



Calendar of events

A LOOK AT THE WEEK AHEAD

Send calendar events (at least two weeks in advance, if possible) to Community, 4475 Regency Place, Suite 301, White Plains, MD 20695. Email items to community@somdnews.com. Include a contact phone number or email on all submissions.

Ongoing

Platinum Senior Care Assisted Living, LLC will host Reminiscing Cafe 6-9 p.m. Mondays-Fridays and 8-11 a.m. Saturdays-Sundays at the facility, 4018 Blackbird Court, Waldorf. For seniors with dementia and Alzheimer's to relax and enjoy themselves. For information, call 301-638-3194.

VConnections will hold Veterans Coffee Break 9-10:30 a.m. Mondays at Chick-fil-A, 107 Drury Drive, La Plata. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

Pomfret Way-of-Life Al-Anon Family Group and Alateen will meet 8 p.m. Tuesdays at St. Joseph Church, 4950 Saint Joseph Way, Pomfret. For information, go to www.marylanddc-alanon.org or call 1-800-425-2666.

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service will offer free foreclosure legal advice the first Wednesday of each month at Charles County Public Law Library, 200 Charles St., La Plata. These are one-on-one online sessions with an experienced attorney. The library is located in the basement of the Circuit Court for Charles County; entrance to the building is on Washington Ave. For more information or to make an appointment, call the Law Library at 301-932-3322.

Kiwanis of Waldorf meets Wednesdays 7:30-8:30 a.m. at Comfort Suites, 11765 Business Park Drive, Waldorf. For information, contact Carol Cox, 301-758-3082 or carol.cox@gmail.com.

VConnections will hold Veterans Coffee Break 9-10:30 a.m. Wednesdays at Chick-fil-A, 3365 Crain Highway, Waldorf. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

Charles County Professional Civitan Club will meet 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesdays at Golden Corral, 2800 Crain Highway, Waldorf. For information, contact George Hawley, 240-367-6489 or planit4ueventplanning@gmail.com.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 82 will hold bingo on Thursdays at Harry White Wilmer American Legion Post 82, 6330 Crain Highway, La Plata. Early birds begin 7 p.m. Doors open 6 p.m. For information, call 301-934-8221.

Hope Cancer Support and Prayer Group will meet 7 p.m. the first and third Thursdays of each month at South Potomac Church, 4915 Crain Highway, White Plains. For information, contact Angela Dion at angeladionwriter@gmail.com, or call 301-645-9427.

Southern Maryland Brain Injury Support Group will meet 6-7:30 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at Spring Dell Center, 6040 Radio Station Road, La Plata. For information, call Jerry, 301-753-6335, or Debbie, 301-932-4920.

Point of Change Jail and Street Ministry Family Ties Support Group will meet 7 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at New Hope AME Church, 12310 Washington Square, Waldorf. For information, contact Jerald or Kimberly Graham at 443-532-0090 or 301-609-9492, or email pointofchange@hotmail.com.

Friday Nighters Al-Anon Family Group will meet 8:30 p.m. Fridays at Lifestream Church Of The Nazarene, 5105 Leonardtown Road, Waldorf. No Alateen meeting. For information, go to www.marylanddc-alanon.org or call 1-800-425-2666.

VConnections will host Veteran Women and Family Coffee Break 9-10:30 a.m. Fridays at Chick-fil-A, 107 Drury Drive, La Plata. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

VConnections will host Veterans Coffee Break 10:30-11:30 a.m. the second Friday of each month at Burger King, 30004 Three Notch Road, Charlotte Hall. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

CSM Open House at Center for Trades and Energy Training will be 10 a.m.-2 p.m. the third Saturday of each month through December at College of Southern Maryland, Regional Hughesville

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Building a better world



Emma Jackowski, 8, of La Plata browses the children's books Thursday afternoon at the La Plata branch library.

