

Kids? creativity abounds at Aurora Public Library this summer

Creative kids, tech kids, and even those just looking to get their hands dirty and have fun, too, will have lots to do at the Aurora Public Library this summer ? and, don't tell them, but they will be learning at the same time!

The Aurora Public Library (APL) is the place to be this summer for a variety of drop-in programs that suit every taste, including Maker Mondays, Tech Tuesdays, Wacky Wednesdays, Outdoor Thursdays, and Science Fridays ? followed by party time each Saturday throughout the season.

?We're providing something free every day for families to drop into ? realistically for any age, but best-targeted to ages four to 10,? says Polly Ross-Tyrrell, APL's Children's Librarian. ?Our morning programs are the pre-school programs, but we feel really strongly that it is really important to reach the kids where we can reach them, so we want to be there every day we possibly can be.?

Summer programs at the APL work like well-oiled machines, but each year's offerings are reflective of feedback from kids and their families.

?We're doing slime again this year because everybody has been letting me know all year they want to do slime again! says Ross-Tyrrell of a staple of their Science Friday program. ?Our daily themes are pretty set with Maker Mondays, Tech Tuesdays... but Wednesdays we've had a lot of changes and we're going with Wacky Wednesdays, which is a lot of silly activities. On Thursdays, we're keeping things outdoors because people have liked seeing us in the parks around Aurora. You won't find us in the Library, but outside in Town Park, Ada Johnson Park, or Edward Coltham Park (William Graham Drive), depending on the week. Fridays are Science Fridays, and Saturdays are Saturday Specials where we do giant parties on fun themes like dinosaurs, princesses and that type of thing.

?Science is kind of my thing during the school year when I run the Mad Scientist Club. I feel it is important to make science a learning experience as they learn in school but also just that everybody knows how much fun it is, that you can learn a lot of science by making slime or blowing bubbles all over the place ? whatever. I think that's what comes through in all our programs. We want kids to have fun. We do want them to learn things and we certainly want them to read books and stuff, but we want them to have fun. As a Library we're able to do that. We don't have the same mission as schools where we have to assign grades, we can just have fun with them and that's awesome.?

This Saturday, July 8, will be the first Saturday Special with a Circus theme with a juggler, balloon animals, tumbling mats, and more so kids can form a circus of their own. July 8 will also see the launch of the TD Summer Reading program, which is the only part of the summer APL programs where pre-registration is required.

Participants can register for the TD Summer Reading club through the APL's Beanstack app, which also allows you to track your reading and earn ?beans? for every hour they read.

?They can earn special beans for coming to programs, get online badges, and write book reviews,? says Ross-Tyrrell. ?They can collect all their readings and then get a prize pack when they get to 20 hours and win free books after that.

?We're also participating in the TD Summer Reading Club's Sister Library program and we have a sister library in Stony Plain, AB, and we will have a pen pal program with some of the Stony Plain kids and Aurora kids. Right now, the program is on a waiting list, but I have every expectation we will be able to extend registration because I know they have more kids and if we have more kids that's all we need. If anybody has a child who would like a pen pal in Alberta, take a look at our website and look for Write Across the Country and get on that waiting list!?

Devising kids programs not just in the summer but throughout the year is a ?dream job? for Ross-Tyrrell, who says she was in her early teens when she realized she wanted to work with kids in her career.

?Everything about programming for children is my favourite thing about this,? she says. ?I love doing story time, I love doing my science programs. We've just come out of a solid month of visiting school classes and talking about all of this stuff and I love that too. It is one of our favourite times of year. You spend a whole day in a school and you see so many friendly faces, some of them new, lots of them old, but for me just children are my people and I feel like I understand what they want and how to do what they want better than I do adults. It is something I really enjoy and it seems to work for people.?

For more information on this summer's roster of kids programs, visit aurorapl.ca.

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