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LIGHTING A FIRE

With a flock of programs related to the great outdoors, the 2023 Summer Reading Program will have a feeling of nature.

"Reading Makes Us Happy Campers" is the theme of the two-month effort to encourage children, teens and adults to read. The program runs June 1 through July 31 with sign-up beginning May 18.

Youths of all ages and adults can earn a variety of prizes, including gift baskets and grand prizes of \$100 Walmart gift cards. All they need to do is read or listen to 10 books or complete a combination of 10 books and activities. For participants who want to read more than 10 books, there is an extra reading challenge to win more prizes.

To be counted, books must be read in June and July. The reason for that is so youths will read through the summer to prevent the summer slide of their reading skills while being out of school.

Participants can register online with the Beanstack reading challenge platform or in person at the Belt and Savannah branches and Bookmobile to receive a reading log. The Beanstack app allows users to scan publisher barcodes to enter the books they've read, and parents can have all the readers in their families in one file.

The summer schedule includes programs about pollinators, reptiles, feathered friends, wildlife, backpacking ba-

**Special events,
prizes ready
to inspire kids
and adults
to read
this summer**

sics, camp crafts, outdoor safety for kids, panning for gold and stars. The Orrick Acres petting zoo is returning to the libraries, too.

"Animal programs are some of our most popular and we are leaning into that this summer," Belt Branch manager Kelly Morris said. "Snakes, turtles, birds, Missouri mammals — we've got it all."

Plenty of programs for all ages

One of the first programs for adults at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, will be the history of the Juneteenth holiday by Gary Wilkinson, vice president of the St. Joseph Museums Board of Trustees.

On June 19, 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation was enacted in Texas, the last Confederate state to abolish slavery. For African Americans, the date became known as Juneteenth (June + the last syllable of 19th) and was usually celebrated the third Saturday of June. After years of lobbying, June 19 became a federal holiday in 2021.

The effort to make Juneteenth an official holiday took so long because, to many people, it lacked "legitimacy,"

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Reading Revival

Have you heard? Audio books are growing in popularity

Where do you think the majority of “reading” takes place? In a cozy armchair or sitting at a desk? You might be surprised to find out that a growing number of people are reading while they commute to work, mow the lawn, or while exercising. Before you start ranting about the dangers of distracted drivers, this reading is taking place with the ears and not the eyes. The growing popularity of audiobooks can’t be denied. It is the largest category of usage on our Hoopla online service.

I’m not much for audio, but I do read a combination of e-books and printed books. I think I read faster than I can listen, but there is something about narration of non-fiction that makes it much more enjoyable for me. If you have ever listened to a podcast, you can understand how it can take a mundane topic and make it so interesting that you have to gorge on every episode. Digital audiobooks are like this.



The reading of books out loud and then recording them is nothing new. Even during the vinyl record phase (which is making a comeback in certain circles) there were spoken word recordings available. In libraries, the phrase “books on tape” is still used to describe audio recordings even if they are now on CD or digital download. Cassette tapes were great because they stopped at any point and could pick up right where you left off. CDs were not quite as user-friendly and were not as durable for

the kind of use/abuse that library users could put them through.

Now, physical media is quickly giving way to digital downloads where you can put titles on your mobile device and listen wherever you are, with headphones or Bluetooth connections to your car or home sound system.

As you enjoy the outdoors this summer, bring along a good book to listen to around the campfire or when walking your dog. If you need some assistance getting started with digital audiobooks, you can make a technology appointment with a librarian for one-on-one help. Try a book you have never read or maybe a favorite title you want to experience in a new way.

You may find yourself transported to another world while at the same time enjoying the great outdoors.

Michelle Mears, Rolling Hills Library Director
mmears@rhcl.org


Other ways to reach and follow us

Text the library at **816-287-9828** using these keywords, and we’ll help with your account:


Status for account information **Renew all** to renew everything on your account

Renew due to renew overdue items **Help** for a list of available commands
or text anything else to start a conversation with a librarian.

