

For Immediate Release

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## “Catch the Reading Bug @ Your Library”

### San José’s Summer Reading Celebration Kicks Off June 14

SAN JOSE, Calif. —Saturday, June 14, the first wave of an estimated 24,000-plus youth and their families are expected to queue up at San José Public Libraries to sign up for the annual *Summer Reading Celebration*. It’s a scene played out throughout the Bay Area as the school term ends and libraries offer fun activities to encourage maintenance and continued development of literacy skills. San José’s eight-week youth programs encourage recreational reading as a family activity, offering fun prizes as rewards for reaching each of several reading milestones for a cumulative total of 30 hours. Bi-weekly prize drawings add spice to the concurrent reading program for adults, ages 18 and over.

Each year program materials carry a new theme to spark the imagination and engage readers’ sense of fun. This year is no different, with *Catch the Reading Bug* for children (birth through grade 5) *Metamorphosis @ your library* for teens (grades 6-12) and *Savor the Summer @ your library* for adults.

While the focus of *Summer Reading Celebration* is on promoting reading as an enjoyable, stress-free activity, there is a more serious underlying benefit for young people. Research has shown that student learning declines or remains stagnant during the summer months; phenomena often referred to as the “summer setback.” However, it also shows that children who read or are read to at least three times a week have a higher rate of academic success than children from homes where they have less exposure to books. The Library’s summer reading program has proven to be a great motivator to get families coming to the library on a regular basis and reading. More than 80 percent of youth program participants surveyed last year report that they both *read* more and *enjoyed* reading more as a result of the program.

San José residents may sign up any time starting June 14 and complete as many milestones as they wish. Family members may sign up for the youth programs individually or as a group, tracking progress with one reading log. Credit may also be earned for reading aloud to younger family members. Those who complete the

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final milestone will take home a free book. Participants may complete as many logs as they wish, but only one for prizes. Participants in the adult reading program may choose to read a book in print or listen to a recorded book.

Library activities increase during the summer to provide educational and recreational activities that are both entertaining and free, encouraging return visits. This year’s program features performances of “Insect Songs” by Sandi and Stevie, and presentations by the “Insect Discovery Lab.” Check [SJLibrary.org](http://SJLibrary.org) starting in June for program schedules and other upcoming events.

Teens may earn community service credit for volunteering to assist program participants at their neighborhood library. With the exception of teensReach volunteers, summer reading volunteers must be 15 years of age or older. Volunteers commit to assisting 2-4 hours per week over the course of the eight-week program, typically between noon and 4 p.m. Good verbal communications skills and an ability to work with people of all ages is required.

Library programs such as Summer Reading Celebration are funded in part by the ten-year Library Parcel Tax approved by San José voters in 2004. This program is co-sponsored by the Friends of King and branch libraries, Round Table Pizza and the San Jose Mercury News, with additional support from Bay Area Parent™ and other community organizations.

As summer approaches, visit our web page at [SJLibrary.org](http://SJLibrary.org) for additional information. Alternatively, contact your neighborhood library or King Library Youth Services at (408) 808-2183.

## **Background**

Summer reading was formalized by San José Public Library as a system-wide program in 1994. First conceived as a program that would encourage recreational summer reading among children in grades K-6, it gradually expanded to include preschoolers and teens. The program underwent a major overhaul in 2001, introducing a new system that awarded points for time spent reading, which could be redeemed for prizes at specified intervals. Recognizing the importance of parental support, the program expanded once more to invite adult participation. Participation in the youth summer reading program has increased from 10,852 in 1994 to 23,271 in 2007.

## **About San José Public Library**

San José Public Library (SJPL) is the largest public library system between San Francisco and Los Angeles on California's Central Coast, serving a culturally diverse population of 989,500 in the nation's 10th largest city. Recipient of the prestigious national Library of the Year award, SJPL is recognized across the country for its innovation and leadership in the field and is one of the busiest libraries nationwide, with an annual checkout rate of more than 14 million items.

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