“UNIVERSE OF STORIES”
Coming Soon to Our Galaxy: The Garden City Public Library

By Sarah Cox

June 4 was the kick-off for the annual Summer Reading Program at the Garden City Public library. This year’s theme, a “Universe of Stories,” promises to be a really out-of-this-world program with activities for parents and children from infancy through teen years.

What you may not know is that you - wonderful donors and friends of the Garden City Library Foundation - are the ones who make this program possible. The Summer Reading Program is funded by the Foundation and is second only to the Big Blue Bus in our priorities. So what is this program and who are the great folks who make it happen?

The Summer Reading Program at the Garden City Public Library began officially on June 1. The kick-off was a big celebration in the Courtyard on June 4. The theme of the Program this year is “A Universe of Stories.” College of Idaho’s Star Lab was on hand for the kick-off to engage children and families in reading and science fun for the Summer with engineering for kids and creating stomp rockets. There was face painting, crafts, games, and some special other worldly guests. Lots of fun and over 200 attendees!
The program officially ends on August 1 with a drawing for prizes including passes to Roaring Springs, bicycles, long boards, and, of course, books. Children and families register during the kick-off or any time in June or July and get busy reading. Children are encouraged to read 10 books over the course of the Summer (6 for teens).

The goal of the Summer Reading Program is to help prevent the ‘Summer Slide’ – children losing reading ability over the Summer. ‘Summer Slide’ is a problem for all kids, but is especially serious in neighborhoods where parents may struggle to support their children in reading or other academics. Some parents may be working extra hours just to keep food on the table or may be academically challenged themselves. The Summer Reading Program at Garden City Public Library helps all children achieve their potential.

The Program is built on levels (numbers of books read toward their total) to keep children and families engaged. Every time a child completes a level, they come in to the Library for a small prize. If they reach their final reading level of 10 books, they are entered in a drawing for big prizes at the conclusion of the Program. Kids who read more than 10 books get multiple chances in the drawing.

This wonderful program is the brainchild of Amanda Berardinelli and Rachel Worthington (see photo), two of the very special staff members at the Garden City Public Library. Amanda has been with our library for 7 months and came to us from the library in Meridian. She is a BSU graduate with a degree in English and Communications. Her co-worker Rachel describes Amanda as “a go-getter who is passionate about helping others.” Amanda also has a “perfect” dog – Reggie – who really should be the official Garden City Public Library Dog! Rachel is an Idaho native, and has worked at our library for 2 years. Rachel's degree is in Multi-Ethnic Studies. Her friend and co-worker Amanda describes Rachel as “absolutely passionate about helping our littlest patrons and their families with early literacy.” How lucky for all of us in Garden City that these two women are so passionate about helping our children learn.

So thank you Garden City Public Library Foundation donors! We are so fortunate to have your support for this great program that helps children learn and families keep reading.