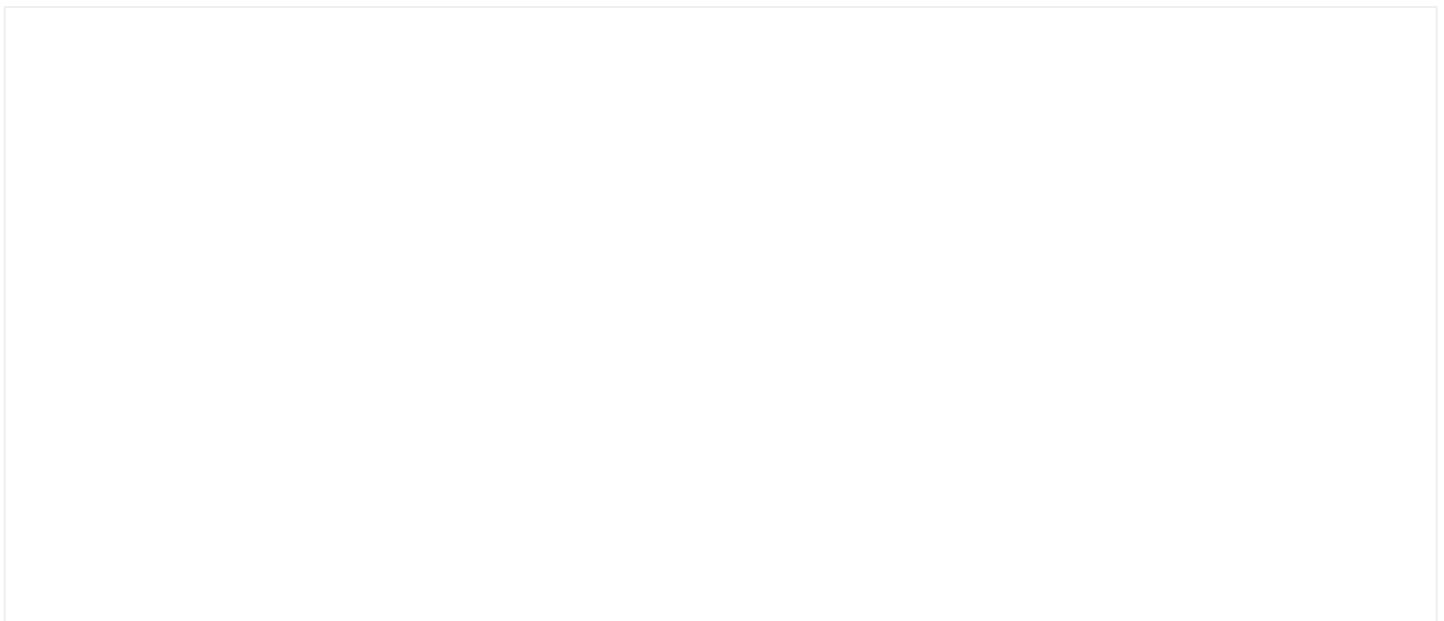




School's out. Summer reading programs are in. Here's some books the kiddos might like.

By KEVIN CANFIELD | MAY 29, 2017

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Mayor G.T. Bynum reads "A Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle last week at the kickoff of the Tulsa City/County Library's summer reading program. The library is joining forces with A Gathering Place for Tulsa park on a second reading program called The Reading Tree Challenge. KEVIN CANFIELD/The Frontier

Kids, don't let the hazy, lazy days of summer keep you from hitting the books.

That was the message from Mayor G.T. Bynun and other local officials last week at the kickoff of the Tulsa City-County Library's 2017 **summer reading program**, "Build a Better World."

The program begins Tuesday and runs through Aug. 5.

But it's not the only children's reading initiative in town. Also part of last week's summer reading program celebration was an announcement by A Gathering Place for Tulsa park that it, too, is challenging young people to read.

The Reading Tree Challenge is a countywide initiative to get children to read 2 million books by the time A Gathering Place opens in the late spring or summer of 2018.

The program gets its name from the largest and oldest Cottonwood tree in the park. The tree will serve as the centerpiece of the park's literacy programming.

