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Contact: Stephanie Simon

Phone: 518.427.4344

Email: simons@albanypubliclibrary.org

PRESS RELEASE

Albany Public Library Announces Initiatives for Children at Press Conference with Mayor Sheehan and City School District

Summer Reading Program and New MyCard Children's Library Card Detailed

ALBANY, NY—Local officials from Albany Public Library (APL), the City of Albany, and the City School District of Albany joined together at City Hall on Friday morning to announce literacy initiatives aimed at increasing children's access to the library and emphasizing the importance of reading to our youngest citizens.

Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan shared her experiences as a young girl participating in her hometown library's Summer Reading Program, which sparked her love of biographies of famous women and started her down the path to public service. Beginning with Friday's event, free children's and young adult books will be available in the City Hall Rotunda while supplies last. This press event and free book initiative is part of the City of Albany's monthly series of community programs presented at the Rotunda.

Albany City School District Superintendent Dr. Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard discussed the importance of youngsters reading during the summer months so they don't lose the academic strides they made during the school year.

Albany Public Library Assistant Director Melanie Metzger shared details of the annual Summer Reading Program, which is designed to encourage children and teens to continue to read, and engage in other educational pursuits, during those long, leisurely weeks between June and September. The library's Summer Reading Program, which runs from June 28 through Aug. 16, rewards young people for their reading and participation in mind-enriching activities. During the Summer Reading Program, the city's seven libraries are hosting close to 100 special events and fun activities, including science experiments, dance parties, food tastings, arts and crafts, game challenges, and more. All programs are free.

Metzger also announced a new library card for children—dubbed MyCard—that allows city children to get a card on their own and use it to borrow up to three items at a time, with no late fees. MyCard also gives users access to the library's free public computers and to digital materials, like eBooks and eMagazines, which are available for free from the library's website. MyCard is only available to city of Albany youth under the age of 18, and can only be used at APL's seven locations in the city of Albany.

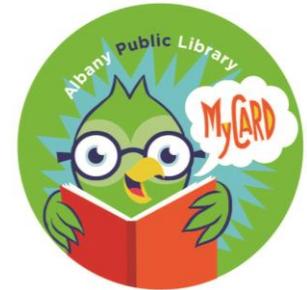
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“The benefit of MyCard is that youngsters can come into the library on their own and get a card that lets them borrow up to three items at a time, and have the freedom to take as long as they need to read those books without racking up late fees,” Metzger said. “Once done with a book, a MyCard user can return it to the library and borrow another one. This new card gives children and teens an opportunity to explore the library, and the world of reading, on their own.”

As part of the MyCard rollout, which begins on June 27, Albany Public Library is waiving late fees on all current children’s cards. This one-time waiver will put current children’s cardholders on the same level playing field as new MyCard cardholders.

Twenty-one fifth grade students from the Arbor Hill Elementary School participated in the press conference and were issued the first APL MyCards, which feature a brightly-colored owl designed for APL by Albany artist Philip Pascuzzo of Pepco Studio.



Children and teens will have the option of getting the new MyCard, or getting a traditional youth library card. The regular card requires a parent/guardian signature and proof of address. The traditional youth card allows up to 200 checkouts at a time, but also accrues late fees. The regular youth card can be used at all libraries in the Upper Hudson Library System (Albany and Rensselaer counties).

For more information about Albany Public Library’s Summer Reading Program and new MyCard for children and teens, please visit any of the seven APL libraries or the website at www.albanypubliclibrary.org.

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Albany Public Library (APL) educates, entertains, and empowers our community. APL operates seven award-winning branches serving the residents of Albany. Each month, about 75,000 people use the libraries to borrow materials, attend programs, access computers, and research information. More than 90,000 books, DVDs, and other materials are circulated each month. Visit APL online at www.albanypubliclibrary.org. And, look for the free “Albany Public Library Mobile” app for Apple and Android devices.

