City of Arts & Innovation

Board of Library Trustees

TO: **BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES** **DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2025**

FROM: **RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY** **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: **SUMMER READING PROGRAM 2025**

ISSUE:

Receive an informational report on the 2025 Summer Reading Program at the Riverside Public Library.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board of Library Trustees receive an informational report on the 2025 Summer Reading Program at the Riverside Public Library.

BACKGROUND:

The Summer Reading Program (SRP) at the Riverside Public Library is held every summer to provide enrichment activities for the community and help prevent students from losing reading skills over the summer. Children and teens participating in SRP spend more time reading over the summer, which prevents learning loss, increases their literacy skills, and prepares them for returning to school in the fall. The library also offers free lunches provided by Riverside Unified School District for kids and teens through the *Lunch at the Library* program and participates in pop-up visits at City parks.

DISCUSSION:

This year's Summer Reading Program ran from May 31 through August 1 with the theme Level Up at Your Library. Programs and performances were centered around the concept of play, promoting reading through fun and interactive activities. This year's theme reminded us that libraries are spaces not just for learning, but also for fun. A total of 2,771 participants registered for the program through the Beanstack app, logging over 43,900 books read. Each week, children who completed a reading or program challenge earned a prize, while teens and adults earned raffle tickets they could use to enter for prizes of their choosing at the end of the summer. Twenty-nine local businesses and organizations sponsored these prizes, including the Museum of Riverside, Ono Hawaiian BBQ, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Hot Topic Loungefly, Top Deck Keep, Elliots for Pets, Market Broiler, and many others.

Free programs and performances were held weekly at every library location. More than 5,400 people attended SRP programs at the library and over 2,300 attended events hosted at park locations. Featured programs included Zany Zoe's Magical Discoveries, California Joe's Adventure Magic Show, Bad Art Night, Portable Planetarium, Wild About Animals, LEGO Building, Dino Party, and many more. Participants expressed their appreciation, noting they were "happy that the library is offering science programs that their kids can participate in," and enjoyed seeing "members from our deaf community being able to participate," along with many comments of, "We love the library."

In partnership with Riverside Unified School District, the La Sierra Library, Main Library, and SPC Jesus S. Duran Eastside Library (Lincoln Park) distributed free lunches to youth ages 18 and under through the *Lunch at the Library* program. Funded by a grant from the California State Library, the Library also provided hands-on crafts, engaging activities, live performances for families, and free books to help build home libraries. Grant funding also allowed the library to hire American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for weekly performances, enhancing accessibility for the community. Over the summer, 5,198 lunches were served to children and teens, a 37% increase from the previous year.

As part of the library's summer outreach, staff hosted pop-up programs at four Riverside parks. A total of 2,318 children and families participated in outdoor StoryWalks®, crafts, and hands-on activities such as self-portraits and engineering challenges. Library cards were issued on-site, and free children's books were distributed to help families build their home libraries.

Approximately $13,625.99 was spent on the Summer Reading Program from the Library's Gift Fund account. An additional $5,000 from the Gift Fund was used to purchase branded materials. A total of $26,913.75was spent on the *Lunch at the Library* program and Pop-Up Park Visits, funded through a grant awarded to the library by the California State Library.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this informational report.

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Attachment: Presentation