

Arizona Reading Program

The Arizona Reading Program provides resources that help public, school, and tribal librarians plan, promote, and implement reading programs for children and young adults during the summer. Begun in 1974 by the Arizona State Library, ARP helps maintain and often increase the reading skills of students during out-of-school times and helps families prepare preschoolers for reading through "Read to Me" programs. In addition, programming coordinated with the summer reading theme brings children and parents into libraries, thus promoting their use.

For the second year, the Arizona State Library participated in the 32-state Collaborative Summer Library Program, a grassroots consortium of states working together to create high-quality summer reading program materials. The 2006 theme was "Paws, Claws, Scales and Tales" for children and "Creature Feature" for teens. A how-to manual with a wealth of ideas and the materials essential to a summer reading program were distributed to over 150 Arizona libraries. Professional development workshops and discussions on best practices for summer reading were attended by 203 library staff members. Two events designed to give librarians the opportunity to meet with artists and arts organizations to select programs to promote reading in their communities had a combined attendance of 270.

Jim Arnosky, naturalist and children's author, toured the state for three weeks during the summer, making appearances in 21 libraries and at the Phoenix Zoo to promote summer reading. The Arizona State Library sponsored his travel and provided mini-grants with LSTA funding for rural libraries to have Mr. Arnosky visit to talk to children about the writing process and his animal books.

Children and parents who participated in "Paws, Claws, Scales and Tales" totaled 71,604, and 5,043 teens joined "Creature Feature" reading programs. Programs offered by libraries attracted 57,496 children and 11,335 teens. At programs for children, 479 parents and volunteers participated, and 2589 adults and volunteers joined in teen programs. Including staff members being trained, readers logging their reading, and attendees of summer programming, the Arizona Reading Program impacted 149,019 Arizona children, teens, and adults.