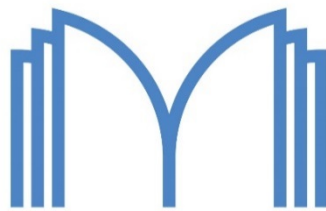




Maricopa County
READS

Maricopa County Reads
2017 Summer Reading Program

Summary & Report



Maricopa County
Library District
where curiosity leads

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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, Maricopa County Reads 2017. From June 1 to August 1, all public libraries and two tribal libraries in Maricopa County (64 locations, representing 18 library systems) encouraged more than 86,000 county residents to participate in our summer reading program.

Building on the accomplishments and lessons of past years, Maricopa County Reads 2017 sought to accomplish two primary goals: interrupt the summer slide and promote early literacy skills. 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, modelling 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 *Build a Better World*. MCLD staff, along with the assistance of representatives from many of the 18 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 every participating library, and a marketing campaign to spread awareness. Using our original Great Reading Adventure software we were able to track achievements and learning, award reading points and digital badges, and implement custom content geared towards specific age groups, communities, and interests.

Outcomes

The two primary goals of the Maricopa County Reads 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 early literacy among prereaders and their families. Strategies employed to accomplish these goals included:

1. Messaging to all participants to read at least 20 minutes every day
2. Providing a free book to all participants who read 1,000 minutes during the program
3. Offering an online interactive platform to log activity or optional paper logs
4. Encouraging teens and adults to model reading to children
5. Adding links to online read-aloud stories
6. Including early literacy tips and information to parents within the software
7. Connecting readers with community experiences

Using the Great Reading Adventure software (or a paper log), 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 coupon for Chipotle Mexican Grill at 500 points, a pass for kids from the Arizona State Parks & Trails at 750 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. Links to free, online read-aloud stories are also available as entertaining literacy resources for kids.

To promote early literacy skills, daily early literacy tips from [Expect More Arizona](#) and Smart Talk graphics from [Read On Arizona](#) are included in the software. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to count these activities towards both their children's and their own daily points.

Marketing

This year's marketing strategy included creating and sharing succinct, meaningful, and unified messages about the program and building awareness through the use of #read20AZ (for reading 20 minutes per day) on our social media platforms. Highlights included:

- Several videos that garnered more than 6,300 views and a reach of more than 11,350 people. Overall, the @mclDaz Facebook page generated nearly 7,500 SRP interactions with a reach of almost 25,000 people.
- Multiple messages were sent to the County workforce of 14,000 people throughout the summer, generating hundreds of interactions. Elected officials participated, including the County Board of Supervisors, the Maricopa County Sheriff, Attorney, and Schools Superintendent. Each of these generated hundreds of Facebook interactions.
- A radio campaign ran on local NPR (KJZZ and KBCH) June 1 – June 30, with a projected reach of 450,000 listeners per week.
- The use of a shortened URL for marketing purposes (read20az.com) generated more than 10,000 clicks. Special URLs (e.g., read20az.com/xxxxx) added an additional 1,100 clicks.



Figure 1 Marketing graphic created by Lucas Gonzalez to advertise the Summer Reading Program on Twitter.

Software and Game Content

Maricopa County Reads 2017 is powered by version 4.0 of the Great Reading Adventure open-source software developed by the Maricopa County Library District. Based on feedback from participants and staff, updates to the software include improved household functionality eliminating required usernames and passwords for family members, allowing the head-of-household user to easily register family members and quickly log activity. In response to customer requests, a new avatar system has been constructed allowing customization of 11 different avatar parts with over 1000 individual items. A reimagined staff interface was deployed in the latest version of the software to simplify and streamline the tasks that staff need to perform to manage the reading program. From a technical standpoint, hosting is improved to support continuous delivery so the software can be updated immediately when improvements are available without interrupting access.

Digital badges continued to be used in 2017 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. In an effort to educate prereader caregivers about early literacy skills, daily literacy tips from Expect More Arizona and Smart Talk graphics from Read On Arizona are included on the game dashboard. These resources have been downloaded more than 900 times during the two-month program. An important feature of Maricopa County Reads is its ability to reach an increased number of children that may not have easy access to the library during the summer. In order to provide these children with additional literacy resources and activities we have included links to four online read-aloud story sites: [KidLitTV](#), [Kid Time Story Time](#), [Reading Rainbow Story Time Videos](#), and [Storyline Online](#). Collectively, the sites were accessed from the Great Reading Adventure more than 8,000 times.



