

**MHLS support of the NYS Summer Reading Program (SRP):** About 65 of the libraries in the Mid-Hudson Library System offer a summer reading program, using the state-wide theme, which this year was *New York Is Read, White and Blue*. (The theme, artwork by a NYS children's book illustrator, manual of suggested programs/activities and choice of incentive prizes are coordinated each year by one or two system youth services consultants. MHLS and RCLS collaborated to coordinate the 2003 summer reading program). A few libraries offer their own themed program; some do no summer programming.

System youth services department support for our member libraries' summer reading programs consists of:

- Offering Summer Reading Program Workshop in spring. (Topics include additional ideas for programs/activities/crafts, sharing ways member libraries run their own programs, where/how to obtain extra community funding, creative publicity/marketing ideas, whether/how to track children's participation.)
- Buying and publicizing materials for the MHLS Professional Collection which support summer programs.
- Organizing a Performers' Showcase in spring in which 15 different children's performers present 10 minutes of their act for librarians to review & subsequently hire them for library programs.
- Adding program ideas to the EZ Library Program database (<http://midhudson.org/resources/ezprogram.htm>) appropriate for use during the summer.
- Spending \$5,500 mini-grant from NYS Library designed to support member summer programs. (We purchased summer reading banners and extra posters for each library and each school, new theme-related dies, 2 permanent county banners for Dutchess & Putnam who hold countywide reading festivals.)
- Coordinating increasing demand for Youth Services program support kits, puppets, costumes, miscellaneous materials sent out through delivery service
- Maintaining the Piggyback Performers web site in which the libraries list performer programs & dates so neighboring libraries can plan block bookings, thereby saving money on performer costs.
- Creating section of MHLS web site with links to summer reading support resources (including sample press releases, letters to parents, schools and communities about impact of summer reading programs, letters to potential funders to solicit money/materials, research on impact of summer reading on literacy).
- Coordinating the coupon drawings for free books from Scholastic, Inc. (sets of books to both children in participating libraries and to libraries for children's reference collections).
- Facilitating sharing of extra srp records/certificates among libraries.
- Coordinating MHLS mini-grants to libraries who offer countywide srp festival.
- Distributing publishers preview books to libraries to hand out at county reading festivals.
- Gathering final reports from all participating libraries, compiling statistics and comments to be sent to NYS Library Development office.

Submitted by Margaret Keefe, Coordinator of Youth Services