

Focus ON CCSD

News for, by and about Charleston County School District,
the state of South Carolina's premier school district where *Students are the Heart of Our Work.*

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DISHING OUT SUMMER MEALS

CCSD's Nutrition Services serves over 100,000 Meals in first 15 days of Seamless Summer Feeding Program

Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Office of Nutrition Services has offered free breakfasts and lunches to students for several years in an effort to ensure all students still have access to healthy meals. Last year alone over 300,000 meals were served over a nine week period.

Seventy four "open" sites are serving meals this summer as part of the Seamless Summer Feeding Program with food service employees preparing "popular menu items such as house-made macaroni and cheese, all beef hot dogs, cheeseburgers, fresh fruit, and vegetables.

What started as a simple summer lunch program turned into a first-class meal program. For example, last summer CCSD served 259,787 meals (breakfast and lunch).

"This summer, to date, we are up 18 percent for lunch and 16 percent for breakfast (compared to the same 15 days as last year)," said Jeremy Tunstall, CCSD Nutrition Services Officer. "The Seamless Summer Feeding Program is a mature operation with a vast amount of people who take advantage of the program."

Open sites are locations like churches, apartment complexes, parks, and community centers that any child can go to for a free summer meal.

Food insecurity among kids and teens is widespread in Charleston County. The Seamless Summer Feeding Program (SSFP) allows school districts to provide free summer meals in low-income areas during the



traditional summer vacation periods. It is an extension of the National School Lunch Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

There are 11 CCSD kitchens being used to prepare the meals. These sites are centrally located to the feeding sites. Food service employees from across the district, to include kitchen managers and operators come together to prep, cook and package each meal.

CCSD provides everything a feeding site needs including trays, gloves hair nets, and serving utensils. Feeding sites have no out-of-pocket expenses related to the Seamless Summer Feeding Program.

Any child 18 or younger can walk into one of these sites for a free breakfast and/or lunch this summer. This list includes addresses, phone numbers and meal service times. Fresh fruits and vegetables are served daily, in addition to low-fat chocolate and white milk. A full menu can be found here. The 2019 CCSD Seamless Summer Feeding Program concludes Friday, August 9, 2019.

"We're committed to serving every child from McClellanville to Edisto and all of those in between," Tunstall. "No other district does a summer feeding program on this level. CCSD is the largest in the state as far as serving the most meals."



COUNTY LIBRARY PARTNERS WITH DISTRICT FOR SUMMER READING PROGRAM



CAMP ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DAVID PARLER PREPARES FOR STORYTIME AT THE JAMES ISLAND LIBRARY



STILES POINT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL MICHAEL ARD READS TO CHILDREN AT THE LOCAL LIBRARY



CHARLESTON COUNTY LIBRARIAN AMY ADAMS LEADS CHILDREN IN A SING-ALONG

Studies show that students who don't read during the summer will be less prepared when school resumes. That's why Charleston County Public Library (CCPL) and Charleston County School District (CCSD) are working together to extend student learning into the summer.

This joint initiative is part of CCPL's annual Summer Reading program.

It is designed for children, teens, and adults and runs through August 17, right before the kids come back to school. The program was extended to better match students' summer vacation time. It features hundreds of free events and prizes provided by community sponsors.

"This partnership opens up so many opportunities for students throughout the summer," said Christy James, CCSD's Library Media Services Specialist. "The amount of access being provided is incredible. The program has sparked excitement among our librarians because it has also created a relationship with the public librarians so that we can continue the partnership all year."

"The incentives from our sponsors give kids something to look forward to, and we're so grateful to that. Because we've expanded the program, kids from different geographic areas can now participate. It's introduced these kids to a whole new world."

NATALIE HAUFF — DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS/OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS, CHARLESTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

This year's participants are outpacing 2018's Summer Reading campaign. As of July 8, there are just over 5,200 participants who have earned more than the 2.6 million points. Points are earned based on the number of books a participant has read and result in prizes offered by the various sponsors.

According to Natalie Hauff, Director of Programs/Outreach and Communications with CCPL the collaboration with the school district has resulted in students of all ages embracing year-round reading.

"The incentives from our sponsors give kids something to look forward to, and we're so grateful to that," said Hauff. "Because we've expanded the program, kids from different geographic areas can now participate. It's introduced these kids to a whole new world."

