

# SCHOOL OUTREACH TOOLKIT

## WHY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS?

Partnering with schools is important for any summer reading program (SRP), not only to increase engagement but also to reach out to students who might not be able to participate in the program through the public library. This is also a great way to promote library resources and information to schools and students. Think of school partnerships as a way to further promote the library and establish it as an important resource in the community. These partnerships can come in the form of SRP promotion before the summer, activities and visits for in-school summer care, or registration for the reading program on a classroom level.

## WHO

- Public schools
- Private schools
- Homeschool groups
- Other (this could be group homes, homeless shelters, military base schools, ESL schools, parent groups, etc.)

When establishing partnerships, make sure to initiate formal contact first. You can use the included form (Example A) to reach out. Make sure you clearly define what you are offering and why.

## WHEN

Start reaching out to schools in February or March to plan promotional visits before schools close for summer. This is also a good time to inquire about any summer care in schools and, if so, to schedule summer visits.

## WHAT

### School Visits

- Promoting SRP can include book talks on summer books, a presentation on the SRP, handouts, small activities, etc. These visits can be done class to class or assembly style. The key is to make an impression on the students and to establish supportive relationships with the schools.
- Speak to school leaders, librarians, or teachers to find out how their educational plan and curriculum can be enhanced by voluntary participation in SRP. Use their input to configure your promotion to appeal to students and staff.

### Promotion and Outreach

- Have handouts, bookmarks, book logs, etc. ready to give to students.
- Create thematic reading lists for different grade levels.
- Prepare a brief SRP description and offer it to school staff to email to parents. Many schools have a multitude of ways to communicate with families, so offer to give them SRP info in any format.
- Heavily promote virtual resources. Teach them how to access no-card-needed resources for kids and encourage them to explore library resources.
- Have flyers that target different age groups. You do not want to promote elementary resources and programs at high schools.

- Make a couple of commercials that are under 5 minutes. These can be posted across different platforms and can be shown in schools and classrooms. Make sure you do different commercials for different age groups.
- Offer a video tour of the library to generate interest. This can also be shown at in-school programs during the summer to make students feel like they are a part of the library.

## **Summer Programs**

- Summer care at school can include anything you can easily do in a public library, such as storytimes, physical activities, and art activities. You can even check out the activities in this manual and adapt those ideas to quick activities and promotions to offer in schools.
- Enroll them in the reading program and give them prizes just as you would for in-library patrons. You can either pass out separate reading logs or ask the care facilitators keep track of the storytime books they read aloud.
- Bring books to the location weekly.
- Bring surplus craft supplies and let them craft.
- If visiting multiple schools/locations, have a battle of the books. Give a special incentive for the group that wins.
- Encourage the facility to decorate with the theme.
- Make up the craft kits for parents to pick up either at the school or public library.
- Tips:
  - Visits are typically no less than 20 minutes and no more than 50 minutes.
  - Offer group reading logs/tracking. Game boards or trackers can help care facilitators track multiple reading logs at once. This could also help them turn the reading program into a game.

# FORM LETTERS

## EXAMPLE A

### INTRODUCTION TO PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS

Dear [Name of prospective partner]:

My name is [insert name here], and I represent [name of library/system]. I am reaching out to you as a potential school partner as we gear up to offer families in our community the 2024 Collaborative Summer Library Program Adventure Begins at Your Library! / ¡La aventura comienza en tu biblioteca!

We'd like to invite you to join us in helping to promote positive family fun in our community this summer.

How can your school help? There are a number of ways to partner with us, and we can help you tailor one to best fit your needs and resources:

- In the spring, invite library staff to give a presentation to students and staff about the upcoming summer reading program. If an in-person visit is not possible, a librarian can do a virtual visit with individual classes or schoolwide.
- Promote an event/activity/club associated with adventure, and tie it into the summer reading program and other services the library has to offer.
- Get your parents/caregivers on board by distributing letters/emails and other promotional materials (provided by the library) to explain the program and how to participate.
- Include information about upcoming library events in your school announcements and newsletters.
- Invite the library to your next family open house to promote library services and to sign students and parents up for library cards.
- Consider sponsoring a summer reading event or prize with an in-kind donation.
- Offer your students service credit/extra credit/incentives for volunteering at the library or attending library events. Library staff can advise you if there are opportunities for student volunteers at their location.

We would be happy to speak to you about other ways in which your school can support the 2024 Collaborative Summer Library Program. We hope you will consider joining us in supporting an inclusive, educational, and enjoyable summer.

Sincerely yours,

[Name and signature]

## **EXAMPLE B**

### **DESCRIPTION OF CSLP 2024**

#### **WHAT IS THE COLLABORATIVE SUMMER READING PROGRAM AND HOW DOES IT WORK?**

The Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) a consortium of state libraries and public library systems working together to provide high-quality summer reading program materials for children, teens, adults, and families. Every year, a voted-upon theme and slogan is integrated into an inclusive, literacy-based, summer reading program that is enjoyable for all ages.

The theme for 2024 is Adventure Begins at Your Library! / ¡La aventura comienza en tu biblioteca! Juanita Martinez-Neal, an award-winning children's illustrator, provided the artwork for some of this year's themed promotional materials.

Your local library system tailors each year's theme to suit its purposes, but generally the program will include:

- A reading/activity log that readers use at home to track their progress toward an age-appropriate reading goal, earning incentives and prizes for participation.
- Activities and events happening at the library or available as take-home kits in support of the theme. These include storytimes, active play/music/movement activities, crafts, cooking/snacks, book clubs, volunteer opportunities, special presenters, movie nights, game nights, and more
- Library activities are low/no cost. For more information about your community's library program and other services, contact your local library location.

## EXAMPLE C

### LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As the school year draws to a close and we look ahead to summer break, we are excited to announce that we are partnering with [insert name of library system] to support the 2024 Summer Library Program, Adventure Begins at Your Library! / ¡La aventura comienza en tu biblioteca! This program will run from [insert dates of local program here] at all library locations.

Librarians will be visiting schools to share information with students and faculty about exciting opportunities for adventure this summer at the library, and how your student can participate in a reading challenge for a chance to win prizes. Staying connected with books and reading over the summer is a proven way to avoid the summer slide of academic skills over the break.

We encourage you to visit the library with your student and discover what the librarians have come up with for no/low-cost, inclusive family enrichment that aims to promote positivity and fun. This summer reading program includes participation levels and activities suitable for all ages, from birth to adult. Find out more about upcoming events and how to register by contacting [name or library location].

We wish everyone a safe and relaxing summer, and hope visiting the library will be a regular part of your family activities until school resumes in the fall. Until then, keep reading!

Sincerely yours,

[Insert name/signature]