PHOTOS BY JESSI STICKEL

Summer reading program motivates families to keep minds active over summer break

By **JESSI STICKEL**
Special to the Maryland Independent

Whether it's on the couch, in the library or by the pool, Charles County Public Library is challenging children and adults to read more this summer and be rewarded for it. "Build a Better World" is this year's theme of the library's summer reading challenge. The program began June 1 and ends Aug. 26. Children and adults log their reading minutes and participate in activities online in order to win prizes.

"It is very beneficial to kids to participate in the Summer Reading Program because it helps combat the 'summer slide,' helping kids to keep up on the skills they learned the previous school year so that they are ready to continue learning when they return to school," Sarah Anderson, children's librarian, Potomac Branch, said.

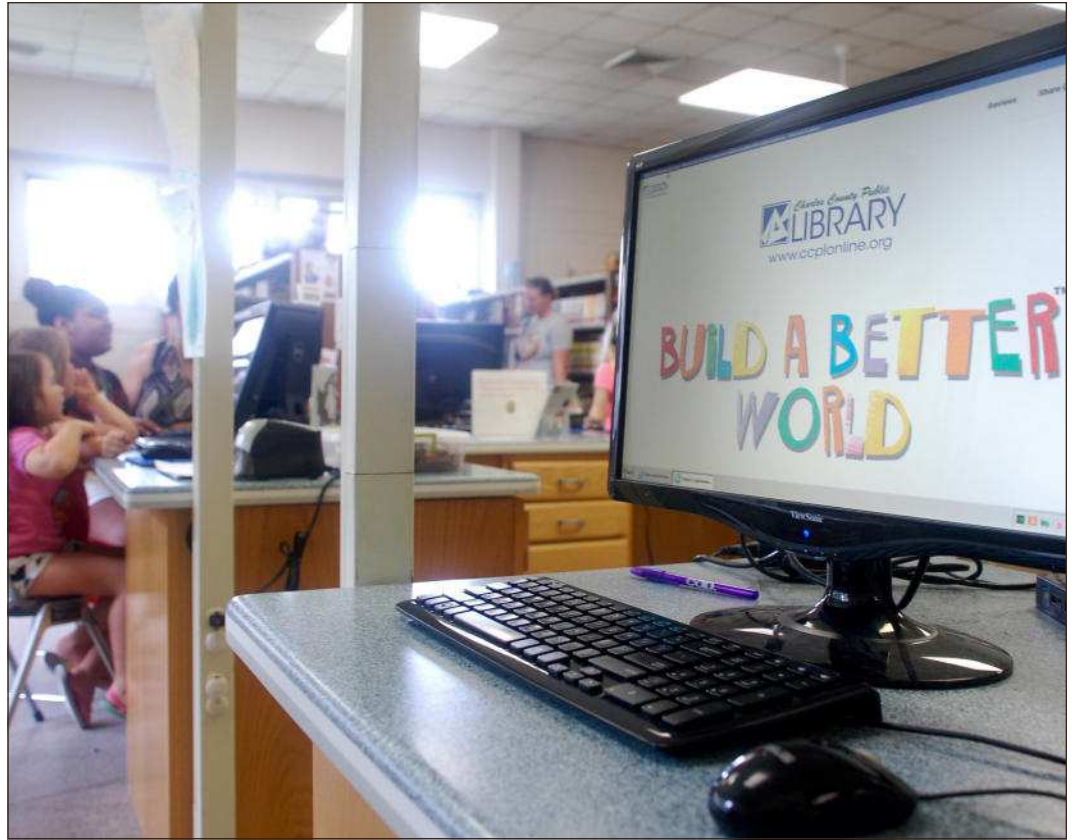
"It also helps encourage a lifelong love of reading and can really help draw in reluctant readers."

Customers can register themselves and their children online at ccpl.beanstack.org. Once registered, adults and children can start reading and participating online.

Participants can earn badges by logging minutes spent reading, writing reviews of books they have read and completing challenges. For every 15 badges, participants earn one entry into the grand prize drawing for a Kindle Fire HD tablet and one entry into the regular prize drawings at their local library branch, which includes prizes such as tickets to the Maryland Science Center, LEGO kits and Amazon gift cards, Anderson said.

