
SOUTH JERSEY REGIONAL LIBRARY COOPERATIVE

YOUTH NEWS

Fall/Winter 2008/2009

Performers' Showcase

Lunch and a show and continental breakfast too! What better way to spend a Thursday in November than by attending the 2008 Performers' Showcase, sponsored by the Children's Services Section/NJLA, to be held at the Monmouth County Library on Thursday, November 6 from 9:30 am to 3 pm.

The Performers' Showcase is a venue for librarians to preview quality entertainment to promote both literacy development and summer reading for youth. Through the annual showcases, the committee recruits and enlists the talents of a wide variety of artists including, but not limited to, storytellers, magicians, musicians, creative theater, and nature/science specialists. The Showcase fosters and promotes resource sharing of performers and programming information throughout New Jersey.

This year the Showcase will host 12 performances: Tchin – cultural/Native, Nora Maher – storyteller, Felix Petri – cultural/music/Latin American, Apple Annie – science, Brian Richards – magic, Ernie and Neal – concert, Spook Handy – music, Jennifer Levine – puppets, Macaroni Anne Cheeze – clown, Wondergy – science, Jennifer Slaw – juggler, Danny and Kim – concert, an exhibit: David Ngheim – cultural, and an additional display: Junior Jam – concert.

Attendees are invited to preview as well as participate in performances, mingle with performers before and after show time, and gather information from exhibits and display tables. The Performers' Showcase registration forms and roster can be found on the NJLA website: www.njla.org.

Diane Cann, Chair
Susanna Chan, Vice-Chair

Literary Award for a Clayton Clipper

Barbara Bysura, a ninth grade student at Clayton High School, recently received Honorable Mention from the New Jersey Center for the Book/Library of Congress Letters About Literature. This is a national writing competition and Barbara's essay about a novel that touched her life was chosen from a total of about two thousand entries from the state.

Barbara wrote an essay in reference to the book *A Child Called It* by Dave Pelzer. The New Jersey Center for the Book sent Barbara a congratulatory letter stating, "The Board of the New Jersey Center for the Book and the New Jersey judges for the statewide contest were keenly impressed with the thoughtfulness, insight, and understanding demonstrated by the entries from students of our state's schools. Your essay was especially perceptive of the author's theme and intentions, and it described well the relevance of the book to your own experience. Your composition is a clearly written, effective expression of your interaction with a book that had a pivotal influence."

Barbara was invited to attend a statewide reception this past June at Rutgers University, New Brunswick where she received a certificate signed by Governor Corzine. Upon returning home Barbara stated she was "very excited about getting honorable mention."

There were two thousand entries from New Jersey and Barbara's writing was in the top twenty-two to be chosen. Barbara is confident that the honor will afford her additional opportunities in the future.

The Legacy of a Children's Librarian: Charlemae Hill Robins

In 1986 Wayne Wiegand invited me to contribute an article about Charlemae Hill Rollins (1897-1979) to The Second Supplement to the Dictionary of American Library Biography. I knew her name because the Association for Library Service to Children offers an annual program in her honor at the ALA Conference, and I had a vague understanding that she was an outstanding children's librarian of African American descent. Twenty-two years later, I know so much more about her. While I never seem to know enough, I am in the beginning stages of settling down to write a book-length biography of her.

When branch children's services were just beginning at the Chicago Public Library in the mid-1920s, Charlemae was trained as one of the first CPL children's librarians assigned to a branch. In 1932, she became the first children's librarian at the first branch library serving Chicago's South Side, the African American community. She did many tasks that children's librarians still do: she reviewed and selected books, did programs, reached out to schools and community organizations, and guided young people's reading. She was very good at all of it, especially telling stories. But she also did something more. She advocated for books with authentic, positive, and realistic portrayals of African Americans in children's books. This became her lifelong crusade, starting with her critique of books purchased by CPL in the 1930s.

The National Council of Teachers of English published her brochure, We Build Together, in 1941; it contained a bibliography of books that Charlemae found acceptable and her essay about why these books were acceptable and others were not. This clear-sighted essay seems to have helped children's book people understand the situation in a new way. Nearly overnight, authors, editors, librarians, and teachers began seeking her advice in critiquing and creating books about African Americans. Charlemae's professional life expanded in ways she could not have anticipated. She became an officer in state and national library associations, spoke all over the country, and taught summer school at historically black colleges. In her retirement, she wrote a few children's books, one of which – Black Troubadour: Langston Hughes (Rand McNally, 1970) – won the second Coretta Scott King Award. Her service to the African American community garnered numerous awards, including the prestigious Brotherhood Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Charlemae Hill Rollins and her colleagues such as August Baker, laid the groundwork for much of our understanding of the importance of authentic diversity in children's books. They remind us that our advocacy of children and libraries for children is meaningful work.