Area principals recently visited James Island Library to read to students participating in the Summer Reading Program. — continued on page 4

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JACKSON NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE MEETS E.B. ELLINGTON STUDENTS



JACKSON AND E.B. ELLINGTON STUDENTS APRIL 2019

Jackson National Life Insurance Company (Jackson®) based in Tennessee, convened its leadership team on Kiawah Island recently for a strategy and planning session. The company also wanted to use this time to serve the local community. Lucky for Charleston County School District, the company chose a local elementary school.

Working with The Leader’s Institute®, Jackson conducted a teambuilding exercise one afternoon during their retreat, assembling bikes for students at E.B. Ellington Elementary School.

The Build-A-Bike® Team Building Workshop and charity event is a brainy, challenging, program where participants are divided into smaller groups to solve specific challenges in order to build bicycles for young children, which are then donated.

When the Ellington students arrived to receive their new bikes, the team from Jackson was impressed. The students were polite, gracious, and excited.

The experience was meaningful for the Jackson executives. Upon returning home, many wanted to do more for E.B. Ellington. Through DonorsChoose.org, the company and its associates donated more than \$13,000 to purchase requested resources for E.B. Ellington classrooms.

Ellington Principal Wanda Hughes said it was an awesome

opportunity to be chosen as part of the bike giveaway.

“We were surprised to be contacted about the Build-A-Bike giveaway,” said Hughes. “We were ecstatic to receive the bikes but even more so now that Jackson has continued to support our school with additional donations.”

DonorsChoose.org is a non-profit crowdfunding platform in which educators can request resources for their classroom. Donors contribute toward purchasing the resources which are then mailed to the school. Most of the Ellington educators’ requests were related

“We know that ‘Students are the heart of our work’. Jackson’s donation to these innovative projects will have a lasting and positive effect on our students and our school. We are so thankful for the donations.”

WANDA HUGHES
PRINCIPAL, E.B. ELLINGTON ELEMENTARY

to literacy, STEM, and wellness.

“Jackson is proud to support E.B. Ellington Elementary School and their students,” said Danielle Robinson, Assistant Vice President of Corporate Philanthropy, for Jackson. “At Jackson, we are passionate about investing in community and partnerships with non-profits like DonorsChoose.org allow us to further our philanthropic goals to strengthen families and create economic opportunities for everyone.”

Hughes described the donations as a windfall for the school’s teachers.

“We know that ‘Students are the heart of our work’,” said Hughes. “Jackson’s donation to these innovative projects will have a lasting and positive effect on our students and our school. We are so thankful for the donations.”

Jackson has a culture of giving back to the communities they serve.

“We are delighted by the commitment of the E.B. Ellington educators and staff to create a learning environment where students thrive,” said Robinson. “I’m certain our investment will impact these young people for years to come.”

West Ashley Valedictorian Honored for 12-years of Perfect Attendance



MARCUS JACKSON
WEST ASHLEY VALEDICTORIAN

A 12-year perfect attendance record is unbelievable testimony to grit and dedication according to West Ashley High School (WAHS) Principal Lee Runyon.

Very few students across South Carolina can boast that accomplishment but two scholars from WAHS can.

The State Department of Education recently recognized Marcus Jackson, West Ashley’s 2019 Valedictorian and fellow student Davonte Capers. The two have known each other since middle school. Jackson admits that there was a time when they were the only kids in the classroom during their junior year on the day after final exams.

He never set out to achieve perfect attendance. However, he had to pass on many field trips because he refused to miss class time. He always insisted that all doctor’s appointments were scheduled after school.

“It is critical to show up so as not to get behind in class,” said Jackson. “It is hard to recover from the missed instructional time. I take pride in showing up to class, and I do it because it is natural for me to want to go to school.”

Impressed by Jackson’s humbleness, Runyon bragged on his top student.

“Very few South Carolina students achieve a 12-year perfect attendance record and earn the title of Valedictorian,” said Runyon. “This is only the beginning for Marcus. He will far surpass these accomplishments.”

