

## **More than Books**

### **Summer Reading at the Library**

There's more at stake than the prizes for children who participate in summer reading programs. Research has shown that children who read four to six or more books during the summer maintain or improve their reading skills. On the other hand, children who do not read during summer vacation lose ground by September. This is why Freeport Library, along with so many public libraries across the United States, dedicates so much time and money planning summer reading programs.

Each year the Illinois Library Association creates summer reading program themes. This year, the theme is "Reading is So Delicious."

Our summer reading programs kick off on Saturday, June 2 with a day-long opportunity to sign up for the programs and enjoy a special children's performer at 10:30 a.m.

Preschoolers, elementary school children, and teens can join in the celebration this year by either reading alone, reading aloud to someone special, or by being read to by a "reading partner" such as, but not limited to, Mom, Dad, or a willing sibling or grandparent. Both readers and preschoolers get paperback book prizes, courtesy of the Freeport Public Library Foundation, just as soon as they sign up for the program.

Many of our Thursday afternoon children's programs will be connected to the "Reading is So Delicious" theme. Whatever the theme, our annual pet show is always one of the most popular Thursday afternoon specials. For the past several years, I've sponsor the pet show and provide prizes in memory of my beloved Standard Poodle, Charley the Wonder Dog. Members of the Freeport Chapter of Therapy Dogs International will be show judges. Don't get the ideas that this is a dog-only affair, however. One year, a bunny took top honors, and another year it was, I kid you not, a rat.

As you can probably tell, I think it is important to have fun with the program and to make it fun for kids. I couldn't be more serious, however, about the value of summer reading to Freeport children.

Coming soon: a library calendar listing all the summer events, including our Tuesday afternoon movie specials and activities for teens.

### **Not for Children Only**

Thanks to our wonderful Library Foundation, not to mention generous local business support, we're able to offer all kinds of prizes and rewards as incentives. More and more libraries today, including Freeport Library, have summer programs for teens and adults. Children are not the only ones who can have fun reading over the summer!