

Copper Queen Library starts up story time in person

Shar Porier
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sporier@myheraldreview.com



Copper Queen Library Coordinator Alison Williams hosts the first story hour for toddlers in over a year. The library is trying to get the youth programs up and running again since postponing them due to COVID-19.
Mark Levy | Herald/Review

BISBEE — It could not have been a better setting — under a shade tree in Grassy Park with a light breeze — to engage youngsters once again in the stories held on the pages of a book.

Though the number of children were few, the attraction of a fantasy like “We Became Jaguars” by Dave Eggers took the small fry from the park to the wild jungle for an adventure.

Louise Stetter, 2, was with her parents, Bronwen and Carl Stetter, and was happily running around while waiting for more pre-K kids to show. Louise has been attending the library’s children’s reading program and but missed going for the past year.

“We used to go to the story time at the library before COVID, but this is great. I prefer this outdoors,” said Bronwen.

Senna Flora with her two children, Ardea, 6, and Cyrus, 4, was happy to be making new friends after spending time cooped up at home during the pandemic. As a single mom, she wanted her kids to make new friends and become involved with reading.

“I just found out about the library’s story time,” she said. “It’s in their best interests. It’s great for the kids.”

Bijoyini Chatterjee and her 5-year-old daughter Alba have attended the story hour since Alba was 8 months old.

“She loves to be read to and she is just learning to read,” said Bijoyini.

They have missed the camaraderie of the library program.

So did Allison Williams, library program coordinator. She was pleased to see the families again after a yearlong absence. Williams’ daughter, Ember, and volunteer Scout Day were there to join in the fun which began with “shaking out the sillies,” a series of stretches and arm shaking to let the children wind down and relax as story time began.

The pre-K story time will continue to be outside in Grassy Park on Fridays at 10:30 a.m. through the end of May, said Williams.

In June, the eight-week Summer Reading Program begins with the theme of “Tails and Tales!” Because supplies are limited, registrations will be prioritized to local Bisbee, Naco and surrounding unincorporated areas served by the CQL. Williams recommends registering early as space is limited. This year, the program will cover birth to 12th grades.

The program will follow the same format as last summer. Based on the child’s level of reading, books and activities will be provided through the mail, she said. Funding for the books is provided by Freeport McMoRan Inc., Copper Queen Branch, Friends of the Copper Queen Library and anonymous donors. The goal is to reach 100 children in the Bisbee area.

Williams said, “We have weekly packets of free and fun stuff to help kids celebrate a summer full of reading, writing and sharing stories. Each week, a child will receive a package from the CQL which will include a free book to add to their home library, as well as a program activity guide full of fun ideas to do at home and with friends.”

There is a Summer Reading Blog at copperqueenlibrary.com to share projects with all other kids and teens enrolled. If a child is unable to upload a project to the blog, drop it by the library and staff will upload it.

The CQL is also planning some free outdoor programs, including the library's First Pet Parade on June 11 at Vista Park, which is hoped will become an annual fun event, Williams said.

To help families without access to computers or wifi, the library has everything needed to set up at home or people will be allowed in the main library when it opens to the public on May 17. There will be limitations on the number of people in the building at one time. Masks and social distancing are required.



Cyrus Flora, 4, takes his time as he chooses a stuffed animal during the Copper Queen Library's story hour Friday. This summer's story hour theme is "Tails and Tales".

*Mark Levy |
Herald/Review*



Parents and children participate in a pre-school hour stretch in Grassy Park Friday morning. *Mark Levy | Herald/Review*



Special bags containing items for Cinco de Mayo and Mother's Day will be given to story hour participants. *Mark Levy | Herald/Review*