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Helpful Internet Tools for Children Makes Homework a Snap

The Public Library's newly designed and improved version of **KIDSPACE**—its widely used web page for children up to grade six—can be a big help now that kids are back in school. Greatly enhanced and greatly expanded, **KIDSPACE** takes kids as far as their imaginations can go, plus offers plenty of helpful ideas to parents, caregivers, and teachers for keeping kids engaged in the learning process. Not only is it easier to navigate, it provides substantially more information to explore.

Homework Help, one of the most popular areas of the web page, has been expanded significantly with hundreds of useful web sites that have been carefully selected by librarians on staff. Many more links connecting kids with answers to questions on a multitude of topics have been added. Its easy-to-use design makes doing homework assignments less monotonous and more enjoyable. Among the helpful topics are Art & Architecture, Current Events, Magazines & Newspapers, Government, Health & Nutrition, History (African American, Ohio, United States, and more), Holidays & Seasons, Math, Money, Mythology & Religion, Ohio People (Inventors, Ohioans, Presidents, and more), Places (Countries, Maps, States, and more), Reference (Encyclopedias, Magazine & Newspaper Articles, and more), Science (Animals, Dinosaurs, Science Fair Projects, and more), Using the Library, Web Tools, and Writing.

Another great feature, **Books & Reading**, introduces kids to current reading choices in a variety of fun ways. Kids can link to sites about their favorite books as well as the authors and illustrators who create them. They can read through biographies, link to magazines, and access the sites of well-known authors, even write to them. Within this category, click on *Shooting Stars* to find out about exciting new books for kids in the Library's collection. There are also many well-researched booklists from among the endless possibilities that librarians have identified as the best books.

Ideas on things to do around town are also just a click away in **Cincinnati Stuff**. Here relevant news, information on local parks and recreation, even weather predictions can be easily accessed. Designed especially for adults, **Parents & Teachers** points out fun field trips, how to arrange library tours, information on schools in the area, resources and informative sites for homeschoolers, and plenty of ways to keep children engaged.

***Seven Hills Review* Online Provides Means of Creative Expression for Teens**

Since 1963, *Seven Hills Review* magazine has been a means of creative expression for teens. Published by the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, this unique publication, which was originally sponsored by the Friends of the Public Library, began as a book review in the fall of 1963. Teens from around the Cincinnati and Hamilton County area were invited to submit their thoughts about books while creating original artwork for the cover. Several years later teen poetry by area students became its main thrust.

Although the format has changed from a print publication to a web-based eZine, the concept remains the same—a creative publication produced by the Public Library, by teens, for teens, grades 7 through 12. The new online version offers more flexibility with more reach so teens can conveniently log onto the web page from anywhere, whether at home, at school, or at their neighborhood library. Creative expression, such as writing, artwork and photography, once limited by printing costs and space constraints, can now more effectively and efficiently showcase a broader range of submissions.

Separate teen areas, wired for the future with multiple computers providing Internet access and CD-ROM stations, are being created in various branches. Library programs, such as poetry slams, teen book clubs and drama clubs, teen mystery nights and Medieval nights, and various teen gatherings are also being fashioned to respond to teen interests. In October, and especially during Teen Read Week (October 13-19), there will be many special programs of interest to teens, and in particular, programs on graphic novels, a fast-growing genre.

Teens should also remember that the *Seven Hills Review* is not only a creative outlet for them, it's a social outlet. It's a fun way to develop their own creativity while taking an interest in the talents of others. Writers and editors, as well as other artists, can participate in various interactive functions such as poetry readings, art shows, and pizza parties. And, since the initial eZine launch reception was a "virtual" success, it's likely an annual reception will be held at the Main Library for the writers/artists whose submissions were published.

Two to three issues a year of *Seven Hills Review* will be published in the fall, winter and spring. In the current issue are 75 submissions written by more than 50 students from various middle and high schools. New modes of creativity, such as art and photography, have been added, and an art gallery to spotlight these works is planned.

Teens (grades 7-12) can make submissions online at www.cincinnati.library.org/sevenhillsreview or send them to: Teen Coordinator, Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, 800 Vine Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. There's no cost to be involved or to submit materials. See submission guidelines online.