Figure 2: Sample avatars

Community Experiences

More than 170 unique community experiences were created for Maricopa County Reads 2017. A community experience is a special summer reading event that takes place outside the library at an external organization. These events can be hands-on workshops, classes, festivals, tasks, scavenger hunts, etc. and provide kids 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. The majority of the most popular community experiences occurred at free community locations.

Challenge Name	Branch	Users	Description
East Valley Explorer - Southeast Regional	Southeast Regional	841	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a walk on a trail or enjoy the scenery of the Riparian Preserve. • Visit the Friends Place Bookstore. • Browse branch displays and find something new to read!
Where in the Sun is that Secret Code?	Gila Bend	611	We have hidden secret codes in the Gila Bend Sun for every week of SRP! Copies of the Gila Bend Sun are located all around town including the library.
Climb to the Top @ Children's Museum of Phoenix	Phoenix Public Library	224	Visit the Children's Museum of Phoenix and journey to the very top of the Climber to find a secret code for the Climber Badge
Read Locally!	Gila Bend	204	Somewhere in the Gila Bend Sun is a secret code. Have you found it yet?
Friends Place Bookstore at Southeast Regional Library	Southeast Regional	202	Drop by the Friends Place Bookstore to see what is new and get a secret code!
The Great Fire Station Tour	El Mirage	190	Tour the El Mirage Fire Department
East Valley Explorer – Perry	Perry	173	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Visit Mrs. Jennifer’s story time and sing Hickory Dickory Dock with the mouse puppet! •Visit Rock & Roll Story Time and wake up the guitar with Mr. Travis! •Browse around and check out some of Perry’s awesome book displays!
Freestone Rock Wall	Southeast Regional	156	Climb the rock wall at Freestone Park
Perry Pool	Perry	138	Participate in public swim hours at Perry Pool
Park Program	White Tank	136	Join Ranger Justin in the library program room for this short, fun and interactive family program and meet some awesome desert dwellers.

Figure 3: Top 10 Community Experiences

Sponsors and Incentives

[Chipotle Mexican Grill](#) donated free and discounted meal coupons for program participants that achieved 500 points. At 750 points, kids also earned a pass from the [Arizona State Parks & Trails](#) good for one child and one adult or one vehicle entry into any Arizona State Park. Participants that logged at least 140 points a week earned entry in a weekly prize drawing featuring free passes donated by [Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix](#), in partnership with [Maricopa County Parks and Recreation](#). Additional drawing prizes included a wooden block starter set for pre-readers, a Build & Play Marble Run set or Geckobot for kids, a FujiFilm instax Mini 8 Camera bundle for teens, and a Kindle Fire Tablet for adults.¹



Figure 4 Chipotle Mexican Grill donated coupons that were used as 500-point incentives. Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix donated 100 tickets for use as drawing prizes.



Figure 5 Weekly prize drawings included wooden blocks, Geckobot, Build & Play Marble Run, FujiFilm instax camera, and Kindle Fire.

¹ Drawings and prizes vary by library system. MCLD provides all participating libraries with Build & Play Marble Run sets to use as drawing prizes. Some systems offer additional point incentives and drawing prizes.

Free Books

In an effort to build home libraries, Maricopa County Reads offers participants that achieve 1,000 points one of 150 free books from our custom online marketplace. More than 21,000 Maricopa County Reads 2017 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 and were encouraged to donate or give their book to a child if they did not want it for themselves.

Top 10 Free Book Titles

Weird but True Gross: 300 Slimy, Sticky, and Smelly Facts by National Geographic Kids

Minecraft Essential Handbook by Stephanie Milton

Disney Pixar 1000 Stickers

Cinder by Marissa Meyer

Challenging Mazes: 80 Timed Mazes to Test Your Skill by Lisa Mallet

The Tail of Emily Windsnap Liz Kessler

Quest for the Heart by Susan Amerikaner

The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

Spy School by Stuart Gibbs

Events

The Maricopa County Library District paid for one youth, teen, and adult program at each of the 64 participating public libraries. Programs linked library customers with educational and cultural experiences connected to our theme of building a better world. They also provided an opportunity to connect the in-person library experience with the online program using secret codes to earn digital badges. Among the wide range of performers, the most popular programs offered this year included Arizona Rick and the Great Grand Canyon Balloon Show, Mark Carter's "Science WOW", Katie Gunther presents "Create a Better World with the Elements of Art!", and Chef Larry P. Canepa's cooking programs.