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Browse

a quarterly publication from
Rolling Hills Library that is
sponsored by the Friends of
Rolling Hills Library

Rolling Hills Library

rhcl.org

Belt Branch

1904 N. Belt., St. Joseph
816-232-5479
HOURS: 9-8 Mon-Sat
12-6 Sun

Savannah Branch

514 W. Main, Savannah
816-324-4569
HOURS: 9-7 Mon-Fri
9-5 Sat/12-5 Sun

Business Office

1912 N. Belt, St. Joseph
816-236-2106

Bookmobile & Outreach

1912 N. Belt, St. Joseph
816-205-7100

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*The board generally meets
at 5:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday
of each month.*

Friends of the Library

The Friends support the library through
volunteer and fund-raising efforts.
The Friends board meets monthly.

Rolling Hills Library Foundation

The Foundation strives to provide
financial support for large
endeavors and future growth of the
library by seeking substantial gifts from
patrons and supportive foundations.



Snakes!

Missouri Western biology Professor Mark Mills returns to the library with some outdoor guests for an up-close look (if you wish) at these live, slithery creatures. 2 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, Belt Branch Upper Story

Diploma Dream

Kelry Smith dropped out in 9th grade but longed to be a high school graduate

When Kelry Smith's high school diploma finally arrived in the mail in March, decades after she left school, the moment was a bit too much to comprehend.

"I emailed them and said 'What now?' " she recalled. "It was surreal."

Smith earned her diploma through Excel Adult High School, the free, online accredited diploma completion program available through Rolling Hills Library.

How she did so is nothing short of amazing.

When she started classes on Oct. 3, 2022, she had no high school credits. Zero. None. But with determination and a goal of finishing school by her birthday on March 12, she earned the 21.5 credits needed to graduate.

"I was on a mission," the 49-year-old said. "I really wanted this diploma."

Free program has its advantages

ExcelHS is offered to Missouri libraries through a partnership between the Missouri Secretary of State's Office and the educational publishing company Gale. St. Joseph Public Library also has the program.

Adults ages 18 and older have 24 months to complete classes. Previously earned high school, GED, HiSET or



Kelry Smith was surprised at her April 22 graduation at the Belt Branch by State Librarian Robin Westphal bringing her a proclamation from Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft.

TASC credits are recognized by ExcelHS, cutting down on the time and effort needed to earn a diploma.

ExcelHS is set up like a regular high school with courses that have their own tests to pass and credits to earn but no final cumulative-knowledge test like the HiSet, which some students find difficult to pass. Students work at their own pace, and Excel's veteran teachers and academic support staff are readily available through email and phone calls.

Potential students start with an interview by library staff members to determine if they could be successful students. The Rolling Hills Friends of the Library provides scholarships to cover the ExcelHS enrollment fee, and the library loans laptop computers and Wi-Fi hotspots so students can work from home.

Smith learned about ExcelHS from an article by Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft (the Missouri State Library is a division of his office) and called Rolling Hills to ask about the program. She realized it was exactly what she needed to accomplish a longtime goal.

Prison leads to a better life

In ninth grade, Smith left school and her family when life at home became troublesome. She fended for herself until she was caught up in a burglary and spent six months in prison when she was 18.

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On April 27, the library thanked its volunteers with a luncheon in the Belt Branch Upper Story. ABOVE: Volunteer Cindy Anderson (left) and library technical services manager Jennifer George fill their plates. RIGHT: Volunteers Teri Milbourn and Dick Filbert won the drawings for the flower basket centerpieces at their tables.



A little more than a month after starting in early April, construction to replace the Savannah Branch parking lot and create a library patio had made great progress. One feature is a new drain for the front parking spaces as shown in these two pictures. The project should be completed – and open to parking – by the end of May.

Master gardener Sharon Weiser passed on the ideas she garnered from visiting the famous French gardens of painter Claude Monet's to an audience of 40 garden enthusiasts on April 26 in the Belt Upper Story.



Thirteen chicks were hatched in late April at the Belt Circulation Desk for library visitors to view. The eggs started in an incubator (left), and the chicks were put in a warming box when the incubator became too crowded.

