

## Kids Dig into summer reading

Written by Austin Benson

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For seven Thursdays this summer, at the Gothenburg Public Library, children are surrounded by classmates and books.

Each Thursday, until July 18, two groups of kids go to the library at either 9:30 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. and check in books they've read over the past week. Afterwards, they go upstairs to watch a short movie.

The kids are provided an hour of entertainment each Thursday and leave with more books to read.

"Dig Into Reading" began June 6 for kids in kindergarten through sixth grade.

This year, the summer reading program has 134 registered kids with around 85 showing up for sessions, children's librarian Linda Swan said.

"There is a decrease in the amount of kids this year," Swan said. "But there are so many things for them to be involved in."

Elliot McMichael, a helper for two years and a reading program member for three, said the reading club gives him something to do during the day.

"I get to be around my friends and choose books I like," he said.

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Hayden Ricley is going into the second grade and said she learns something new from books she reads.

“Scooby Doo and animal books are my favorite. I like learning about different animals,” Ricley said.

The library offers arts and crafts that registered readers can do during the week.

Library director Mary Koch said around 20 kids come in each weekday to do the crafts.

“They can come to the library to paint rocks and shells. They can make a jumping caterpillar and have a chance to decorate things,” Swan said.

The librarians said that the reading program has been offered each of the last 37 years.

Swan said she wants the kids to continue their reading through the summer.

“This program helps them continue reading and growing instead of losing what they gained in the school year,” she said.

Swan said she selects a top reader from each grade at the end of the summer who is awarded a prize and that’s incentive for joining the program.

“They can choose whatever books they want,” Swan said. “We don’t want them to feel like they are still in school with selected books.”

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Each of the age groups has a section of books that match the levels they read during school.

Swan thinks getting the children into reading early is beneficial and can lead to them reading for the rest of their lives. That is one of the best things about this program, she said.

“The librarians and staff enjoy the kids coming in and being a part of their lives,” Swan said. “Reading is something they start now and take with them the rest of their lives. We will see some that come back and use the library as adults because of this program.”

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