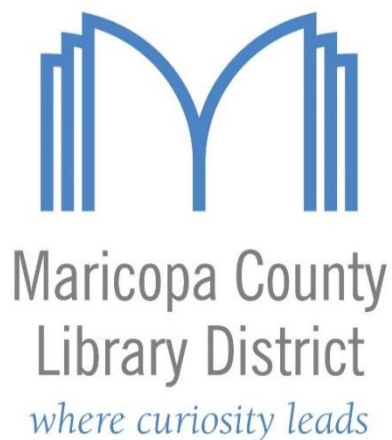


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Maricopa County Reads  
2019 Summer Reading Program

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Summary & Report



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## Overview

The [Maricopa County Library District](#) (MCLD) is proud to share the success of its annual online countywide Summer Reading Program. From June 1 to August 1, all public libraries, two tribal libraries, a military base library and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office library in Maricopa County (67 locations, representing 19 library systems) encouraged almost 83,000 county residents to participate in our Summer Reading Program.

Building on the accomplishments and lessons of past years, the 2019 Summer Reading Program sought to accomplish two primary goals: interrupt the summer slide and promote literacy among children and their families. To achieve these goals, multiple strategies were incorporated in the program format, the Great Reading Adventure software, and the marketing campaign. Strategies focused on encouraging participants to read twenty minutes a day, modeling positive reading behaviors, and building home libraries.

Each year the Summer Reading Program is built around a theme, provided by the [Collaborative Summer Library Program](#) (CSLP). The Arizona State Library supplies supporting materials created by CSLP to each of the participating libraries. This year's theme was "A Universe of Stories," in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Moon landing. MCLD staff, along with the assistance of representatives from many of the 19 library systems, planned a comprehensive program that included an interactive online platform to record program activity, digital badging, activity challenges, prize incentives and sponsored coupons, community experiences, a series of free and engaging events at participating libraries, and a marketing campaign to spread awareness.

Continuing this year was a partnership with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to provide a Summer Reading Program to adults experiencing incarceration. This program has the potential to positively impact this community by encouraging adult to read for learning and/or for enjoyment with the goal of reducing recidivism. The dates for this program were extended to better fit their library structure, which led to a 300% increase in participation with 2,134 reading logs completed.

## Outcomes

The two primary goals of the Summer Reading Program are to interrupt the summer slide, the common term given to the learning loss experienced by children while transitioning between school years, and to promote literacy among children and their families. Strategies employed to accomplish these goals included:

1. Challenging all participants to read at least 20 minutes every day
2. Providing a free book to all participants who reach 1,000 points during the program
3. Offering an online interactive platform to log activity or optional paper game board
4. Encouraging teens and adults to model reading to children
5. Links to online read-aloud stories for children who may not have access to books
6. Including early literacy tips and information to parents within the software
7. Connecting readers with community experiences to build comprehension skills

Using the Great Reading Adventure software (or a paper game board), participants are encouraged to build a habit of reading twenty minutes a day by working towards a total reading goal of 1,000 minutes. Various incentives are achieved along the way including a free food coupon/sports ticket at 500 points and a free book at 1,000 points. The free book incentive serves as a motivator towards the reading goal and helps to build home libraries, an important aspect of increasing children's literacy success. Teens and adults are also encouraged to participate in the program in order to model positive reading behaviors as they work towards their own reading goals and incentives.

Important to the program's success is consistent staff training throughout the many library systems regarding the goals and tracking points, along with the functionality of the program and software. Three online trainings were created and distributed this year (one for administrators, one for customer service staff and a general program overview).

## Outcomes

In hopes of breaking down barriers, the largest change to the 2019 program was seen in the ability to toggle the online interface between English and Spanish. Participants had the choice to participate in the language of their preference from start to finish. It was also ensured that prize information, frequently ask questions, social media posts, email correspondence and marketing was conducted in in both languages. The objective was to incorporate three Spanish-language elements into the program but that was far exceeded by the implementation of the entire online program in the dual language.



Figure 1: The online program with the choice to participate in Spanish.