The eggs and equipment were provided by Orrick Acres farm, which retrieved the chicks after they all hatched.



Houseplants 101

Horticulture specialist Jennifer Shackelford from Moffet Nursery will give tips on how to care for your leafy friends. Teens and adults will pot a plant to take home, too! Sign up at events.rhcl.org/events. 5 p.m. Monday, July 10, Savannah Branch



The Monday performers include juggler Brian Wendling (left to right), Mike Horner of What If Puppets (formerly Mesner Puppets), Wings of Love with Yvonne Burbach, science educator Nitro Joe and musical group Drum Safari with Brandon Draper.

Fire and stars are topics of 2 summer events

From Page 1

Wilkinson said. But “as far as African Americans and others, it’s always had that.”

Nature’s powerful element of fire will be featured at 8 p.m. Thursday, June 29, when the fire performers of Pyro Flow light up the Belt parking lot.

“The experience of dancing with fire is something that is really attractive to the people who are doing it, and also people love to watch it,” Pyro Flow manager Christine Ziemer said.

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Christine Ziemer,
Pyro Flow manager

Ziemer took up fire performing 12 years ago while she was in graduate school. She moved to St. Joseph a few years later and made it known she was looking for other fire performers. A small group formed and started having monthly jams. A decade later, there are about 30 members of the fire community who still meet for the monthly jams and also do hired performances.

It won’t be fully dark when Pyro Flow performs in June, but it should be dark enough.

“Fire looks cool all times of the day. It’s a bit early, but we’ll still see the effects and excitement of it,” Ziemer said.

Ansh Gupta, a graduate of Central High School and now studying astronomy at the University of Arizona, will present the program “The Night Sky” at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 18, at the Belt Branch. The presentation will offer some history of astronomy and how scientists have come to understand more about what’s out there in the great beyond.

Stars have intrigued humans for thousands of years, from the time they could be observed with the naked eye to the invention of the telescope in the early 1600s to now, when telescopes are floating in space to provide a deeper look into the galaxies.

“I think it would be really cool if people can understand some of the more complex ideas,” Gupta said.

What about the Monday entertainers?

The lineup of Monday entertainers for both branches feature a number of proven favorites, starting June 5 with What If Puppets (formerly known as Mesner Puppets) and juggler Brian Wendling on June 12. On June 19, Operation Wildlife will bring birds of prey to the Belt, while Wings of Love takes its trained parrots to Savannah.

Creatures by Theresa will introduce small animals to youths on June 26, and Exotics R Us will bring animals most likely new to many people on July 10. Drum Safari will teach kids the rhythms found in animals on July 17, Nitro Joe will amaze all with his fun science experiments on July 24 and storyteller Will Stuck presents stories, songs, science and silliness on July 31.

“In addition to our Monday performers, which always draw big crowds, we’ll have several small group activities each week,” Savannah Branch manager Jill Weaver said. “There will be opportunities for all ages for crafting, building and making.”

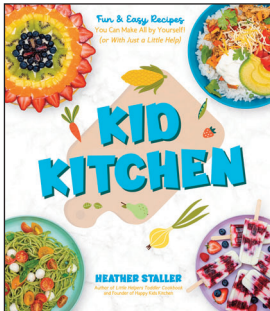


Gold Panning

We're not promising any gold, but come and join the Pony Express Prospectors club for a presentation and hands-on demonstration in this program open to all ages. Sign up at events.rhcl.org/events. **11 a.m. Thursday, July 13, Belt Branch**

Kids in the Kitchen

Summer can be the right time to teach youngsters how to cook. Try these cookbooks



Kid Kitchen

For 4th grade & older

This is the second cookbook by Heather Staller, founder of **Happy Kids Kitchen** blog and author of **Little Helpers Toddler Cookbook**. The recipes are categorized as "Easy-Peasy," "Totally Doable" and "Challenge Accepted" and open with a you-can-do-it encouraging note. The recipes cover snacks, breakfast, box lunches, dinners and desserts.

