Free literacy club takes kids on journey through time (posted June, 2023)

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Categories: Library news

As the school year winds down, children can keep learning alive and fun throughout the summer by participating in the BC Summer Reading Club, a free literacy program available at public libraries and online.

“Libraries were a big part of my childhood, and I want all kids in B.C. to have the opportunity to share in the joy and wonder of reading,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “Our local libraries are among our greatest public assets, and the Summer Reading Club program is an incredible way for kids to connect with learning opportunities and adventure all summer long.”

The BC Summer Reading Club gives children of all reading abilities the chance to participate in virtual and in-person activities offered through their local public library. It is designed to allow libraries from every part of the province to plan and deliver the program in the way that best meets the distinctive needs of their communities. Families can register readers aged five to 14 and find out about activities through the program's website or by visiting their local library.

"The annual BC Summer Reading Club encourages kids to expand their literary repertoire. We have prizes, games and programs for everyone who participates, including kids who might be a little rusty at reading," said Sarah Tarcea, manager of public services at North Vancouver City Library. "We know that kids who participate in the program are more likely to do better in school, regardless of what language they read in, what kind of book they choose, if they're reading aloud, or listening to an audiobook."

The guiding theme for this year's program is Journey Through Time, featuring artwork by Richmond-based illustrator, artist and picture-book author Jeni Chen.

The BC Summer Reading Club encourages children to read daily and track their progress. From listening to a story, to reading a graphic novel, all forms of reading count – and in any language. An online reading tracker lets children and families set and track summer reading goals. Participants can also enter contests to win prizes and earn digital badges. Many libraries also award a medal to those who reach their reading milestones.

"Parents and caregivers tell us how important it is to have a fun, free and inclusive program for all families, and the Province's support allows us to offer this valuable community literacy experience for kids throughout B.C.," said Rina Hadziev, executive director, British Columbia Library Association. "Our theme this year is Journey Through Time, and features dinosaurs and robots, so we know it will be a lot of fun!"

The BC Summer Reading Club welcomes the participation of all children and their families and is committed to providing an accessible and fully inclusive program. Supporting materials are available in nearly 40 languages. A video in American Sign Language with English subtitles is available for staff

and kids, and a book list has been curated to include titles in audio formats for the convenience of anyone with a perceptual or print impairment.

Co-ordinated by the British Columbia Library Association and public libraries, the BC Summer Reading Club is supported by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and CUPE BC.

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— Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Quick facts:

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs provides $65,000 annually to support the BC Summer Reading Club.
- As part the Province’s $45-million investment in one-time grants for public libraries in March 2023, the British Columbia Library Association received $100,000 to support accessibility and enhanced co-ordination of the BC Summer Reading Club.
- In 2022, 81,902 children registered in the BC Summer Reading Club, logging more than 128,291 reading entries online.
- There are 71 public libraries in B.C., 250 service locations and six library federations, serving 99% of B.C.’s population.