

NEWS RELEASE

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Literacy in the Park Program Kicks Off in the Treasure Valley

BOISE, Idaho — Literacy in the Park, a summer learning initiative the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) introduced in 2013, is once again in full swing June 8 through August 7, offering kids storytime, activities, and books to borrow from traveling lending libraries.

Piggybacking on the Idaho Foodbank's Picnic in the Park initiative and the Idaho Department of Education's Summer Food Service Program, ICfL and participating libraries stage Literacy in the Park events weekly at numerous summer-feeding locations throughout the Treasure Valley. Literacy in the Park is open to all children in the community.

ICfL's traveling lending libraries, which they've dubbed "Little Libraries," are large plastic bins filled with a variety of books of interest to children 1-18 years old. They offer a generous read-and-return process, where kids can borrow a book for as long as they want and then return it to any Literacy in the Park location and choose another one.

State Librarian Ann Joslin points to the success of the project in the previous two years. "Parents and children really enjoyed the activities and the books, and there's solid evidence the program helped a sizable number of kids to read more compared to previous summers," she said. "They work hard to become better readers over the school year, and it's important those gains aren't lost. Children who read six or more books over the summer hang onto their reading skills better than those who don't." See the Literacy in the Park schedule for Boise and Garden City at libraries.idaho.gov/page/literacy-park.

The Literacy in the Park project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries helps libraries build the capacity to better serve their clientele by supporting statewide databases and online resources, continuing education, consulting, programming, early literacy skills, and building library community. Visit libraries.idaho.gov to learn more about ICfL.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Its mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. IMLS grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. Visit www.imls.gov to learn more about the IMLS.