Another update to the program this year was to look for partnerships that benefited two specific MCLD libraries. Participants in Gila Bend and Aguila struggle to use free food coupons from our partners because of the distance to their nearest location is too far. In 2019, partnerships were formed to be able to give 500-point prizes to these participants that they could use. In Gila Bend, a partnership was formed with their local [McDonald's](#) restaurant who donated free kid's meal passes for participant's ages 0-11. For Aguila, a partnership was formed with the local NPR-affiliate, [K-JZZ](#), who has a recording studio on wheels that includes an outdoor stage and a food truck. This vehicle is referred to as [Soundbite](#). An event was held in Aguila, where any participant who reached 500 points was able to get a free meal from [Short Leash](#), the Soundbite partner restaurant. There was also live mariachi music on the outdoor stage and the recording of stories inside the truck's studio. This partnership expanded and Soundbite traveled to many participating libraries as an event to record local stories and the histories of library customers and staff.

## Marketing

The 2019 Summer Reading Program marketing strategy emphasized digital promotion to generate traffic to read20az.com. New this year were separate “A Universe of Stories” themed Facebook posts in English and Spanish to better reach Spanish speakers and encourage them to register for Summer Reading. Throughout the program, messaging for Summer Reading promotion was diverse and focused on sign up, completion, prizes, community experiences, challenges, and early literacy.

Highlights included:

- Two-thirds increase in total digital acquisition
- More than 13% increase in people going directly to read20az.com instead of library specific webpages
- Trackable URLs generated 66% more new users and 66% more sessions
- Valley wide, bi-lingual radio campaign with iHeartMedia yielded 467,000+ impressions
- Facebooks posts generated 74% more clicks to read20az.com
- Step-by-step video for creating a Summer Reading icon on smartphones
- Weekly messages sent to MCLD’s list of ~130, 000 email subscribers
- Social media posts in both English and Spanish



Figure 2: Marketing graphic created to advertise on social media.



Figure 3: Marketing bookmark.

## Software

It was an exciting year for the Great Reading Adventure open-source software which powers Maricopa County Reads. This year we were proud to roll out internationalization for the participant front-end of the software including localization for Spanish! In addition to translating all of the messages that allow the software to function, we were able to facilitate translation of additional information (like the “about the program” and “frequently asked questions pages”).

Some additional features that were added to the software include:

- Spatial search for Events and Community Experiences by providing an address or ZIP Code. This allowed Maricopa County Reads participants to find nearby activities sponsored by any one of the eighteen library systems participating in the program, even if that wasn’t set as their primary library location.
- An opt-in question about receiving a few reminder emails through the summer reading program with a single-click unsubscribe feature. Aligning with the internationalization of the software, the emails we sent out provided text in both English and Spanish.
- Improvements to the free book redemption process: more aggressive notification to participants when they’ve earned their free book, a carousel of free book options for viewing on the dashboard, and enhanced book redemption for groups.
- A fully unified staff experience with news, performer scheduling, and program administration all tied to a single account and operating out of the application itself.

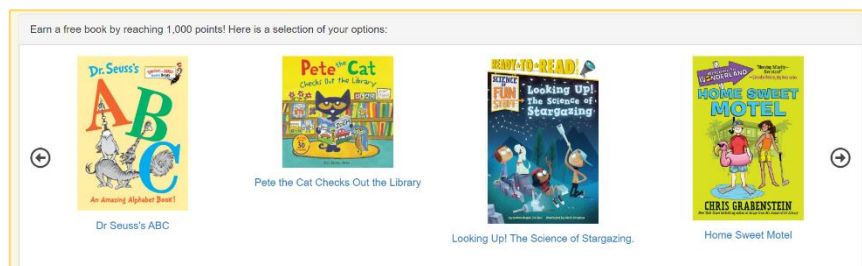


Figure 4: Sample carousel of free book prize options found on the program’s dashboard.

## Game Content

Digital badges continued to be used in 2019 to mark program achievements (program registration, 500-point achievement, etc.) and to indicate the completion of in-game challenges. Badges also provide added motivation and incentive for participants to continue logging reading points throughout the Summer Reading Program.

Daily, bilingual early literacy tips from Expect More Arizona and Smart Talk graphics from Read On Arizona continued to populate on the game dashboard of anyone who is registered as a prereader. Another feature that continued was web links to online literacy resources and activities on the game dashboard, accessible as soon as someone logged into their account. Collectively, the sites were accessed from the Great Reading Adventure software more than 7,800 times.