Figure 7: Katie Gunther presents "Create a Better World with the Elements of Art!"



Figure 6: Arizona Rick and the Great Grand Canyon Balloon Show

Literacy Assessments

The Maricopa County Library District is committed to contributing to the retention and improvement of reading comprehension skills during the summer. To that end, we have expanded our efforts to show that participation in the summer reading program and continuing to read 20 minutes per day can help students retain their reading comprehension skills. Through our continued partnership with the Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA), we administered pre and post reading comprehension multiple-choice tests, constructed by MCESA, to measure reading comprehension skills of 7 and 8 year olds at the beginning and end of the summer. The assessments were presented as part of the online Maricopa County Reads summer reading program. Results of the 2017 assessments are currently being analyzed and will be added to the report once they are available.

Overall Statistics

Maricopa County Reads 2017 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 86,150 participants registered online between May 1 and August 1, 2017. Of those, 27,942 became achievers (earned 1,000 points)—an achievement rate of 32.43%.

- 49,287,822 reading minutes were logged
- 522,565 digital badges were earned
- 86,847 challenges were completed
- 21,316 free books were awarded

The graph below illustrates Summer Reading participation and achievement rates over the past three years. The number of participants for 2017 increased by 8,821 compared with the previous year. The number of achievers in 2017 (those who logged at least 1,000 points) also increased by 4,446 (2.05%) compared with 2016 and by 15,042 (an increase of 15.87%) compared with 2015.

