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Schools, libraries kick off summer reading

Huntington – Students at Gateway elementary schools were rewarded for reading throughout the school year at special assemblies, where summer reading was announced and promoted.

Students at Littleville who had met the yearlong reading challenge were rewarded after a special assembly on June 13. Teachers Gail Gingras and Margaret Petzold announced a summer reading assignment to students entering grades K-5: read over the summer and complete a book sharing activity of your favorite book. (Teacher Angela Dalton added, “Preferably a book you’ve never read before!”) Students received materials and instructions about the book sharing in red folders. Students entering grades K or 1 will complete a picture sheet about their book; those entering grades 2-5 should complete the summary sheet. Students should return the assignment to their new teacher no later than September 2; a special school recognition will be awarded to any student who takes part.

Montgomery Librarian Paula Long was also on hand to announce that the Gateway town libraries all run a reading program during summer vacation. In Montgomery, the theme is “Ready, Set, Read!” and children are welcome to take part. The Montgomery library will sponsor 25 adventure hunts during the summer, including a visit from the Springfield Science Museum’s portable planetarium “StarLab”. The Montgomery program starts July 14 and runs through August 15, and every student who goes to a special event this summer will be entered into a drawing for a free book.

Just before students returned to class, names were announced from each grade to stay behind. Those lucky students were rewarded for turning in their reading journals during the yearlong reading challenge at Littleville. Students received an ice cream party, special recess, and tickets for free books to select and keep.

Students at Chester earned a different reward for collectively reading 75,000 minutes during the school year: Assistant Principal Sara Laing had to kiss a chicken at school!

“He was very polite,” noted Laing.

Chester staff also kicked off summer reading with helpers Hollie Jacob from the Hamilton Memorial Library in Chester; Maryann Walsh, Director of the Middlefield Public Library, and Lori Bocon from the Porter Memorial Library in Blandford. The three librarians described their summer reading programs and special events. Chester students received a summer reading log and viewed some of the prizes that will be available at the school for students who turn their logs in when school reopens in August. Parents will sign the reading logs issued by the school; students who take part in their town library reading program receive another prize! Students were then able to select a book to get them started on their summer reading.
“They were all pretty excited!” noted Title I teacher Christine Bresnahan, who helped organize the assembly and summer reading program. Chester students who join their town library summer reading program, and collect a librarian’s signature to prove their attendance, will get a prize. They can also complete and return 3 reading logs, and get a prize for each of those. Any student who returns more than 3 completed reading logs will be entered into a raffle for additional prizes!

The summer reading programs are sponsored by the Gateway Education Foundation and school PTOs.

Parents are reminded of the importance of continued reading through the summer, to help prevent the dreaded “Summer Slide”, in which children who don’t practice their academic skills lose ground over the summer.

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*Photo: Littleville’s Kailyn Hawley picks up her ice cream reward at the school’s reading challenge celebration on June 14. Below: Assistant Principal Sara Laing kissed a chicken at the Chester reading reward assembly—a prize that the student body voted for!*