Upon registration during the month of May, participants could choose to enter their email address so that they would receive an email reminding them of the program when it officially began on June 1<sup>st</sup>. This reminder email had a 61.3% open rate with a 45.9% click rate and a total of 1,792 clicks.

Avatars continued to allow for personalized engagement in the online program. Avatar accessory bundles, such as swimwear, pirates and monsters, were unlocked throughout the program. To keep with this summer's space theme, the spacesuits, flight suits, movie-inspired galactic wear, and planet heads for the avatars was added this summer allowing for 3.6 septillion possible avatar combinations. Additionally, customers were able to share their avatars on social media platforms to personally promote their engagement with the program.



Figure 5: Sample avatar with a flight suit and planet head.



## Community Experiences

230 unique community experiences were created for the 2019 Summer Reading Program.

A community experience is a special summer reading event that takes place outside the library at an external organization or to highlight a feature or space in a library. These experiences can be hands-on workshops, classes, festivals, tasks, scavenger hunts, places, etc. and provide participants with the experiential knowledge that is a key component of literacy. Staff from all participating libraries collaborated with community partners to create secret codes that were found and redeemed for a digital badge and bonus points.

Experiences	Location	Users	Description
Gilbert Local Art Rotating Exhibit, Southeast Regional Library lobby	Southeast Regional Library - MCLD	580	Make sure to visit the lobby of the Southeast Regional Library, and check out the photography and art exhibits, and find the secret code!
Friends Place Bookstore, Friends of Gilbert Libraries	Southeast Regional Library - MCLD	572	Drop by the Friends Place Bookstore and see what's new! Ask at the Friends desk for a secret code. Store located in the lobby of the Southeast Regional Library.
Northwest Regional Library Explorer	Northwest Regional Library - MCLD	538	Track down the Library Explorer code at El Mirage, Fairway, Gila Bend, Goodyear, Hollyhock, Litchfield Park, Northwest Regional, Sun City and White Tank Libraries to earn points as you visit Maricopa County Libraries in the West Valley. Collect 3 or more codes and get a SUPER EXPLORER badge!
Litchfield Park Library Explorer	Litchfield Park Library - MCLD	476	See the Northwest Regional Library Explorer description.
City of Surprise Marquee	City of Surprise	259	The City of Surprise will be posting a secret code on the marquee at Bullard and Bell in June! Keep your eyes peeled for the code!
Water Use It Wisely Tower	Queen Creek Library - MCLD	177	Visit the astonishing Water Tower at the Queen Creek Library during the month of July 2019.
Children's Museum of Phoenix: Paint the Robot	Children's Museum of Phoenix	149	There's a giant robot out there who needs a new coat of paint. If you find it, and paint it, a secret code will be revealed!
Tempe History Museum	Tempe History Museum	147	Visit Tempe History Museum & look for the secret code to earn bonus points!
June swimming @ Surprise Aquatic Center	Surprise Aquatic Center	139	Have fun swimming this June at the Surprise Aquatic Center and earn points toward summer reading.
Arizona Mills	Arizona Mills	136	Visit the Arizona Mills Mall & look for the secret code to earn bonus points!

Figure 6: Top Community Experiences.

## Sponsors and Incentives

Donations from outside organizations support the program by providing incentives. [Peter Piper Pizza](#) and [Rubio's Coastal Grill](#) donated free food coupons, and [Phoenix Mercury](#) donated up to four free tickets to a game for program participants that achieved 500 points. [Harkins Theatres](#) donated a prize pack for each of the 67 participating libraries, which was drawn from any participant to reach 1,000 points by the end of the program. Each prize pack included loyalty ups, admission passes and free popcorn. Prize coupons were also donated to multiple MCLD libraries by [Arizona State Parks & Trails](#), [Bahama Bucks](#), [Black Bear Diner](#), [Whataburger](#), [Applebee's](#), and [Sonic Drive-In of Phoenix](#) but did not support the Summer Reading Program as a whole.



Figure 7: Summer Reading sponsor logos.

