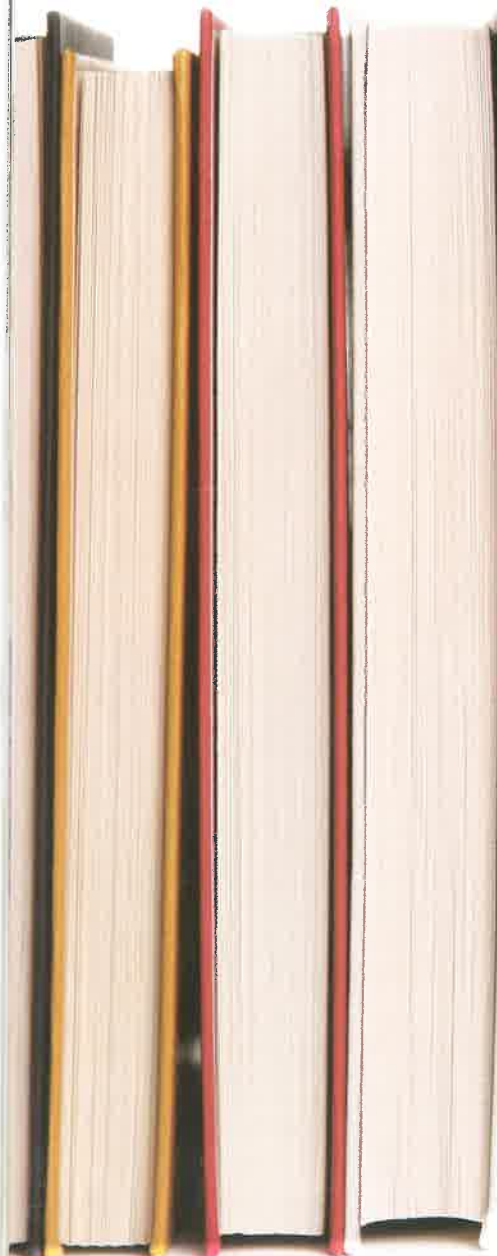


Animal Tales

Books Bring Animals To Life Through Summer Reading Programs At Libraries

By Heide Brandes

Summer means long “dog days” of heat and fun, but it’s also a time when area libraries encourage children (and adults) to read.



For children who want to learn more about animals and pets, the summer reading programs at Oklahoma’s libraries offer the perfect opportunity to do so while having a fun time as well. Both the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Library System and the Tulsa City-County Library offer annual reading adventures for children during the summer.



“The Summer Reading Program is a fantastic way for Tulsans of all ages to be rewarded for reading over the summer. We’re a library, so of course we think reading is awesome, but the research backs it up,” said Linda Raphael, children’s services coordinator at the Tulsa City-County Library.

“Not only do readers tend to grow up to have better jobs, make more money and get sick less often, but children who read in the summer are more likely to retain their cognitive skills and academic knowledge and return to school ready to learn.”

For children who love stories about animals—or who need to learn more about pets, pet care or kindness to animals—joining the summer reading program at a local library is a perfect way to spend the next few weeks, gaining knowledge and growing along the way.

“We encourage reading of all kinds, whatever that looks like—including joke books, graphic novels and listening to audio books, if that’s what kids are interested in. In fact, kids reading the books they want to read is a cornerstone of the program because pleasure reading should be, well, pleasurable,” Raphael said. “There are so many wonderful animal books for children!”

The Metropolitan Library System announced the launch of its 2019 Summer Reading program, “Wild About Reading,” which began in June. The program gives children, teens and adults the opportunity to earn prizes while they read for fun and promote the importance of reading.

The program runs through July 31. All summer readers can track their reading progress and earn digital badges, fine waivers and books, and adult readers can receive a tote bag and keychain flashlight. There will also be prize drawings for Kindle Fires, iPads and Chromebooks for qualified readers. In addition to

earning prizes for minutes spent reading, participants will also have the opportunity to earn points for completing reading-based activities.

“This year, we want to show that we are ‘Wild About Reading.’ The library is celebrating the literary and artistic achievements of Maurice Sendak, author of ‘Where the Wild Things Are,’ said Kim Terry, director of marketing and communications. “This year, we will also host a one-of-a-kind Maurice Sendak art exhibit at the Downtown (Oklahoma City) Library featuring original art pieces by Sendak. His wild works will be an enjoyable learning experience perfect for all ages.”

Oklahoma Metropolitan Library System Summer Reading Program and Picks - By Kim Terry

Pet Pals Series - The “Pet Pals” series gives readers information on everything they need to know to care for a pet. The series covers a variety of species including Bird Pals, Fish Pals, Guinea Pig Pals, Lizard Pals, Pony Pals, Unusual Pet Pals, Dog Pals and Cat Pals.

Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship - This heartening story is about a girl and her service dog, Jessica is adjusting to life with her new prosthetics. Her connection with her service dog helps her adjust to her new life. This book was written by a Boston Marathon survivor and features beautiful illustrations of the Boston skyline.

Made for Each Other: Why Dogs and People are Perfect Partners - This title discusses scientific insights including stress reduction, companionship and safety related to having a dog. This book is written in a clear and understandable voice perfect for young readers looking to learn more about their furry friends.

Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key Taught the World About Kindness - This title explores the unique true story of the relationship between former slave Dr. William Key and his horse, Jim. Key taught Jim to read and write, and the two amazed audiences with Jim’s ability to spell and do math.

Libby and Pearl: The Best of Friends - This photography-based picture book tells the true story of a toddler and her pet pig. This book illustrates the special bond between a child and her pet. It also shows that pets can come in all shapes and sizes.

To learn more about the Metropolitan Library System’s Summer Reading Program, visit www.metrolibrary.org/summerreading.

Tulsa City-County Library’s Summer Reading Picks for Kids Who Love Animals - By Laura Raphael

“On the fiction side, kids seem to really like two series: the **Rainbow Street Shelter** series and the **Pet Rescue Adventures**, both of which follow different individual pets from rescue shelters,” said Raphael.

Unusual pet stories include **Lulu and the Rabbit Next Door** by Hilary McKay and **Hiss-s-s!** by Eric Kimmel, about a boy with a pet snake. Both books are funny, sweet and show how pets—even ones that aren’t cats or dogs—can quickly become part of the family.

“Finally, **Spunky Tells All** by Ann Cameron is a winner in my eyes because it is told from the point of view of a loyal dog trying to understand why his family adopts a moody cat,” Raphael said. “If you ever wondered

what your dog is thinking, this is probably as close as you’ll get.”

But Raphael’s favorite animal and pet books can be found in the Juvenile Nonfiction (“real life”) section of the library.

“Ask a friendly librarian to show you the Dewey Decimal 599s (the category for animals) or 636s (the category for pet care),” she said.

For more information about the Tulsa City-County Library’s Summer Reading Program, visit www.tulsalibrary.org/summer.



Reading With Dogs

Both the Oklahoma City and Tulsa library systems also have a unique program that pairs young readers with dogs.

The Metropolitan Library System’s Reading With Dogs program is offered at various library locations throughout the metro and helps build “pawsitive” self-esteem, improving children’s reading skills while reading aloud to certified therapy dogs at the library.

PAWS for Reading (<https://www.tulsalibrary.org/kids/paws-for-reading>) is a year-round program that many of Tulsa City-County Library’s 24 branch libraries offer. It matches young readers ages 5 to 12 with therapy dogs.

“The dogs are great listeners to children who read to them. Kids get practice reading, and dogs get lots of time with happy kids,”

said Raphael. "The wonderful thing about PAWS for Reading is that it reinforces reading as a positive and pleasurable activity, in a safe environment with nonjudgmental partners. Learning how to read is hard. The gentle acceptance of the therapy dogs coupled with the reading practice helps kids become better readers while enjoying the process."

Additional Books

Native Oklahoman author Linda Harkey is the author of "Hickory Doc's Tales - The Pack: First Generation"; "The Remarkable Story of Willie the Crow - A Hickory Doc's Tale"; and "Solitary Toes and Brown-Headed Cowbirds - A Hickory Doc's Tale," all of which bring children into the world of hunting dogs.

Hickory Doc's Tales – (The Pack: First Generation) is an elementary age book about a family of five hunting dogs and their encounters, mysteries and adventures with people. They also have adventures with other animals such as Arnie the armadillo, Pete the porcupine, a stinky skunk, cows, rattlesnakes, Willie the crow and an owl.

The Remarkable Story of Willie the Crow – (A Hickory Doc's Tale) brings elementary readers back into the Hickory Doc tales. The book is a story about the pack's new friend, Willie the Crow, and allows children to learn more about the areas that the animals inhabit.

Solitary Toes and Brown-Headed Cowbirds – (A Hickory Doc's Tale) continues the adventures of the Hickory Doc's Tales series with a humorous story depicting the relationships between a retired race horse, B. J., Deacon, the pack's three-legged German Shorthaired pointer, Doc and Zeke. The children are taught life lessons as they read about the actions of Doc, Zeke, Deacon and B. J. These characters and their behaviors and actions are lessons to readers to avoid Zeke's bad habits and to demonstrate good, kind and loving behavior between and with the animals.

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