



Harford County
Public Library

NEWS RELEASE

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ON YOUR MARK, GET SET... READ!!!

Harford County Public Library Challenges Children to Read this Summer!

(Belcamp, Maryland – June 28, 2016) Babies, children and teens waited in anticipation on Monday, June 20th, to sign up for Harford County Public Library's Summer Reading Challenge, *On Your Mark, Get Set...READ!* More than 4,500 readers signed up by the first day of the Challenge at all 11 branches!

Close to 1,000 children took part in opening day festivities at the Abingdon and Havre de Grace Libraries. The day's activities began at the Abingdon Library with an interactive presentation by the Hoppin' Hawks, a precision jump rope team that combines skill development with choreography. The festivities continued later that afternoon at the Havre de Grace Library and featured a performance by magician Mike Rose, as well an opportunity to explore the newly reopened branch.

Adding to the Summer Reading excitement, Monday's kickoff also featured the unveiling of the redesigned Library mascot, Tales, and the introduction of Tales Jr., a puppy sidekick just added to the Library family. Inspired by Harford County Public Library's early literacy initiatives, Tales Jr. was an instant crowd favorite. The doggy duo received many hugs and high fives from children of all ages, while also posing for pictures. Tales and Tales Jr. were joined by Ferrous and RipCord, from the Aberdeen Ironbirds, as well as the Chick-fil-a cow.

"Physical activity makes the body strong, and reading does the same for the mind. Together, they make the perfect combination for our Summer Reading Challenge," said Mary Hastler, CEO of Harford County Public Library. "*On Your Mark, Get*

Set...Read encourages students to exercise their minds and their bodies. The Summer Reading Challenge helps students retain and grow their reading skills over the summer, so they are ready when the new school year begins."

The Challenge runs through August 20th and is geared for children from birth to high school, to encourage continued learning that inspires a lifetime love of reading. Studies show that children who participate in public library summer reading programs score higher on reading achievement tests at the beginning of the new school year, experience less summer reading loss and begin the school year with more confidence.

Children may sign up for the Summer Reading Challenge at any of the 11 Harford County Public Library branches or online at hcplonline.org. Preschool-age participants will receive a reusable tote bag with incentives from sponsors. Elementary- and Middle/High School-age participants will receive a reusable drawstring sports pack along with incentives from sponsors.

Program completion is based on the ages of those who register. Read to Me, Please!, for those from birth to pre-K, will read or listen to 25 books. Elementary students (entering grades K-5) should read 10 books. Middle/High School students (entering grades 6-12) are asked to read three books.

All children can complete the program beginning on July 5th and will receive a ticket voucher to an Aberdeen IronBirds game. In addition, children ages birth through Middle School will receive an age-appropriate book selected by Harford County Public Library librarians. High school students who complete the program will receive a \$10 gift card from Wegmans. All are while supplies last.

The Summer Reading Challenge is funded through sponsor contributions, donations from Library Friends' groups and by funds raised by the Harford County Public Library Foundation.

Sponsors of this year's Summer Reading Challenge are Aberdeen IronBirds, Advanced Eye Care, APG Federal Credit Union, Bel Air Friends of HCPL, Bernardino Family Trust, Darlington Friends of HCPL, Growing Smiles Pediatric Dentistry, HAR-

CO Credit Union, Harford Day School, Huether-McClelland Foundation, Jarrettsville Federal Savings & Loan Association, Ripken Baseball, Rosedale Federal Savings & Loan Association, Rotary Club of Aberdeen, The Aegis and Wegmans.

More information may be found at HCPLonline.org or by picking up a copy of the *Headlines & Happenings* newsletter at any of the Library's branches.

Harford County Public Library operates 11 branches located throughout Harford County. The library serves more than 181,000 registered borrowers of all ages and has an annual circulation of more than 3.8 million. Harford County Public Library is committed to connecting people with information and promoting the love of reading in the community.

The Harford County Public Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization established to raise funds to augment the financial resources of the Harford County Public Library and to promote awareness of its services.

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Photo caption #1: Members of the Harford County Foundation Board of Directors and Library mascots thank the 2016 Summer Reading Challenge sponsors.

Photo caption #2: Newly debuted Library mascot Tales Jr receives many hugs and high fives from children of all ages.

Photo caption #3: Hoppin' Hawks precision jump rope team teaches guests some of their tricks at the Abingdon Library.

Photo caption #4: Summer Reading Challenge sponsors, Abingdon Library staff, volunteers and members of the Harford County Foundation Board gather for the Summer Reading Challenge Kickoff.