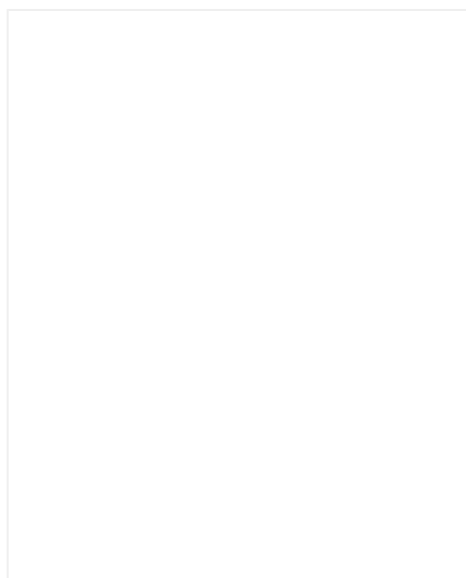
All books that are read as part of the library's summer reading program will count toward The Reading Tree Challenge goal.

Once children are back in school, participants in the Reading Tree program — as well as anyone interested in signing up — can go to TulsaReadingTree.org to check on activities and follow the progress being made to reach the 2 million-book goal. The website also provides updates on park construction.

Mayor G.T. Bynum kicked off the library's summer reading program by reading "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle to a group of children at the Tulsa Central Library. He was joined by Tulsa Schools Superintendent Deborah Gist; A Gathering Place for Tulsa Director Tony Moore; and Tulsa City-County Library CEO Kimberly Johnson.

Which got The Frontier wondering: What children's books do they love, and why?

So we asked, and here are their answers:





Superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools Deborah Gist reviews Jack Prelutsky's collection of poems, "New Kid on the Block," in this week's edition of Frontier Reads.

“Rosie Revere, Engineer” by Andrea Beaty: “This is a book that encourages children to think big, to try new things, and to fail forward — accepting our mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow. Of course, I also love that Rosie is interested in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math). Adults will appreciate the not-so-subtle shout-out to Rosie the Riveter and can use this book to start conversations about famous female historical figures.”

“Ish” by Peter H. Reynolds: “This is another great book that celebrates our imperfections — reminding readers that not everything we do will be perfect and that perfect-ish is OK too. ‘Ish’ also captures the joy and wonder of the boundless creativity of young children.”

“Amazing Grace” by Mary Hoffman: “This is a beautifully illustrated story about an imaginative young girl who loves to act out stories of all kinds. When her classmates tell her that she can’t be Peter Pan in the school play, Grace’s Nana steps in to remind her that she can do and be anything. ‘Amazing Grace’ tackles issues around race and gender roles head-on, but in language that is accessible to young readers. This is a story that parents can use to foster a dialogue with children around these important topics.”

“The New Kid on the Block” by Jack Prelutsky: “This is one of my all-time favorite collections of children’s poems. If you’ve had a bad day and need something to make you smile, this is the book for you. If you’ve had a great day and want to keep it going that way, this is also the book for you.”

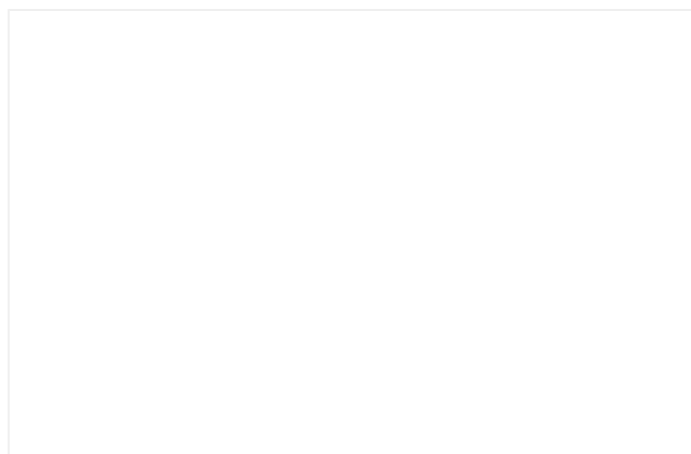


Kimberly Johnson, Tulsa City-County Library chief executive officer

“A Letter to Amy” by Ezra Jack Keats: “I recommend anything by Ezra Jack Keats. ‘A Letter to Amy’ was my family’s favorite. Keats is an award-winning author and illustrator. Peter is the unforgettable character in many of Keats’ books. This is a simple yet classic story of a shy young boy who wants to invite his girlfriend Amy to his birthday party. The illustrations are done in a brilliant collage technique that will capture your child’s imagination. What isn’t written on the page is artfully demonstrated through vibrant illustrations. It is a classic story that you’ll return to again and again.”



“Tikki Tikki Tembo” by Arlene Mosel: “I have fond memories of reading ‘Tikki Tikki Tembo’ by Arlene Mosel to my family. It is still one of my favorite children’s books. According to this Chinese folktale, the firstborn is given the honor of a great long name. Unfortunately for him, this honor delays his rescue when he accidentally falls into a well. This book is best read aloud because the honorable long name is rhythmic. Children will have hours of fun learning and reciting his name. They will remember it long after the story ends.”