MCLD participants that logged at least 140 points a week earned entry in a weekly prize drawing featuring free passes donated by [Hurricane Harbor Phoenix](#), in partnership with [Maricopa County Parks and Recreation](#). Weekly teen drawings were conducted for a free one-topping large pizza from [Hungry Howies](#). Additional drawing prizes included a Grippies Builders for pre-readers, a Boom! Fun with Science kit or a National Geographic telescope for kids, wireless headphones for teens and a Kindle Fire Tablet adults.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 8: Images of the MCLD weekly drawing prizes.

<sup>1</sup> Drawings and prizes vary by library system. Some systems offer additional point incentives and drawing prizes.

## Free Books

In an effort to build home libraries, the Summer Reading Program offers participants that achieve 1,000 points one of 166 free books from our custom online marketplace. More than 25,600 Summer Reading Program participants chose a title from this year's selections, which featured fiction, non-fiction, and activity books for early readers through adults. Participants could select books from any age category. Bilingual and Spanish-language books were available at every reading level with 793 of these titles redeemed as a prize.

In hopes of reaching our objective to build home libraries, a preview of the free online bookstore was linked when participants logged on, along with a changing carousel of books which highlighted the free prize book options. There was an increase in the number of participants who reached their goal of 1,000 points and then chose to redeem or donate their prize book from 74% of participants in 2018 to 81% in 2019.

A partnership continued this year with Maricopa County Human Services Department which allowed participants the option to donate their free book to local Head Start classrooms instead of redeeming it for themselves. More than 1,500 participants chose to donate their book to 85 individual Head Start classrooms across Maricopa County.

### Top 10 Free Book Titles

*Dog Man 6: Brawl of the Wild* by Dav Pilkey

*Paint by Sticker Kids* by Workman Publishing

*Mini Pusheen Coloring Book* by Claire Belton

*Weird but True! 10: 350 Outrageous Facts* by National Geographic Kids

*The Magic Misfits* by Neil Patrick Harris

*Dog Ate My Mad Libs* by Roger Price

*Frozen: Ultimate Sticker Book* by DK Publishing

*Pokemon Readeractive: Alolan Academy* by Simcha Whitehill

*Narwhal and Jelly 1: Unicorn of the Sea* by Ben Clanton

*The Big Book of Word Search: 500 Puzzles* by Parragon Books

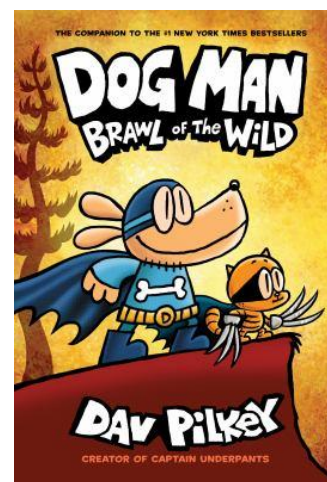


Figure 9: “Dog Man 6: Brawl of the Wild” by Dav Pilkey, the most ordered free prize book option in 2019.

## Events

MCLD paid for one youth, teen, and adult event at each of the 66 participating libraries. Programs linked library customers with educational and cultural experiences on a wide range of topics. They also provided an opportunity to connect the in-person library experience with the online program using secret codes to earn digital badges. Libraries did have the option to receive a kit instead of an event, if that better served their customers. Kits provided the flexibility for passive or staff-led programs. Kit topics included dramatic play costumes, games, and STEM activities. MCLD provided 169 events and 29 kits to participating libraries.

### Top Programs

As You Wish “Canvas or Pottery Painting”

Dino Crew Entertainment

Hampstead Stage Company’s “Jungle Book”

Robot Ambassador, Eric Ose “Nebula Light Boxes”

Mark Carter’s science programs

Dr. Trex’s Science Exploration!

### Top Kits

Escape the Room

Family Outdoor Games

Henna Tattoo



Figure 11: Indoor Inflatable Planetarium at MCLD’s Perry Library.



Figure 10: Viva Aguila with KJZZ’s Soundbite at MCLD’s Aguila Library.



Figure 12: Dino Crew Entertainment at MCLD’s Northwest Regional Library.



## Overall Statistics

The Summer Reading Program features four age groups: Prereaders (Birth to 4), Kids (Ages 5 to 11), Teens (Ages 12 to 17) and Adults (Ages 18+). A total of 82,982 participants registered online between May 1 and August 1, 2019. Of those, 36,119 became achievers (earned 1,000 points)—an achievement rate of 44%.

