

Spring Reading Initiative

Special events are planned in April and May to celebrate “School Library Month.” These include the Library Book Fair (March), Author Visit, Book Badges, Reading Chain, Page Tally, and school wide SSR Read-In. An explanation of each is found below.

Information about these activities will also found on the library web page at

<http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library/SpringRead/SpringReading.html>.

1. **The Library Book Fair:** The annual Library Book Fair is held during the week of achievement tests and spring parent conferences. This year the Fair is held in the gym March 26-27 & 30-31. The purpose of the Fair is to encourage reading of quality children’s books while raising funds to expand the library collection. Scholastic, Inc. is the book fair supplier with a theme this year of “Reading Makes You a Star.” The Fair will include a **Classroom Wish List Program** that allows parents to purchase books from the Fair for teachers’ classrooms, Scholastic’s “One for Books” donation program, and student gift basket free raffle.

The “**One-for-Books**” program is an opportunity to enhance our library collection while promoting literacy beyond our school community. Families are encouraged to donate \$1 or loose change. All money collected is used to purchase books from the book fair for our library. Scholastic will match the “One for Books” dollars with a donation of books to three programs dedicated to helping children and families in need: Kids in Distressed Situations, National Center for Family Literacy, and Toys for Tots. Donations may be made at the Fair or prior to the Fair using the attached form.

Volunteers will be needed to work at the Book Fair, especially to pack-up the Fair Tuesday, March 31 after 3:00. Contact Shelley Ross, Book Fair co-chair by email at judgesbay@yahoo.com or by phone at 412-687-0503.

2. **Author Visit, Wednesday, April 8:** Mary Newell DePalma, the author and illustrator of three picture books: *The Nutcracker Doll*, *A Grand Old Tree*, and *A Strange Egg*. She has illustrated over a dozen books including her recently released book *Swimming Sal* by Carol Molski. Ms. Newell DePalma, a Pittsburgh native, now lives in Boston, Massachusetts with her family. She will give presentations to students during the school day. This author visit is made possible in part through the generous support of the Falk School PTA.

Ms. DePalma’s books are being sold for autographing. See enclosed flyer or the library website.

3. **Book Badges:** Students, parents, teachers, interns, staff, and family members are encouraged to fill out a **Book Badge** for each book they read or that is read to them. Book Badges may be turned in to the homeroom teachers or sent to Ms. Herward by way of the school office. One sheet of Book Badges is included with this mailing. Cut badges apart. **Note unpagged books usually have 32 pages.**

Additional badges will be available in the library, in intermediate and primary homerooms or online at <http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library/SpringRead/BookBadges.html>

4. **Reading Chain:** Badges will be attached to a paper chain strung about the library. The chain will be moved to the school for the **Read-In**.
5. **Page Tally:** A cumulative ‘total pages read’ is displayed each day on the library bulletin board and outside the school office. Total number of books read and the total number of pages read will be announced at the end of May.
6. **Read-In:** A school wide SSR **Read-In** will be held at the end of May or early June. The entire Falk School Community will be invited to join in Sustained Silent Reading in the gym for twenty minutes on a specified day. Parents are invited to join in. Details will follow.



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March 23, 2009

Dear Parents,

In April the Falk School community will be celebrating School Library Month. Several special events will be held in April and May, the Mary Newell DePalma Author Visit and a school wide SSR Read-In (date and time to be announced). This year the annual Library Book Fair is being held in late March. These events are part of our annual Spring Reading Initiative to promote and celebrate reading. The information sheet on the back of this letter gives details of each. I would like to share the rationale for our reading promotion program and encourage your support.

In his book, *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*, Stephen Krashen tell us that free voluntary reading is one of the most powerful tools we have in language education. (p.1) "In-school free reading studies and 'out of school' self-reported free voluntary reading studies show that more reading results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and grammatical development." (p.12)

Krashen cites other research findings concerning reading and literacy.

The richer the print environment, the better the literacy development. However, a rich print environment helps only when more reading is done. A good reading environment encourages reading (comfort and quiet). Children read more when they listen to stories and when they discuss stories. Hearing stories has a direct impact on literacy development. Reading itself promotes reading. Children read more when they see other people reading. Direct encouragement to read helps if the right type of reading material is recommended. (pp. 36-43)

As a working parent and member of the Falk community for the past seventeen years, I know how busy families are today. Reading aloud is a wonderful way for family members to spend quiet time together. It can be relaxing and entertaining for all. Make this spring a time for reading!

Review the activities with your child/children. Encourage them to participate in each aspect of the Spring Reading Initiative. Model reading for your children; fill out Book Badges for the books you read. These will be attached to the Book Badge chain in the library along with the children's. Ask about the tally of pages read. Make this a truly Falk community project and we will all share in the rewards.

Respectfully,

Linda Herward
Librarian