Melinda Jackowski of La Plata said her two daughters Emma, 8, and Isabelle, 5, regularly participate in the summer reading program.

"Emma actually won



Charles County Public Library's children section has computers dedicated for summer reading program use.

two prizes for doing her reading one year, so she liked that," Jackowski said. "The prizes are a good motivation for them to read."

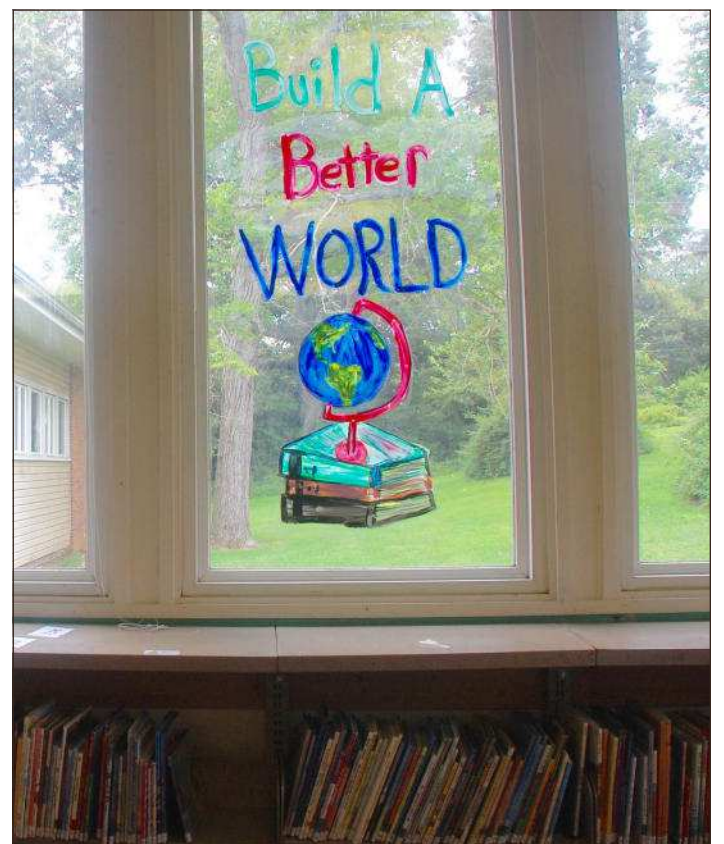
Jackowski said her family has been participating in the program for several years. She likes that the program offers free events during the summer and that it is a fun learning experience for her children.

This is the Charles County Public Library's 15th year putting on the summer reading challenge; however, it is the first year they are using Beanstack, an online site that lets "library customers log their reading, write reviews, create wish lists of what they want to read in the future, read peer reviews and participate in challenges," Sarah Guy, program coordinator, said.

The Beanstack site allows librarians to create customized challenges that appeal to their customers, Guy said.

"For example, at the requests of some of the schools in Charles County, we have challenges that encourage kids to learn more about their school," she said. "[The challenges ask questions like:] What does Piccowaxen mean? Who was Milton Soman? Who was General Smallwood?"

The Beanstack site is available all year long, but



Charles County Public Library is rewarding children and adults for reading this summer as part of their "Build a Better World," challenge.

there are more activities and challenges to participate in when children are out of school during the summer.

"We've had great feedback from our customers and staff about how easy Beanstack is to use, so we'll be using the site for at least the next couple years," Guy said.

"This year we're testing Beanstack's new Photo Review option, which has been a lot of fun. We've had customers do the Origami Challenge and submit photos of what they've created," she said.

"We've had customers try a new recipe and show us photos of tasty looking cookies and cakes."

"The kids love all of the fun and engaging events we have all summer long and that they can win lots of cool prizes," Anderson said. "The parents love that we have lots of fun and educational events mornings, afternoons, evenings and weekends to accommodate different schedules and that it is super easy to participate."

"It makes a great family activity for the summer," Anderson said.