*Tony Moore, director of A Gathering Place for
Tulsa*

“Grandfather Beezerwitts and His Big Red Balloon” by Bernard Albertson: “One of the first books I ever read — or perhaps I should accurately state was read to me — was ‘Grandfather Beezerwitts and His Big Red Balloon’ by Bernard Albertson. It’s one of those stories that teaches the young about relationships and family life.

“What especially makes this book so memorable for me, is that it captures my first memories as a child checking-out a book from my community library. The funny thing is that I wasn’t even at a reading age at the time; I am not even sure how I was even able to get a library card. But these were my first memories of my grandmother reading this book to me. For me it was all about the pictures and the amazement.

“I remember a few years later finding the same book again and checking it out a second time. This time, though, it was my chance to read this book to my grandmother, but this second

read was all about enjoying the memory of the first read.”

“Dick and Jane” series written by William S. Gray: “The first books that I can remember reading for myself were the ‘Dick and Jane’ series written by William S. Gray.

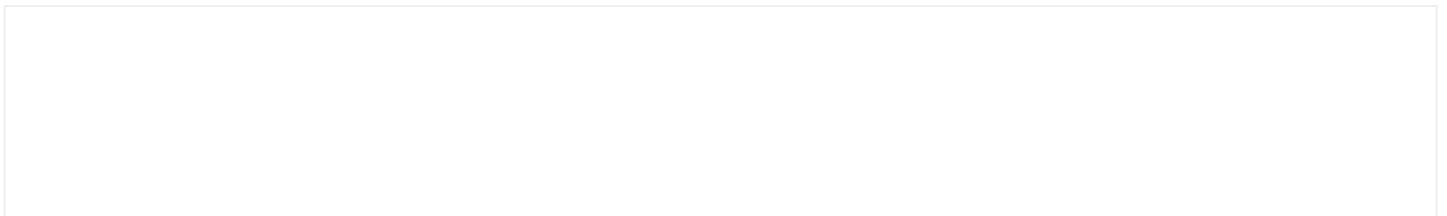
“I was always so fascinated about the images of a young family on a farm, as they were so different from the tropical island where I lived as a child. But the stories were simple and representative of what was a wholesome family life. The stories of Tom, Spot and Sally are still repeated even today as a measure of childhood simplicity and innocence.

“I clearly remembered Tom’s red wagon and wondering how much fun it would have been to have a wagon of my own. I never did get my red wagon; perhaps now may be a good time for this fulfilment.”

“The Giving Tree” by Shel Silverstein: “One of the first books that I read to my daughter is ‘The Giving Tree’ by Shel Silverstein.

“As you may already know, this story shares a sad commentary of a friendship between a boy and his tree and how the demands of friendship can affect a relationship of giving. It’s certainly not one of those warm-and-fuzzy stories, but it’s for those reasons that it represented a great teachable moment for my young 6-year-old daughter. It teaches about the importance of balance in a relationship. This book provided for us both a life lesson that I hope will be lasting for her.

“The engagement of reading is so powerful, it provides a personal and visual opportunity for readers to immerse themselves in a whole new world. The degree of wonderment is only limited to the unique interpretation and imagination of the reader. When parents and children read together life-long memories are formed and life-long messages are taught.”





Mayor G.T. Bynum. DYLAN GOFORTH/The Frontier

“The Chronicles of Narnia” by C.S. Lewis: “I have loved reading these to them (my children) because they are great stories, and also, I am a big believer in doing the different voices as you’re going along, and fortunately for those there are a number of characters who are fairly consistent through them, and for any given book you are not going to have more than 10 or 15 voices.”

“Childhood of Famous Americans” series: “They were like biographies for kids on presidents and Ben Franklin and Henry Ford and Babe Ruth, all these different notable Americans, and I loved reading those as a kid. I couldn’t get enough of those books.

“I have been a history nerd my whole life, and I loved reading stories about kids who grew up to do important things. And by the nature of them making the series, they were people who had lived interesting lives.

“For me, the neat thing as a kid about history was that these were people who had actually lived and walked around and done things just like I did. These weren’t fictional characters in a fantasy universe I could never access. This was real life, which was very cool.”

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Kevin has been working the Tulsa city hall and county beat for nearly a decade. He hails from a newspaper family and Okies enjoy the Connecticut native's accent. In newspapers, Kevin's done everything from copy editing to covering high school football. If you see him around town, make sure and ask him about the time he went to the O.J. Simpson trial or when he was an extra in a zombie movie. Contact him at 918-645-5452 or kevin@readfrontier.com

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