Jackson, who boasts a weighted 5.283 GPA, was awarded the Teaching Fellows Scholarship plans to attend the University of South Carolina to major in History. He expects to obtain a Master of Arts in Teaching as well. Aside from his love of history, Jackson enjoys reading, trivia, volunteering at the Lowcountry Food Bank, listening to classical music

and K-Pop, and playing historical video games.

As part of earning the distinction of Valedictorian Jackson was awarded The C.E. Williams Cup is given annually to the graduate who has earned the highest grade point average over his or her high school career. This award honors Mr. C.E. Williams, former Superintendent of Charleston County District 10 schools.

In his Valedictory speech, Jackson told his fellow classmates, “Curiosity, Integrity, Flexibility. These magic words can bring you success, no matter which path you take after today.”

His Rise to the Top

Jackson truly enjoyed school and learning, and credited his teachers for making learning fun.

“I was motivated to make straight A’s and not get behind,” said Jackson. “Earning the spot as my school’s valedictorian was never my goal. My goal was to make nothing less than an A.”

Principal Runyon said the leadership example he has set for his peers is unmatched.

“His fellow students have seen first-hand his diligence to produce exemplary work on a daily basis,” said Runyon. “Every day he puts on his education hardhat. He is consistent, and he is unbelievably prepared to do the work.”

His teachers have commented to Runyon that Jackson is one of the most exceptional students they have ever taught.

“He is a quiet, giant of a student,” said Runyon. “He is so well loved that he is considered a rock star here at West Ashley High School.”

Becoming an Educator

Jackson hopes to teach social studies and history. He enjoys the subject so much that he took every single social studies class offered at WAHS.

“Marcus is a gentle soul, firmly planted on the ground,” said Runyon. “He has the ability and intellectual insight to understand people. He will be there for his students as a consistent presence.”

Jackson said he is driven to do what his teachers did for him.

“I want to make history fun and inspire my future students to have a love of learning,” said Jackson. “My teachers have always been my mentors, and they pushed me to do my best. My academic success is because of the great teachers I enjoyed. They helped me to grow as a student and as a person. Those teachers are more the key to my success than anything I have done.”

Jackson is also driven by his competitive nature and a motivation to do his best.

“I would pick the smartest kid in the room and silently vow to be smarter than them,” said Jackson. “The one and only B I received on one of my third-grade report cards made me upset enough that I told myself I would never again receive an Honor Roll ribbon – only the Principal’s List Ribbon.”

Runyon said that Jackson will forever be a legend at WAHS.

“Marcus was an academic giant in the Charleston County school system, and he will be one for his future students,” said Runyon.

“My teachers have always been my favorite part of going to school. I would like to thank all of my teachers for fostering my growth and development as a student and more importantly as a person and for doing the same for all of us.”

MARCUS JACKSON — WEST ASHLEY HIGH VALEDICTORIAN

Jackson’s love of education was evident in his final words at graduation.

“My teachers have always been my favorite part of going to school,” said Jackson. “I would like to thank all of my teachers for fostering my growth and development as a student and more importantly as a person and for doing the same for all of us. I will work very hard these next few years in order to hopefully join your profession and do the same for future students, and I’m sure I speak for many of my fellow graduates.”



DAVONTE CAPERS HONORED



MARCUS JACKSON AT GRADUATION

New Summer Camp Works with Non-native English Speaking Families

Christina Vivas, a Charleston County School District (CCSD) Bilingual Parent Advocate, supports the district's non-native English speaking families each school year. Under the leadership of Chris Hagy, ESOL Curriculum

Specialist, she's an extension of the schools by purposefully immersing herself into the communities that the district serves.

Like most educators, she knows the importance of avoiding the summer slide by providing learning opportunities throughout the summer.

With support from the local community, she and CCSD Coordinator of Adult Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Aimce Herring launched a Newcomers Summer camp for children, after noticing a large influx of non-native English speaking families to CCSD this past school year.

The ESOL Newcomers Summer Program was a partnership between CCSD ESOL program, CCSD Adult Ed's ESL program, and numerous CCSD community partners in North Charleston area.

The three-week camp, which ended June 27, was packed full of educational opportunities for students, siblings, and parents.

Students rotated between classes and learned about themselves, their family, and their community, and doing it all in English. From art to math to music, the students experienced literacy education in a fun, camp-like environment.