- 76,875,117 reading minutes were logged
- 1,198,532 digital badges were earned
- 40,575 challenges were completed
- 27,667 free books were awarded
- 1,529 free books were donated to local Head Start classrooms
- 2,134 Inmate participants in the Maricopa County Jails

The graph below illustrates Summer Reading participation and achievement rates over the past three years. The highest increase this summer from the 2018 program can be seen in the number of participants who reached 1,000 points or received achiever status with an over 3,000 participant increase.

### Library System Participation & Achievers

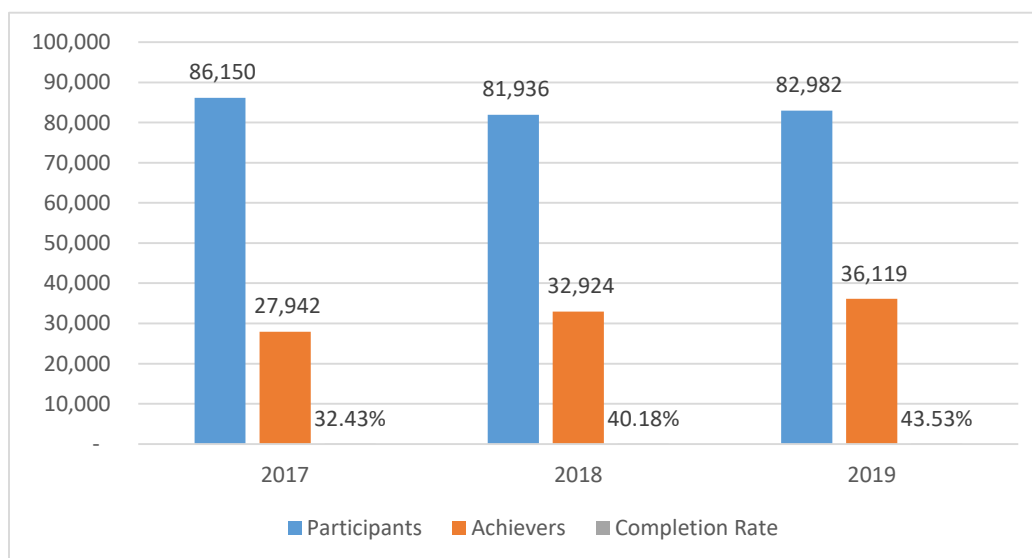


Figure 13: System-wide participants and achievers 2017-2019.

## 2019 Participants and Achievers by Library System

	Total Participants	Total Achievers	Rate of Achievement
Avondale Public Library	1,499	479	32.0%
Buckeye Public Library	1,758	778	44.3%
Chandler Public Library	10,737	5,639	52.5%
Desert Foothills Library	254	117	46.1%
Fort McDowell Tribal Library	73	10	13.7%
Glendale Public Library	2,043	1,509	73.9%
Luke Air Force Base Library	213	88	41.3%
Maricopa County Library District	19,620	8,514	43.4%
Mesa Public Library	7,916	3,326	42.0%
Morristown Volunteer Library	58	4	6.9%
Peoria Public Library	2,339	1,097	46.9%
Phoenix Public Library	24,423	8,987	36.8%
Salt River Tribal Library	116	11	9.5%
Scottsdale Public Library	7,445	3,170	42.6%
Tempe Public Library	3,905	2,165	55.4%
Tolleson Public Library	456	168	36.8%
Wickenburg Public Library	52	24	46.2%
Youngtown Public Library	74	33	44.6%