Staller is consistent in her use of whole wheat ingredients and calls for maple syrup or honey rather than sugar in some ingredient lists. The majority of recipes are from scratch and only a few call for store-bought biscuits or pizza dough. Changes to make recipes vegetarian are noted. An allergy friendly index lists which recipes are gluten, dairy, egg and/or nut free. Do

By **Sarah Sieg**, *Belt Branch youth services librarian*

note that several recipes make use of an air fryer.

Verdict: With clear instructions, mouthwatering photos and healthy ingredients, this is a great book for families to check out.



Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: The Official Cookbook

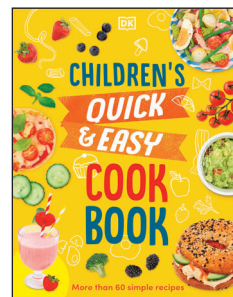
For preschool & older

Thanks to text by Kate Lloyd, the dialogue is kid focused and opens with kitchen instructions and how to properly wash hands. For children with discriminating palates, there is a page encouraging kids to try new foods. The recipes include notes on how to convert a dish to gluten- and/or dairy-free, vegan or vegetarian.

This is a kid-friendly cookbook in food choices, graphics and inclusion of

commentary from the popular characters. The book is designed for adults and children to cook side by side, with recipes in cups and weights for however chefs measure. In addition to featuring items with Hispanic and Indian roots, there are twists on classic favorites. For example, grilled cheese sandwiches with coleslaw layered on for extra texture and vegetable consumption. To keep little chefs occupied while an item is baking or cooking, there are seek-and-find pages and fun food facts. To cap off this tasty offering, a recipe for creating your very own Daniel Tiger cake is included.

Verdict: A delicious must-checkout.



Children's Quick and Easy Cookbook

Grade 3 & older

This is the kid-focused

cookbook you've been looking to check out. Most pages in author Angela Wilkes' book have white backgrounds with colorful boxes hosting ingredients and equipment needed. Recipe pages also include cooking times, servings and suggestions for vegetarian-friendly changes. When adult help may be needed, recipes are marked with red warning signs.

While the book is not entirely health food conscious and a few recipes call for frying, the focus overall is on fresh fruits, veggies and unprocessed meats. To encourage a well-rounded palate, recipes from around the world are included, such as Turkish Kebabs, Israeli Falafel, Mexican Tacos and Chinese Chow Mein. The recipes are simple snacks, meals, desserts and sweet treats and range from simple to more complex, including oven-baked potato wedges and a chocolate souffle. To help kids prepare these dishes, there is a chef's know-how section, complete with photos and written instructions.

Verdict: A must-checkout.

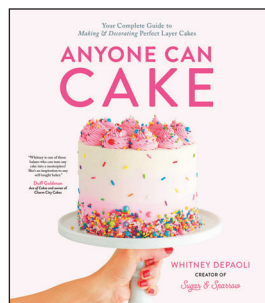
Continued on Page 7



DIY Spa Products

Miss Emma will lead teens and tweens through making fragrant bath bombs and body scrubs to take home. Sign up at events.rhcl.org/events.
4-6 p.m. Tuesday, July 18, Savannah Branch

From Page 6



Anyone Can Cake

Grades 9 & older

The **Sugar & Sparrow** blogger Whitney DePaoli has written a cookbook that will appeal to teens (and adults). In six chapters, readers learn kitchen basics ranging from greasing pans to which layer should always be placed upside down and how to create Insta-worthy cakes. If you're a beginner, you'll learn how to succeed as you purchase supplies and work in the kitchen; a more frequent baker will have their techniques confirmed and expanded.

DePaoli writes as someone who has been in the tornado-stricken kitchen, had cakes heartbreakingly fail and watched cakes bring joy. You feel she is cheering you on as you venture into the kitchen. With drool worthy photos, readers will be eager to create their own striped, floral, textured, ganache-dripped and sprinkled cakes.

Verdict: A good checkout for teens and adults who need accessible cake decorating books.

