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Out with the new, in with the old: Library system announces reinstatement of previous summer reading program

■ This summer's online registration, individual cards were disliked.

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Posted: Saturday, October 17, 2015 12:00 am | Updated: 1:03 am, Sat Oct 17, 2015.



Shaffer

By ANDREA EGER World Staff Writer | 3 comments

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Plummeting participation rates in the Tulsa City-County Library's summer reading program for children has prompted an about-face by library administrators.

For the first time, registration for the program was only available online and all children were required to have their own individual library card. Participation sank 52.7 percent to 16,013 participants — compared to 33,857 in 2014. It represented a 30-year low in the number of children signing up and completing the program.

After online polling results confirmed those issues were to blame for the nosedive, library

officials have announced that beginning in 2016 paper registration forms will be available again and library cards will not be required for every child.

"We are disappointed to see the numbers drop like this," said Chief Operating Officer Kim Johnson in a written statement.

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"It's clear to us that our customers did not embrace the changes we made for the library card requirement and the online registration process. We would like to see all children have a library card, but we recognize making it a requirement posed challenges for some families and large groups."

The issue was first brought to public light at the library oversight commission's August meeting.

Kelly Jennings, a former library employee who previously ran the summer reading program, confronted the current administration with startling statistics about summer reading participation falling to a 30-year low.

"What did you do to break the summer reading program?" Jennings said that day. "You owe the commission and taxpayers an answer."

Jennings said that in previous years, larger groups usually opted for one card for easy tracking of library books checked out. She told the commission the policy changes had resulted in children's groups being turned away and parents of multiple children opting out over the frustration of not being able to maintain a single family card.

Chief Executive Officer Gary Shaffer didn't deny Jennings' claims, and he questioned how she had acquired the information.

He also told the shocked library commissioners the program requirements had been changed to encourage more children to get a library card, which he called a "social justice issue."

After that meeting, the Tulsa World used the Oklahoma Open Records Act to obtain library officials' emails pertaining to the summer reading program.

Those public records revealed that in April, one month before the launch of the summer reading program, patron complaints about the new requirements, and media questions based on those complaints started rolling in to officials, including Shaffer.

Andrea Eger 918-581-8470

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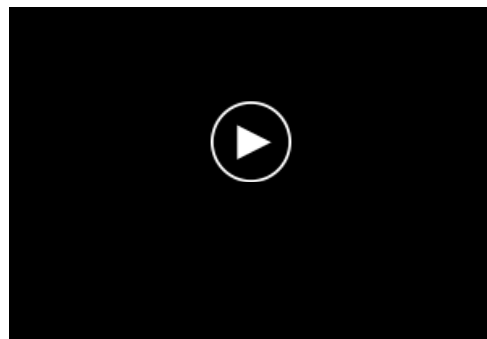
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i Your real name will display with your post.

Dana Asher posted at 1:15 pm on Sat, Oct 17, 2015.



Posts: 3499

just another over paid and under worked.....sounds like a Oklahoma republican want to be!!

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Gordon Mills posted at 10:08 am on Sat, Oct 17, 2015.



Posts: 4691

Chief Executive Officer Gary Shaffer is just another "social justice issue" Obama sycophant and as such is totally not suited for his position in Tulsey Town. Another good example of a highly educated but not very smart bureaucrat.

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Ann McWhortor posted at 7:41 pm on Fri, Oct 16, 2015.



Posts: 3942

"the program requirements had been changed to encourage more children to get a library card"

Bull. You thought you would turn it into a glorified membership drive and

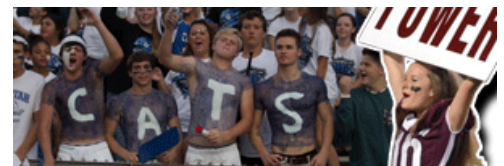
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it backfired.

The CEO wanted to be able to act like he had increased membership by great numbers. Instead, he owns the dismal flop that it turned out to be.



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