Adults participated in ESOL classes, a Latino Literacy Project program, and a Parenting Partners program that were provided taught while the children were in their classes.

Rounding out each week were Family Fridays, which were sponsored by community partners. Community representatives were on hand to share information on topics such as health care, and education.

“This Newcomers Camp will prepare kids academically for the next school year by engaging all of their senses in an environment so organic that it addressed all of their needs as we went along.”

TERESE SHELTON, VOLUNTEER

At no charge, breakfast and lunch were provided by CCSD's Nutrition Services.

Very limited Title III funds were available to operate the program and pay for staff, so Vivas relied heavily on volunteers. Also, community partners donated bikes to each student as well as packed book bags, toiletries, and a back-to-school outfit.

“Literacy for parents is as equally important as it is for the students,” said Vivas. “We are fortunate that some of our volunteers included former ESOL educators and Adult Ed students from across the district.

It was a successful, all-hands-on-deck approach. Vivas hopes to add additional grade levels next summer.

“I’ve done grass-roots efforts all over the country, and there are a lot of different cultural factors one has to consider when launching something like this,” said volunteer Terese Shelton. “I am impressed with Christina’s ability to reach out to stakeholders and create this collaboration with faith groups, community leaders, and educators. This Newcomers Camp will prepare kids academically for the next school year by engaging all of their senses in an environment so organic that it addressed all of their needs as we went along.”



ARTS INTEGRATION AT CCSD'S NEWCOMERS CAMP



SOA STUDENT VOLUNTEER



CINDY, DIANA AND ALEXIA VOLUNTEERS TO HELP TEACH



NORTH CHAS UNITED METHODIST FAMILY ARTS NIGHT



CSU MED STUDENTS HELPING AT DREAM CENTER FAMILY NIGHT



LOWCOUNTRY ORPHAN RELIEF BOOKBAG AND CLOTHING GIVE AWAY

DISTRICT HONORS RETIREES WITH ANNUAL BANQUET



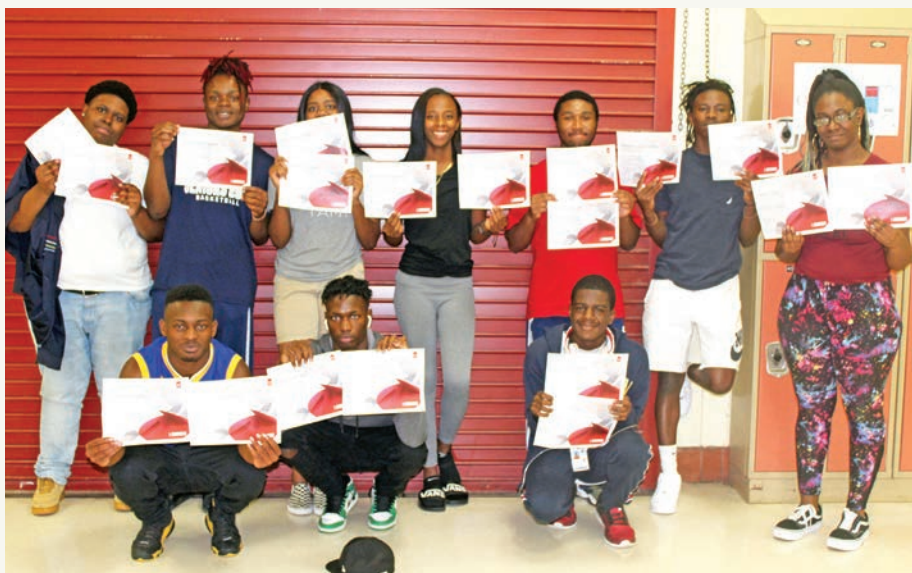
This year marked the end of one season and the beginning of another for employees retiring from Charleston County School District (CCSD).

During the annual Retiree Banquet, held June 11, 2019, CCSD honored 38 retirees who dedicated a combined total of 942 years of service to CCSD.

In their roles as teachers, academic coaches, administrative support, food service operators, instructional assistants, athletic coaches, counselors, media specialists and administrators, they supported students and their fellow educators.

With care and expertise, this group of retirees helped students and staff grow by planting seeds of knowledge and watering those seeds with ideas, encouragement and infinite possibilities. As a result, those in their care — whether in the classroom, guidance office, cafeteria or on the athletic field — flourished.

