

## Spring Reading Initiative

Special events are planned in April and May to celebrate “School Library Month.” These include the Library Book Fair, Author Visit with Megan McDonald, Reading Calendars (April only), 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>. See link to Reading & Books.

- The Library Book Fair:** The purpose of the Fair is to encourage reading of quality children’s books while raising funds to expand the library collection. A Literacy Book Festival will be supplied by Scholastic, Inc. The Fair will be held in the school gym Friday, April 7 & Monday through Wednesday, April 10-12. The last three days of the Fair are parent conference 1:00 pm dismissal days. The Fair will include a Wish Book Program that allows parents to purchase books from the Fair for teachers’ classrooms, Scholastic’s “One for Books” donation program, Book Fair Gift Certificates, and student gift basket free raffle. See Book Fair flyer for details.
- Author Visit:** Children’s author Megan McDonald will visit on Monday, April 24, 2006. Ms. McDonald grew up in Pittsburgh, has MLS degree from University of Pittsburgh and started her career as a children’s librarian at the Carnegie Library. She now lives in California. She writes fiction and nonfiction books including the *Judy Moody* series, *Stink: The Adventures of Incredible Shrinking Boy*, *Beetle McGrady Eats Bugs!*, *Insects are My Life*, *Is This a House for Hermit Crab?*, *The Potato Man*, *The Great Pumpkin Switch*, *Ant and Honey Bee*, *Beezy* series, *The Bridge to Nowhere*, *Shadow in the Glasshouse*, *The Sister Club* and others. Ms. McDonald 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. Several of Ms. McDonald’s books will be pre-sold for autographing. Proceeds of the sale will help defray the expenses of this special event.
- Reading Calendar (grades K-5 only):** Families are encouraged to set aside 15 minutes daily for recreational reading, together if possible. “Reading” includes individual reading, reading aloud, and listening to reading aloud. During April use the **Reading Calendar** to record reading times for intermediate and primary level students. Parents are asked to sign the calendar. More than one person may record times on the same calendar. Students who turn in their calendar with the requested information will receive a certificate and bookmarks.
- Book Badges:** Students, parents, teachers, interns, staff, and family members are encouraged to fill out a **Book Badge** for each book they read or 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. Additional badges will be available in the library and in intermediate and primary homerooms. **Note unpagged books usually have 32 pages.**
- 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**. A ‘total pages read’ count will be tallied and displayed each day on the library bulletin board.
- Page Tally:** A running total of pages read will be recorded and posted in the library. Total number of books read and the total number of pages read will be announced at the end of May.
- 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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Dear Parents,

In April the Falk School community will be celebrating School Library Month. Three special events will be held in April and May, the annual Library Book Fair, April 7 and 10-12, Author Visit with Megan McDonald, and a school wide SSR Read-In (date and time to be announced). 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. In this letter I would like to share the rationale for the 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 fifteen 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. Record your readings times along with theirs on the April Reading Calendar and send in 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