Library System Participation & Achievers

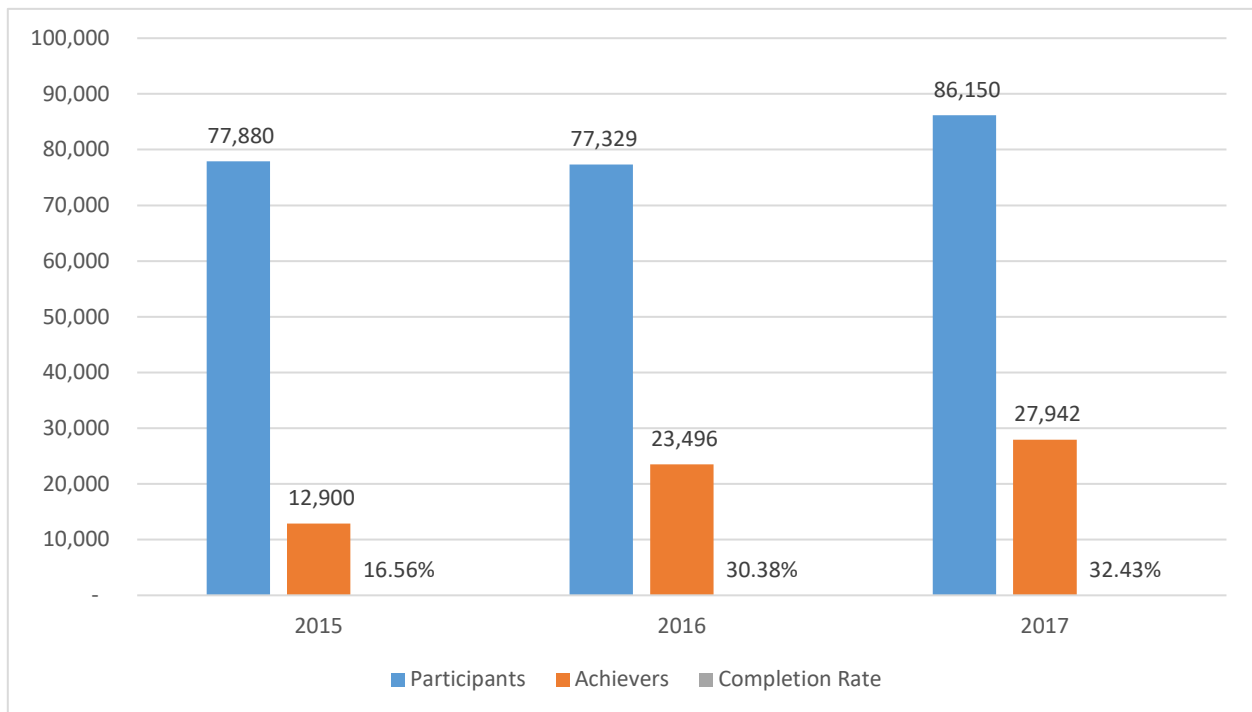


Figure 8: System-wide participants and achievers 2015-2017

Participants and Achievers by Library System

	Total Participants	Total Achievers	Rate of Achievement
Avondale Public Library	2,039	349	17.1%
Buckeye Public Library	1,391	436	31.3%
Chandler Public Library	7,398	2,783	37.6%
Desert Foothills Library	329	127	38.6%
Fort McDowell Tribal Library	83	28	33.7%
Glendale Public Library	2,163	1,172	54.2%
Maricopa County Library District	20,190	7,513	37.2%
Mesa Public Library	7,636	2,644	34.6%
Morristown Volunteer Library	51	6	11.8%
Peoria Public Library	2,168	839	38.7%
Phoenix Public Library	31,760	7,275	22.9%
Salt River Tribal Library	12	6	50.0%
Scottsdale Public Library	6,190	2,318	37.4%
Tempe Public Library	4,137	2,284	55.2%
Tolleson Public Library	462	128	27.7%
Wickenburg Public Library	84	3	3.6%
Youngtown Public Library	60	31	51.7%

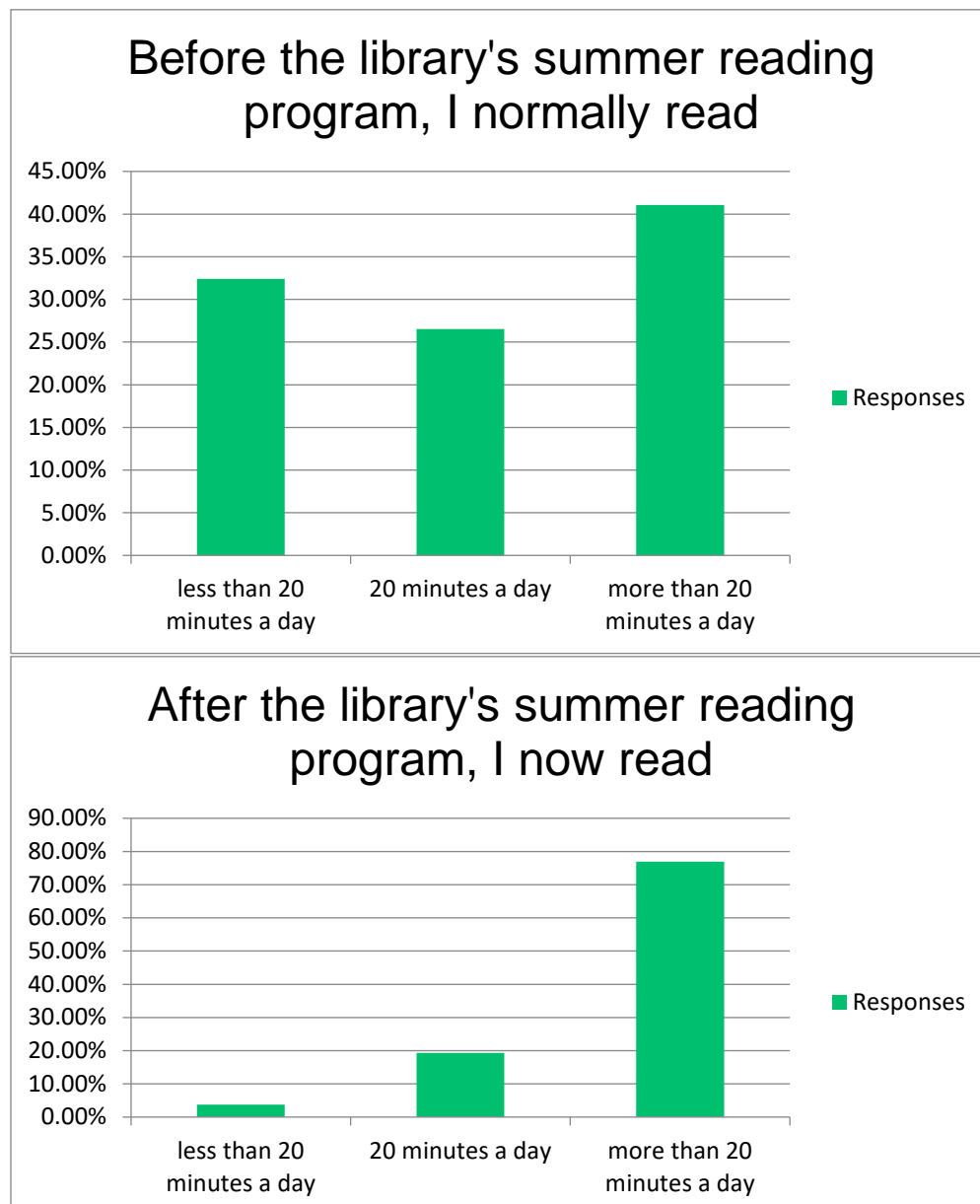
Participants and Achievers by Program Age & Library System

