



## **Westchester Library System Goes Buggy Over Books**

*Summer program encourages youth to think, dream, and explore through reading*

**Tarrytown, NY – (June 5, 2008)** – As the school year winds down, children can look forward to a summer of fun at their local library. The Westchester Library System (WLS) is getting ready to open the books on its annual Summer Reading Program, an opportunity for children to experience the joy of books and reading in each of the county's 38 libraries. Specially designed programming enables younger children to *Catch the Reading Bug* while teens explore *Metamorphosis* as they celebrate this year's themes through special programs and events.

Libraries throughout the country will kick off the 2008 Summer Reading Program with exciting programs and events. Group programs throughout the summer allow children to step into the world of books through events like song and dance programs, crafts sessions, and science and nature projects. Storytelling programs and pajama story times invite young children to stretch their imaginations. Libraries are excited about their partnerships with community groups and service organizations, enabling them to welcome children with special needs, including children with disabilities and children of immigrant parents. Youth services librarians will be available one-on-one to help children think, dream, and explore through books that are just right for them. Librarians from around the county are ready to share their favorite titles with eager summer readers. Adding to the joyous events are incentives, prizes, and certificates to inspire children and teens to include reading in their summer activities.

"Summer is a time to remind kids that reading can be an activity of choice," says Judith Rovenger, WLS Youth Services Consultant. "With so many great titles to choose from, kids can be assured that there is the perfect book for each and everyone. What is a perfect book? It's the one you can't put down and don't want to end, but can't wait to finish and find another one just like it."

"The Summer Reading Program is both educational and enjoyable," explains Siobhan Reardon, Director of the Westchester Library System. "The library becomes like a second home where children can learn, explore, and ask questions. Over the summer, children are empowered to delve into the areas that interest them most."

Westchester children's and teen librarians can't wait to welcome readers to its fun-filled 2008 program. They hope to top last year's success, when over 39,000 children attended 2,410 programs and read over half a million books. Librarians welcome teens to this year's program with expanded programming and opportunities targeted toward middle school students.

"The libraries of Westchester County can keep teens entertained and engaged all summer long with books, magazines, CDs, and DVDs that appeal to their age group," says John Sexton, WLS Teen Consultant. "Summer provides the time for teens to explore and our libraries offer a world of discovery. It's a perfect match."

WLS acknowledges the generous support of Commerce Bank and other summer reading program sponsors. Commerce Bank sponsored a 16-page *Catch the Reading Bug* educational

supplement that was published by The Journal News and distributed to over a hundred schools throughout Westchester. Copies also will be available at libraries, Commerce Bank branches, various agencies, and on-line on The Journal News and WLS websites. Commerce Bank also generously underwrote Books-to-Share, the Westchester librarian picks for great summer reading. Commerce Bank is a supportive partner in its encouragement of bringing children and books together in Westchester libraries. Its support of summer reading allows Westchester libraries to reach out to children and families with free publications and recommended readings and to enjoy summer programming and reading throughout the year.

Thanks to the generosity of Rye Playland and Westchester County Parks, special reading incentives are given -- "Fun Cards" that offer discounts to rides at Rye Playland to kids who enroll in the summer reading program. Each library will also receive three grand prizes – fun cards for 30, 20 & 15 rides to give out at the end of the summer program or as raffles.

Once again, Hitachi America, Ltd. and its Community Action Committee are providing funding for additional promotional items to support summer reading such as Catch the Reading Bug t-shirts and bags.

Programs typically begin in late June and continue through mid-to-late August. For additional information on the 2008 Summer Reading Program, including a calendar of events and programs, visit the WLS website at [www.westchesterlibraries.org](http://www.westchesterlibraries.org) or your local library.

### **About the Westchester Library System**

The Westchester Library System (WLS) includes 38 member public libraries located throughout the County and is one of New York State's 23 public library systems. WLS and its member libraries have a total collection of 5.6 million items, including 4 million books, as well as audio recordings, videocassettes, DVDs, print serials, and other materials. Support from WLS helps expand and enhance the services and resources of local member libraries, enabling them to better serve the public. WLS also ensures that all county residents have excellent library service on-site and on-line. A sponsor of year-round events, WLS helps coordinate featured author events, the annual Book and Author Luncheon, and seasonal reading initiatives. The WLS Adult and Outreach Services Department offers improved access to library services for all residents, training and development of library personnel, services to disadvantaged youth, and WEBS Career and Educational Counseling service. WLS will commemorate its 50th year beginning November 2008 with a series of kick-off events leading up to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

*Catch the Reading Bug* and *Metamorphosis* are programs of the New York State Library's Statewide Summer Reading Program.- [www.summerreadingnys.org](http://www.summerreadingnys.org)

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