50 Certifications Earned by 25 Garrett Students in Digital Art Program



SENIOR STUDENTS PICTURED WITH CERTIFICATIONS FROM TOP LEFT:
SERENA WRIGHT, KALYNN HAMLET, NYASIA GREEN, TRAVAZIA KING, CARLOS PRINGLE,
DASHAWN GREEN MCFADDEN, SAKINAH GREEN, SHAKUR GADSDEN, JACQUEZ LEWIS,
EARL BOSTIC. (NOT PICTURED BUT ALSO CERTIFIED: LUIS MORALES-MONTIEL,
DALMONT GOURDINE, DESEAN SMALLS).

Fifty Garrett Academy of Technology digital art students finished out the school year with certifications in Digital Art.

The students, taught by Career and Technology (CTE) instructor Anita Hepburn, are now certified in two or three areas (Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, and Microburst.

Also, 12 juniors received Adobe Illustrator and 13 seniors finished the school year as completers with industry-recognized certifications and are college and career ready. In addition, 25 Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications were also received by the automotive collision and automotive service students.

“My students’ hard work paid off,” said Hepburn. “When I started teaching students, I didn’t think they would go this far. Failing was not an option. Students encouraged each other to push harder and not to give up. When someone passed the certification exam, the whole room cheered, and everybody could hear their joy.”

Adobe Illustrator is a vector drawing program, and Adobe Photoshop is a platform for image manipulations. Hepburn explained that the Adobe Certified Associate certification would prove to employers that students have the digital skills in multiple programs, and the confidence to further develop their skills.

The Microburst certification concentrates on students’ soft skills and prepares them for employability basics, communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, planning, and productivity.

“At Garrett Academy, we were disappointed with our 2018 State School Report Card,” said Principal Dale Metzger. “We scored a 49 (Below Average) only 2 from being Average. The area we felt we had the most room for growth was College and Career Readiness, where we scored an Unsatisfactory rating with only 42 percent of our graduates being considered College and Career Ready.”

Metzger challenged the faculty to improve this metric through a focused effort in three specific areas:

- Rededicate to preparing students for the WIN Career Readiness assessment.
- Work with Chad Vail (CCSD’s Work-based Learning Partnerships Coordinator) to find opportunities for students to participate in Qualifying Work-Based Learning and Internships.
- Work within our CTE Department to ensure as many of our students as possible could become CTE completers with an industry-recognized certification.

“Through these efforts, we were able to recognize over 80 percent of our 2019 graduates as College and/or Career Ready,” said Metzger. “With a little luck, we will move our state report card rating to ‘Average’ for 2019!”

Hepburn said it was truly an amazing experience to teach these students.

“They proved that everybody can succeed,” said Hepburn. “Earning hard skill and soft skill certifications will help these students to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate the ability to combine technical skills with employability skills.”

“My students’ hard work paid off. When I started teaching students, I didn’t think they would go this far. Failing was not an option. Students encouraged each other to push harder and not to give up. When someone passed the certification exam, the whole room cheered, and everybody could hear their joy”

ANITA HEPBURN – CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY (CTE) INSTRUCTOR

Academic Magnet Robotics Team Wins First Place in Engineering Design at SeaPerch International Competition

Academic Magnet High School’s (AMHS) Robotics Team won first place in the Open Class Engineering Process and Design category in the 2019 SeaPerch Challenge held at the University of Maryland on June 1-2, 2019.

Team members included Gage Gailbreath, Stephen Hilton, Daniel Killough, Angela Li, John Paradise, and Bohan Wang.

"As teachers, we have standards, curricula and proven programs that we follow, but it is these kinds of real-world projects that evolve students into scholars," said physics teacher and AMHS robotics team sponsor/coach, Maria Desbrow. “My kids are seriously smart.”

Organized by RoboNation, the international SeaPerch competition presents an opportunity for high school students to learn about STEM-related fields by creating an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

The competition challenged students to have an ROV that executes rescue operations.

Using SeaPerch kits, a Nanoline controller, Arduino boards and sensors, AMHS Robotics Team members created an autonomous system of underwater rovers complete with infrared sensors and GPS technology. The system allows the small vehicles to detect and avoid debris, while simultaneously identifying and pinpointing possible rescue persons and locations within bodies of water.

