

**Board of Education General Business Meeting  
May 1, 2012**

**Briefing on the 2012 HSPLS Summer Reading Programs**

With goals to sustain and strengthen reading skills throughout the summer months and encourage the habit of reading and life-long learning, the Hawaii State Public Library System (HSPLS) launched our first statewide Children's Summer Reading Program (SRP) in 1967. Forty-five years later, the System's most beloved and signature program continues to flourish, and has expanded to include complimentary statewide Teen and Adult Summer Reading Programs, which began in 1992 and 2007 respectively.

The long-lasting success of the SRPs is based on their simplicity—during the five-week campaign, patrons are asked to visit the library weekly, read at least one book per week, and they will receive a reading incentive. As our HSPLS mission is focused on life-long reading and learning, our staff does not enforce meeting specific reading level requirements; instead, we reinforce and reward the positive actions of making reading and libraries a part of their lives.

As our budgets tightened over the years, the SRP's were threatened with elimination as we focused on providing essential core library services. The Summer Reading Programs are now reliant on financial support and donations provided by the Friends of the Library of Hawaii and our loyal corporate sponsors. We are so grateful for their generosity and support—over the past several years, we have had moderate increases in participation and record-breaking numbers of sponsors contributing to the programs.

This summer, HSPLS invites our readers to celebrate the wonders of night. The Children's slogan is "Dream Big, Read!," the Teen slogan is "Own the Night," and the Adult program slogan is "Between the Covers." These slogans are created by the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP), in which HSPLS is a member. The advantages of participating with a national collaborative include purchasing affordable manuals with clip art, program ideas, publicity samples, and reading lists, as well as finding numerous incentives matching the themes. CSLP Membership has relieved our workload, especially in light of our continuous short-staffing conditions.

Our staff is busy preparing booklists, displays, and fun, free programs built around these night themes, including campfire and ghost stories, nocturnal animals, astronomy, careers involving night-shifts, mysteries, suspense and romance novels. We will be hosting family-friendly programs, headlined by internationally-acclaimed, Brazilian mime and storyteller, Antonio Rocha, as well as a host of Hawaii's most gifted and noted artists. We are expecting about 25,000 patrons of all ages to sign up and read 300,000 books in five weeks! By summer's end, nearly 100,000 incentives will have been passed out, along with other great prizes ranging

from complimentary HSPLS DVD rentals to iPod Shuffles, e-readers, and more! For your perusal, please enjoy the packet with samples of the SRP materials and incentives.

Our informal Children's SRP statistics gathered each year have indicated that roughly 50% of participants are from public schools; 40% from private; and 10% are homeschooled, and the percentage of girls and boys enrolled are 60% and 40% respectively. To date, our efforts to increase the participation of public school students has not yielded significant increases. To that end, this summer, HSPLS and the Department of Education will begin a special collaboration focusing on increasing summer reading program participation by students in Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Multiple studies have proven beyond a doubt that children who continue reading during the summer perform better when they return to school in the fall, score higher on standardized tests, and are more active and engaged in the classroom. To achieve these results, we are encouraging teachers to contact their local public library prior to the summer break to schedule class visits, create and share reading lists, and instill excitement for reading and the Summer Reading Program among their students.

In the end, our SRP will be successful only if our patrons feel satisfied. The following comment was among hundreds we received through evaluations last year:

*"I think that the reading program helps keep me busy and also improves my reading comprehension during the summer instead of just watching TV and playing games the whole day. It helps me to notice that reading is a fun and an adventurous activity. I look forward to joining again next year and I will encourage my friends to join too!"*

On behalf of the patrons and staff of the Hawaii State Public Library System, thank you to all the members of the Board of Education for supporting our endeavors. To get you excited about this year's program, we would like to share a 30-second public service announcement created by the Collaborative Summer Library Program.