Holly G. Willett
Rowan University

Children's Garden

In late August, the Children's Garden at the Franklin Township Library celebrated its fifth birthday with a Tea Party. Lorraine Kiefer of Triple Oaks Nursery in Franklinville and members of the Country Garden Club sponsored the evening event that featured a tour of the garden, storytime, refreshments, and fresh brewed hot tea.

The Children's Garden, planted in memory of the late John Grochowski, was originally designed and is currently maintained by Lorraine Kiefer, Mr. Grochowski's daughter.

Denise Saia, Director
Franklin Township Library





Summer Reading Program

The 2008 Summer Reading Program at the Gloucester County Library System was fun and well attended this year.

Performers included Mr. Malcolm, Laura Kaighn, the Bug Lady, professional exterminators, Miss Amy, Toni Baloney, Kathryn Ross, Dennis Thomas Magic, the Rutgers Extension 4-H Clubs, Michael Forestieri, Brian Richards, Rick Waterhouse, several bands, and other local favorites. Performance costs have risen, so it may be necessary to look for other funding for performers next year.

Giveaways this year included the usual coupons from McDonalds, Westbrook Bowling, Old Country Buffet, and Dippy's. Commerce Bank again offered \$10.00 for 10 books read (I wonder if Commerce has a count of how many customers returned the coupons). Commerce also offered a program for the teens on checking and financing. The Riversharks sent their mascot and free passes. Carolyn Oldt arranged for a free item from several Rita's locations. The Rita's in Mantua said that the turnout had been great and they would do it again next year. Each library also arranged to receive coupons from some local businesses. Customers were very pleased with the handouts, including the bookmarks from the State Library. Prizes were given at various programs and for weekly drawings.

We used the various wonderful suggestions for craft and program activities that were suggested in the manual and on the Summer Reading website. New Jersey librarians are very fortunate to have such dedicated and talented people to share their ideas with all of us. Indeed, it is remarkable how the librarians across the country were able and willing to come together to give our children and teens an extraordinary summer reading program.

Teen programs were scheduled at several libraries and were somewhat successful. The band events and food programs attracted the most participants. Teen volunteers were very valuable for shelving and programs this summer.

Each branch library received a Wii and the sports game, so the tweens and teens were able to have some gaming activities at the libraries. Use of the Wii will continue in the branches during the year.

Ultimately the goal was increased reading, and that was accomplished. There were about 400 more children and teens registered this year and 80 more programs. Program attendance increased by about 2000 people.

Pat Collins
Gloucester County Library System, Mullica Hill

Book Evaluation: An Opportunity Too Good to Miss

How often are you offered a chance to receive wonderful new children's and young adult books FOR FREE? The Book Evaluation program sponsored by the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative offers you just this opportunity. Any library that agrees to accept and review new books will be able to keep half of the books they review for their own collection.

The coordinator for the next two years is Jean Wipf at the Woodbury Public Library. Please email her at wod@jersey.net or call her at 856-845-2611 to join. You can review as many books as you like with the reviews being submitted online (just go to the SJRLC webpage). This is an easy way to build your collection, especially since you can review books at your own pace.

Calling All Creative Writers and Readers

The Woodbury Public Library is the recipient of a Literacy grant from the New Jersey State Library in the amount of \$7300. These funds will be used to expand the young adult after-school program and the collection of books for this age group. Beginning in the fall, young adults are invited to attend a weekly discussion of new manga books (and others), write some poetry (or maybe a novel?), and help produce a young adult newsletter. This expanded program will be in two parts. First, the library staff will present a booktalk on the new acquisitions purchased through the grant and second, the young adults will be encouraged to participate in creative writing, such as poetry, book reviews and the creation of a quarterly newsletter for teens.

This grant was funded by the New Jersey State Library, an affiliate of Thomas Edison State College and the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Technology Act.
Jean Wipf, Director
Woodbury Public Library

Young Adult Group at the Atlantic County Library, Hammonton

The young adult group at the Atlantic County Library, Hammonton, is hosted by Rachel Simmons, Librarian. It is a free spirited group that changes from year to year. The group started as an Anime/Manga discussion group, and then developed into a relaxed, game-oriented group. There are several ages, ranging from 12 to 20 with everyone getting along very well. Some of the young men attending brought their own video games but now the games are provided by the librarian.

