

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Otter Proclaims July 12 to be “Summer Learning Day” in Idaho

BOISE, Idaho – Governor Otter proclaimed July 12, 2018 to be “Summer Learning Day” in Idaho.

The day is observed throughout the United States to raise awareness of the importance of keeping youth safe, healthy, and learning throughout the summer. More than 30 years of studies consistently show that students who do not continue reading over the summer can lose several months of academic progress.¹

For example, in Idaho, 76 percent of low-income kindergartners were reading at grade level in the spring of 2016. When they returned to school as first-graders in the fall, only 57 percent were reading at grade level.² This type of learning loss leads to an achievement gap that is cumulative and can leave low-income students up to three years behind their peers.³

To combat the summer slide of learning loss, an array of agencies, such as the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) and the STEM Action Center, provide programs, materials, and funding to Idaho libraries in communities -- large and small -- throughout the Gem State. These resources allow libraries to fill the achievement gap and help the next generation of Idahoans prepare for their future.

State Librarian Ann Joslin said, “Summer Learning Day is a time to remind parents and caregivers how important it is for children to read and learn during the summer so they are able to maintain their academic achievements from one school year to the next.”

Public libraries throughout Idaho help curtail learning loss by offering reading and education programs within their buildings and out in the community, as well. Library staff routinely go where the kids are, which is particularly important for low-income children who tend to have few books in the home and limited access to their local library. In 2017, more than 53,900 Idaho children and teens participated in their library’s summer reading programs, and another 59,600 were served through library outreach programs.⁴

The ICfL includes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activities in its summer learning outreach to libraries, which, in state fiscal year 2018, was made possible by a \$30,000 grant from the Idaho STEM Action Center. STEM helps foster many of the skills and knowledge sought by employers, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration.

Libraries have evolved from places known only for research, reading, and reflection, to becoming the community’s bustling hub of innovation, education, and engagement.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) builds the capacity of the more than 850 public, school, academic, and special libraries in Idaho to better serve their communities through: statewide programming and resources, like Read to Me and Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI); consulting; continuing education; partnerships; and aid to underserved populations, such as the visually impaired through the Talking Book Service.

Sources: ¹Summer Reading: Closing the Rich/Poor Achievement Gap by Richard L. Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen, 2013. ²State of Idaho Department of Education. ³National Summer Learning Association. ⁴State of Idaho: 2017 Idaho Public Library Statistics. ⁵National Center for Education Statistics, 2001.