Library System	Prereaders		Kids		Teens		Adults	
	Signups	Achievers	Signups	Achievers	Signups	Achievers	Signups	Achievers
Avondale Public Library	134	45	1,225	117	385	60	295	127
Buckeye Public Library	219	51	612	152	228	87	332	146
Chandler Public Library	1,070	371	3,430	1,096	1,048	461	1,850	855
Desert Foothills Library	26	11	110	26	64	17	129	73
Fort McDowell Yavapai Tribal Library	10	6	42	3	9	2	22	17
Glendale Public Library	253	153	856	369	427	224	627	426
Maricopa County Library District	2,503	804	9,174	2,754	2,932	1,295	5,581	2,660
Mesa Public Library	1,265	358	3,185	912	1,061	519	2,125	855
Morristown Volunteer Library	-	-	42	1	5	1	4	4
Peoria Public Library	259	82	916	271	444	203	549	283
Phoenix Public Library	3,658	925	15,556	2,668	5,199	1,085	7,347	2,597
Salt River Tribal Library	2	1	5	-	-	-	5	5
Scottsdale Public Library	890	284	2,786	897	754	349	1,760	788
Tempe Public Library	420	189	2,460	1,476	412	226	845	393
Tolleson Public Library	26	10	232	60	151	26	53	32
Wickenburg Public Library	6	-	47	-	21	-	10	3
Youngtown Public Library	9	4	21	8	10	4	20	15

Public Surveys

Each year we conduct a customer survey to measure the strengths and weaknesses of Maricopa County Reads and to solicit feedback. Information gleaned from survey results is used to shape and inform the future program. This year 3,169 participants completed the Summer Reading survey (847 Kids, 512 Teens, 895 Adults, and 942 Parents or Caregivers). Results from the survey indicate that approximately 35% of participants reported an increase in their daily reading habits because of summer reading. After participating in summer reading, 37% of respondents indicate they enjoy reading more and 23% say they read more to their children.

92% of customer survey respondents stated that they currently have a library card and 50% visit the library weekly. These results hint at the need to expand summer reading participation beyond traditional library users in order to achieve the larger program goals.



Summary

In its fourth year, Maricopa County Reads 2017 saw an increase in overall participation and achievement across all age groups. We expanded the reach of the program with the addition of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Library and Salt River Tribal Library, bringing our participating libraries total to 64. Large-scale updates to the Great Reading Adventure software improved customer and staff experiences and provided a strong foundation for future improvements. The addition of new, more robust avatars enhanced customer engagement with the software. Links to online read aloud stories provided literacy activities to engage kids and added a means to achieve further daily reading points. Additionally, special URLs were employed for the first time to assist in tracking the popularity of various marketing strategies and content pieces of the GRA.

Plans for Maricopa County Reads 2018 include further development of the avatar component and increased user education on the importance of reading. Continued efforts will also be made to increase the reach of Maricopa County Reads in order to increase data for evaluation of the impact of summer reading participation on interrupting the summer slide.

Acknowledgments

Maricopa County Reads 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 2017 Maricopa County Reads program a success.

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