My best strategy to a good young adult/teen group is to make it as free and open as possible. Originally, the group was more organized and structured with crafts and manga scheduled once a month. Now, the group comes in and just does whatever they like. There is a designated meeting room for the teens and they can play video games, talk, play Pokemon, read, etc. The group members give input so that I know what to plan and provide.

Video games are the most popular activity at the present time. The teens also like to talk and use their laptops, PDA or iPods, however, DVDs were not as successful since it required focused attention. I try not to apply too many rules since the teens usually want to relax and cut loose.

If interested, the group meets twice a month – dates vary between Wednesdays and Thursdays. The Atlantic County Library, Hammonton, is located at 451 S. Egg Harbor Rd., Hammonton, NJ 08037 (609-561-2264).
Rachel Simmons, Librarian
Atlantic County Library, Hammonton

Just for Toddlers

Just for Toddlers is the newest addition to the line-up of programs at the Franklin Township Library. Aimed at children ages 12 to 24 months, Just for Toddlers is currently starting the second session. Last year we met once a month from January through April and had a grand time listening to stories and nursery rhymes, singing songs and doing finger-plays.

We are planning a different schedule this fall/winter as we will meet for four weeks in October and then again in February. Parents/caregivers are able to sign up for one, two, three or all four sessions. We are hoping this will allow an opportunity for more people to experience Just for Toddlers. - **Linda McBride, Administrative Assistant/Children's Services Franklin Township Library**

2008-2009 Book Evaluation Schedule

South Jersey Group – all meetings are Wednesdays at 3:30 pm

Nov. 19 – Middle Township High School, 300 E. Atlantic Ave., Cape May Court House. Contact: Kelly Lasher, 609-465-1852, x518

Jan. 14, 2009 – Wildwood High School Library, 4300 Pacific Ave., Wildwood. Contact: Kathy Fulginiti, 609-522-7922, x409 (snow date 1/21)

Mar. 11 – Atlantic County Library, Pleasantville Branch, 33 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., Pleasantville. Contact: Pam Saunders, 609-641-1778 (snow date 3/18)

West Jersey Group – all meetings are Fridays at 9:30 am

Nov. 21 – Deptford Library, 670 Ward Dr., Deptford. Contact: Susann Kaback, 856-848-9149

Jan. 16, 2009 – South County Branch, Camden County Library, 35 Coopers Folly Rd., Atco. Contact: Janet Ralston, 856-753-2537 (snow date 1/23)

Mar. 13 – Haddon Township High School Library, 406 Memorial Ave., Westmont. Contact: Arlene Baker, 856-869-7793 (snow date 3/20)

All day joint book evaluation and giveaway – May 15 (10 am to 2 pm) at the Woodbury Public Library

Letter from the Co-Editors' Desk

Patricia Collins, Children's Librarian at Gloucester County Library, recommended

Dan Gutman as a guest author

for elementary grades. Mr. Gutman spent a day at my daughter's school

in Central Jersey. Both the teachers and students enjoyed his presentations. At the end of the day, he presented the school with a character drawn from his books on a large sheet of paper. Not only did he teach the writing process and how a book gets published, he also tried to instill traits and qualities that the students could use in their own lives. Mr. Gutman's presentations were very humorous.



Let us know of happenings at your school or library. Happy holidays to all.

- **Co-Editors: Ann Wodarczyk and Denise Saia**

South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative

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YOUTH NEWS is the newsletter of the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative Youth Services Committee, Char: Denise Saia, Franklin Township Library, Franklinville. SJRLC Director: Karen D. Hyman. Telephone: (856) 346-1222, FAX: (856) 346-2839. The South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative is part of the New Jersey Library Network and serves the counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem. SJRLC is supported from State funds appropriated for the New Jersey Library Network. YOUTH NEWS is published three times a year and is distributed to libraries as part of membership benefits. EDITORS: Ann Wodarczyk, Gloucester County Library, Mullica Hill, NJ and Denise Saia, Franklin Township Library, Franklinville, NJ. Design and layout by Ellen McCann, Franklin Township Library, Franklinville, based on a design by the Community Relations Department of the Atlantic County Library System.