Surprise ending to her studies

From Page 3

There she earned her GED and became determined to never return to prison. She turned her life around, married and became a mother of three children, only to see her husband pass away at the age of 31. A few years later, a fourth child was born. She's happily married today to Bobby Mott.

Smith was determined her kids (Jerry, Autumn, Alexis and Lucas) would graduate high school and supported them throughout school. (She has the same goal for stepdaughter Kira Mott.) But watching their graduations often left her wishing she had that same experience.

Good at math, Smith started ExcelHS with that class first and finished it in a day. She moved on to the next class and then the next class. And still more classes.

ExcelHS's advantages, she said, are that students work at their own pace, online videos can be watched as many times as needed and ExcelHS staff are very supportive. She completed most classes in about a week's time, sometimes studying 12-14 hours a day when she was sidelined from work with an injured leg.

As she studied, she became ever-more grateful for the free program. She emailed with Ashcroft's office several times to let him know her appreciation. When she completed her

last course, an Ashcroft assistant asked when her graduation would be.

Rolling Hills offers students the chance to have a graduation ceremony if they want one. The library provides caps and gowns to wear, community rooms to use, a cake and some library gifts. Graduates keep the tassels from the caps.

Smith's graduation included family members along with library staff and Friends of the Library president Karen Steeby. State Librarian Robin Westphal surprised Smith by bringing her a framed proclamation from Ashcroft that celebrates her accomplishment.

"It was just total shock and awe and true excitement that they would send someone all this way to my graduation, and it was just really, really heartwarming that she did that," Smith said about Westphal.

Smith is happy to tell anyone about ExcelHS and the support Rolling Hills provides students. "I want to see this program succeed because it is life changing," she said. "I have options now."

What might those options be? Smith plans to go to college to study accounting or a career in insurance so she can help others have better lives. And with true Smith determination, she says she will choose her path by July 1 and get ready to take more classes.



Books Revisited

The Friends of the Library Bookstore

Offering used and rare books, music and more!

1908 N. Belt 205-7125

12-5 Monday, 9-5 Tuesday-Friday & 9-6 Saturday

A Dessert Sure to Delight

Strawberries – *and plenty of them* – make this a great treat to cool off with this summer

One of the best things about summer is strawberries come into season. This dessert is a great way to serve many people's favorite fruit.

No-Bake Strawberry Delight

Crust

2 cups graham cracker crumbs

½ cup melted unsalted butter

Grind crackers into fine crumbs using food processor or blender. Combine with melted butter and stir until crumbs are coated then press mixture into a 9x9-inch pan. Refrigerate the crust while you prepare the remaining ingredients.

Filling

2 pounds strawberries, washed, dried, stems removed

2 8-ounce packages full-fat cream cheese at room temperature

½ cup sugar

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup heavy whipping cream

½ cup powdered sugar

2 tablespoons strawberry gelatin powder

Slice 1 cup of strawberries into small pieces, about the size of a dime. Cut the rest lengthwise and pat dry.

To prepare a batch of whipped cream, chill a bowl in the freezer for 5-10 minutes then beat the heavy whipping cream in the bowl at medium high speed until soft peaks

form. Slowly add powdered sugar and continue beating at high speed until stiff peaks form. Set it aside.

In another bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar, lemon juice and vanilla extract until it's free of lumps. Add the mix to the prepared whipping cream, stirring with a spatula until well mixed.

Divide the mixture in half. To one half, add the strawberry gelatin powder and 1 cup of strawberry pieces and stir to combine.

Topping

1 cup heavy whipping cream (or Cool Whip)

½ cup powdered sugar

To Assemble

Layer the sliced strawberries over the graham cracker crust, overlapping and filling the gaps.

Spread cream cheese mixture over top of strawberries, followed by the strawberry cream cheese mixture.

Prepare the topping of heavy whipping cream with powdered sugar as instructed above. (Or just use Cool Whip for the topping.) Spread evenly over the top of the dessert or use a piping bag with a 1M tip to decorate the top. Cover with plastic wrap and chill 4-6 hours before serving.



Information about all library programs can be found at rhcl.org.

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1912 N. Belt
Administrative Office
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