*Figure 14: 2019 Participants and Achievers by Library System.*

### Participants and Achievers by Program Age & Library System

Library System	Prereaders		Kids		Teens		Adults	
	Signups	Achievers	Signups	Achievers	Signups	Achievers	Signups	Achievers
Avondale Public Library	231	59	674	176	182	76	412	168
Buckeye Public Library	232	78	824	354	258	119	444	227
Chandler Public Library	1,340	577	5,230	2,742	1,515	877	2,652	1,443
Desert Foothills Library	26	11	124	43	16	8	88	55
Fort McDowell Yavapai Tribal Library	21	4	33	1	5	1	14	4
Glendale Public Library	328	250	864	625	266	181	585	453
Luke Air Force Base Library	26	10	46	15	9	5	132	58
Maricopa County Library District	2,593	997	8,862	3,207	2,757	1,361	5,408	2,949
Mesa Public Library	1,325	490	3,346	1,232	1,067	538	2,178	1,066
Morristown Volunteer Library	1	0	38	0	10	0	9	4
Peoria Public Library	314	127	1,032	404	378	228	615	338
Phoenix Public Library	3,616	1,077	10,741	3,738	2,942	1,135	7,124	3,037
Salt River Tribal Library	3	0	49	3	42	4	22	4
Scottsdale Public Library	1,372	689	3,030	1,131	963	428	2,080	922
Tempe Public Library	434	202	2,350	1,345	390	227	731	391
Tolleson Public Library	67	26	275	92	82	37	32	13
Wickenburg Public Library	7	3	30	12	10	6	5	3
Youngtown Public Library	5	0	31	6	4	4	34	23

Figure 15: 2019 Participants and Achievers by Program Age and Library System.

## Public Surveys

Each year customer surveys are conducted to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the Summer Reading Program and to solicit feedback. Information gleaned from survey results is used to shape and inform the future program. This year 1,484 participants completed the survey (246 kids, 203 teens, 502 adults, and 533 parents or caregivers). These results hint at the need to expand summer reading participation beyond traditional library users in order to achieve the larger program goals.

- 39% of respondents read more to their children.
- 73% of respondents increased in their daily reading habits.
- 50% of respondents visit the library weekly.
- 67% of respondents enjoy reading more after the program.
- 95% of respondents have a library card.

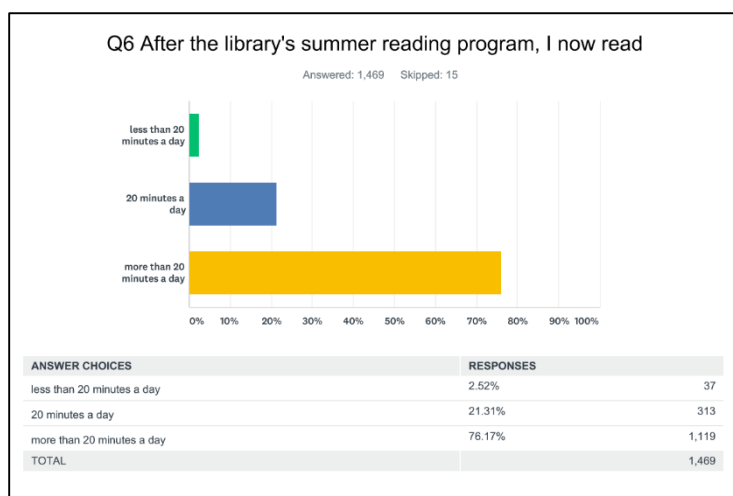
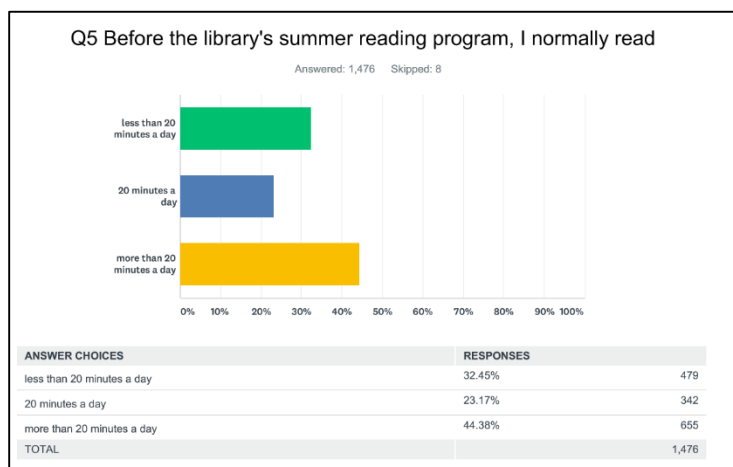


Figure 16: 2019 Participant Survey Results.