The team built two rovers: a smaller scouting bot, which was half the size of a normal SeaPerch kit that was outfitted with sensors to record information; and a Search and Rescue bot, the normal size for a SeaPerch kit, that has a malleable hook to pick up and move objects within the rescue and recovery course.

Over 2,000 middle and high school teams competed over the past year throughout the United States. Two hundred of these groups advanced to face international teams from four countries to compete in three categories of speed and agility, rescue and recovery, and engineering process and design.

AMHS competed in the regional competition held in Charleston against 30 teams in March of this year, then advanced to the international challenge.

Although the AMHS robot performed respectably in the obstacle and mission courses, the judges were most impressed with the engineering process and design the students created.

While the team’s automation system appears to be very sophisticated technologically, the rover itself was physically built using recycled pool noodles, a coat hanger, and a pencil on top of the basic SeaPerch kit. The rover looked so simple that, during the question and answer portion of the presentation, judges remarked, "On one side, we have NASA, and on the other is what you can find on the floor."

As the typical SeaPerch robot is made using no more than \$25 beyond the original SeaPerch kit, the team decided to follow that general low-budget model, with added technology.



THE 2019 ACADEMIC MAGNET ROBOTICS TEAM WITH THEIR FIRST PLACE ENGINEERING PROCESS SEAPERCH TROPHY: (L TO R): DAVID YOUNG, SEAPERCH CHALLENGE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, ROBO NATION, DANIEL KILLOUGH, ANGELA LI, GAGE GAILBREATH, JOHN PARADISE, BOHAN WANG, STEPHEN HILTON, AMHS PHYSICS TEACHER AND ROBOTICS TEAM SPONSOR/ COACH, MARIA DESBROW AND LINDSEY GROARK, STEM PROGRAMS DIRECTOR, ROBO NATION).

“We found that the more complex we made the rover from stock in terms of our design, the more problems we had with it,” said Killough.

“We decided to devote more time to making the automation run more efficiently than making the rovers look nice. Simple is best, and that was proven through this competition,” added Hilton.

The students not only learned about the process and challenges of creating an ROV but how their work can go in solving real-world issues.

“The 2019 SeaPerch Challenge mission was inspired by the real-life events of the 2018 cave rescues in Thailand,” said Academic Magnet High School Principal Catherine Spencer. “AMHS students know firsthand the threats and dangers of rising waters and worked together to create a rover capable of navigating not just a cave, but possibly a Lowcountry waterway or flooded street to assist with search and rescue efforts. We are proud of their achievement as well as their desire to create a device to improve their community and world.”

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Erica Taylor, *Chief of Staff*
Sully Witte, *Communications Officer*

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County Library Partners With District for Summer Reading Program – Continued from page 1

“Literacy shapes everything these kids will do in their future,” said Jonetta Gregory, principal of James Island Elementary School. “This program provides access to reading and experiences and encourages not just the students but the parents as well.”

Kids ages 11 and younger earn prizes for reading or listening to stories. Students entering grades 6-12 win prizes for reading whatever they like. Participants ages 18 and older are eligible for bi-monthly gift card prizes and a grand prize drawing.

The regional branches, as expected, have higher participation, which is why this year the program has hosted pop-up libraries in rural areas and partnered with CCSD’s Nutrition Services to provide meals through the district’s Seamless Summer Feeding Program. Free lunch is available to children and teens age 18 and younger at seven branches. Also, CARTA has launched a new Free Student Fare pilot program that allows students (ages 6 and older) to ride CARTA for free.

This is the second time CCSD and CCPL have partnered to implement the program. As part of the collaboration, every student has been automatically registered for the program that corresponds to their age.

“The kids truly miss school during the summer, even if they don’t admit it,” said James. “This program brings everyone together to support reading. The library has been incredibly responsive in making this program kid-centered and by removing barriers and creating access points at every turn.”

Today’s local libraries are not the traditional facilities where all is quiet. They are fun, community hubs.

“The Summer Reading Program is an extension of the fun, engaging activities we host year-round,” said Hauff. “We’re now able to expand our reach far beyond books.”