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Press
Release

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Nearly 18,000 Children and Teens Participated in ReadQuest This Past Summer

When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.

~ Maya Angelou ~

While most kids were at the pool, enjoying summer camp, playing baseball, or involved in typical activities during their time away from school, nearly 18,000 kids and teens instead chose to be part of the Public Library's 32nd annual summer reading program, **ReadQuest: Unlock the Mystery...Read!**

Laura Dell, Program Coordinator, noted "despite the program being one week shorter than in 2004, we saw some significant increases in participation, with half the branches showing major gains in the number of kids and teens involved." Three branches actually more than doubled their numbers over last year: Avondale (135%), Hyde Park (126%), and West End (113%).

"Librarians observed that kids participated for a longer amount of time this summer," she continued. "In past years, kids would finish fast and then disappear from the program, but this year they seemed to stick around. I think having an opportunity to win one of nine bikes was a good incentive for many. We're extremely grateful that we were able to offer this extra motivation, thanks to the Cincinnati Chapter of Executive Women International."

Children could participate in a reading activity or read five books to get through four reading levels. After completing all four levels, they received a book and were eligible to enter a drawing to win one of nine Schwinn bicycles, provided courtesy of Executive Women International. Teens participating in three hours of reading activities entered weekly drawings for incentives that included gift certificates for restaurants, movie tickets, and other items. They were also able to choose a book during the first week of the program.

The nine Schwinn bikes were awarded to Claire McDonald (Anderson), Jerry (no last name, Bond Hill), Shannon Kaine (Delhi Township), Carlie Wilhelm (Harrison), Selena Stone (Main Library), Hayley Samson (Mariemont), Anna Risma (Mt. Healthy), Kyle Fielman (Mt. Washington), and Andrina Holmes (Westwood).

“We’ve often been asked why the Library puts so much time and energy into our summer reading program,” said Lisa Hamrick, Manager of the Children’s Learning Center at the Main Library. “Studies show that students lose some of their literacy skills if they don’t use them during summer school breaks. We try to make *ReadQuest* as engaging and fun as possible to keep kids reading while school is out. Reading over the summer enhances student achievement.” According to the National Reading Panel’s 2000 report, hundreds of correlation studies suggest that “the more children read, the better their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.”

“By emphasizing fun and prizes for reading as well as offering kids a huge range of books to choose from, we try to stimulate interest in voluntary reading,” she continued. “The real rewards are not the inexpensive incentives, but the joy of reading!”

ReadQuest is supported by the Friends of the Public Library, which provided funding for special programs throughout the summer, and the Anderson Township Library Association, providing support for programs at the Anderson and Mt. Washington branches.

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✓ **Information about events at the Main Library and 41 branch libraries is available on the Internet site: www.CincinnatiLibrary.org.**