal: Helping Alabama Succeed

LearningExpress Library & Homework Alabama

- Online tutoring for grades K-12
- College placement resources
- Help for all ages and skill levels
- Certification testing & GED preparation
- Career resources

Find both on our Resources & Research Links Page