

Fitchburg library party to launch summer reading program

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FITCHBURG -- When the public library kicks off its annual Summer Reading program with a party on Thursday be prepared for the entertaining Mr. Vinny, the Bubble Guy.

"Last year, kids had a blast chasing his giant bubbles around the courtyard," said Paysha Rhone, a library patron and mother.

During the party, which will be held from 4:30-6 p.m., children of all ages, from newborn to 18-years-old, can sign up for the library's summer program, which will include hands-on "Build a Better World" activities all summer, like building rockets, a giant erector set, a birdhouse, a pinhole projector, puppets and paper airplanes.

Other educational programs will teach kids about gardening, chickens, the solar eclipse, wildlife, print making, service dogs, theater improv and writing memoirs, she said.

There is also an Early Literacy Program for babies and toddlers, with activities and prizes, and a "Read and Bead" program for kids and teens, where the readers will set reading goals and receive beads for the number of minutes spent reading.

Fitchburg Public Schools Parent Liaison Eva Kelly will also attend the kick-off, promoting the district's summer reading lists, which is on the school district's website and the School Superintendent Andre Ravenelle's "Three-Million Word Challenge."

Through the Fitchburg Flourishes initiative, Ravenelle has challenged Fitchburg students to read three million words by Sept. 1, 2017, using the free Footsteps2Brilliance app. Kelly will demonstrate the app for families with visual, hands-on tech activities during the party.

With students having read almost 2.5 million words so far, Ravenelle recently joked at a School Committee meeting that he may need to raise the bar.

The grant-funded Footsteps2Brilliance app is free to download for anyone living in the city of Fitchburg, and is targeted for students aged 3- to 7-years-old to help them learn to read through online instruction, stories, recordings, singing and book writing. Families can register at www.myf2b.com/register/FPS (<http://www.myf2b.com/register/FPS>).