## Summary

In its sixth year using this online format and software, the 2019 Summer Reading Program saw an increase in the number of achievers from 40% of participants to 44%. The program expanded its reach by partnering with the Luke Air Force Base Library, bringing the participating libraries total to 67. Updates to the Great Reading Adventure software improved customer experiences by offering the option to participate in a second language. Staff interactions with the software was enhanced by the incorporation of the performer software and a newsstand right into the main Summer Reading software so there was no need to toggle between multiple places. Online staff training provided consistency despite distance and schedule constraints. The option to donate participants free book allowed for community engagement and support for the youngest county members.

Plans for the 2020 Summer Reading Program include training enhancements within the Summer Reading software and refining the usability in Spanish. Continued efforts will be made to increase the diversity of content in hopes of increasing the number of non-readers and non-library users who are engaging in the program.

## Acknowledgments

The Summer Reading Program is made possible through the collaborative efforts of Maricopa County Library District staff, participating libraries, and community partners. We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for making the 2019 program a success.

### Maricopa County Library District

#### *Branch Operations*

Alicia Snarr

Library Region Managers

#### *Collection Management*

Laura Jamison

Amy Cimino

Tracey Hoyos

Linda Maudsley

Tara Summus

#### *Facilities*

Jeremy Reeder

#### *Finance*

John Werbach

Mary Carson

Michael Filosofo

Bob Mungovan

Ben Ridge

#### *Marketing and Public Relations*

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Lucas Gonzalez

Rob Scott

#### *Services Team*

Erin MacFarlane

Jolene Bradley

Jacqueline Jeffrey

Lindsey Powers

#### *Virtual Branch*

Marissa Beckett

Amanda Carron

Yvonne Trotta

#### *Web Team*

Harald Nagel

Daniel Wilcox

Madi Boman

#### *Information Technology Team*

#### *Library District Branch Staff*

Participating Libraries

*Avondale Public Library*

Marisela Munoz

Brenda Soto

*Buckeye Public Library*

Chris Larson

Janene Van Leeuwen

Jana White

*Chandler Public Library*

Jill Baker

Deborah Moreno

Karrie Wicks

*Desert Foothills*

Caitlin Decker

Erin Meadows

Ashley Ware

*Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Library*

Jacquelyn McCalvin

*Glendale Public Library*

Erin Garred

Greg Kinder

*Luke Air Force Base Library*

Jennifer Crowell

Kathryn Pucket

*Maricopa County Sheriff's Department*

Lisa Poulin

*Mesa Public Library*

Kimberly Belair

Brenna Klassen

Heather Nelson

Sarah Prokop

*Morristown Volunteer Library*

Linda de Berge

*Peoria Public Library*

Kathie Jackson

DawnMarie Schmidt

*Phoenix Public Library*

Gretchen Pierce

Wendy Resnik

*Salt River Tribal Library*

Melissa Rave

*Scottsdale Public Library*

Lisanne Erie

Andrea Guzman

Michelle Vorves-Cabrales

*Tempe Public Library*

Micah Corporaal

Angela Weisner

*Tolleson Public Library*

Kim Eckhoff

Lila Garza

*Youngtown Public Library*

Cathy Grow

Heidi Speed

*Wickenburg Public Library*

Jane Baumbach

Suzie Wolfe

## Maricopa County Partners

### *Maricopa County Supervisors*

Jack Sellers, District 1

Richard Bohan

Melody Henderson

Steve Chucri, District 2

Page Gonzales

Nicole Bendle

Bill Gates, Chairman, District 3

Laura Etter

Zach Schira

Clint Hickman, District 4

Scott Isham

Michelle Montijo

Steve Gallardo, District 5

Cristina Arzaga-Williams

David Galaviz

### *Maricopa County Human Services Department*

Nancy Kessay

### *Maricopa County Parks and Recreation*

Donna Southard

### *Maricopa County Departments*

Sheriff Paul Penzone

Department of Transportation

Office of Communications

## Partner Organizations

### *Arizona State Library*

Donna Throckmorton

### *Arizona State Parks & Trails*

Ken “Gecko” Sliwa

### *Harkins Theatres*

Dakota Andrew

### *Hurricane Harbor*

Don Spiller

### *KJZZ & K-BACH’s Soundbite*

Janet Kerby

Scott Morrow

### *Peter Piper Pizza*

Lee Rosenthal

### *Phoenix Mercury*

Natalie Kirby

### *Rubio’s Coastal Grill*

Danielle Mann

### *Expect More Arizona*

### *Read On Arizona*

Terri Clark