



## Measuring Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile's Summer Reading Services and Programs

Overview of Survey Results and Community Implications [as of September 20, 2016]

### Overview

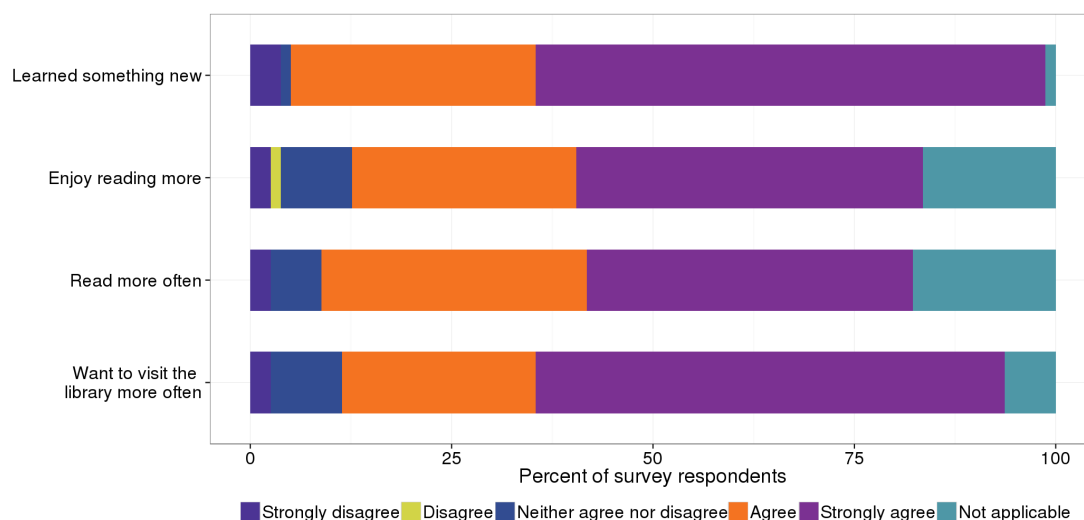
Reading programs are at the heart of library programming, and public libraries intend summer reading programs to be engaging and fun while providing structure that supports ongoing learning opportunities for adults and protects against literacy backsliding for children out of school.

### Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile Survey Work

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile staff distributed surveys to program participants to collect data and insights about how summer reading services and programs are supporting community education needs. Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile surveyed adults participating in the summer reading program using the Project Outcome Summer Reading Services and Programs Survey, which measures the impact of services designed to provide continuous reading and learning opportunities for adults. A total of 79 survey responses were collected.

### Results

The results of the Summer Reading Survey are shown in the chart below.



Of the percentage of adult participants that agreed or strongly agreed that they benefited from the summer reading program:

- 94% learned something new from what they read or experienced
- 71% enjoy reading more
- 73% read more often
- 82% want to use the library more often

## Implications for Community Impact

Summer reading programs are an essential public library service that benefits a range of patrons from children, teens and adults. According to the Library Research Service, Colorado State Library, adult summer reading programs benefit patrons by providing opportunities in literacy development and exposure to new literary genres. Summer reading programs promote the value of reading and its immense benefits, including reduced stress and modeling good reading behavior for children.<sup>i</sup>

- Adults continue to pursue interests and self-growth, such as reading, past formal education. According to recent research produced by the Pew Research Institute, 74% of adults are "personal learners," which means they do activities such as reading or taking classes tied to personal interests.<sup>ii</sup>
- There are a multitude of social and psychological benefits that come from personal learning. According to Pew, 87% of personal learners feel well-rounded and 64% reported their learning helped them make new friends.<sup>ii</sup> A 2006 study suggests the more fiction a person reads, the more empathy they have.<sup>iii</sup> Research found that reading fiction could improve people's social awareness in two ways – by exposing them to knowledge regarding social behavior and by practicing inference of people's intentions and relationships.<sup>iii</sup>
- Most people in the United States view public libraries as an integral part of the education system by providing resources to everyone, while also being advocates of digital and information literacy. A recent report produced by the Pew Research Institute found that those over the age of 15 feel that public libraries have an important role in fulfilling the educational needs of the community they serve. In addition, 78% feel libraries adequately encourage literacy and an enthusiasm for reading.<sup>iv</sup>

*Project Outcome surveys were developed by PLA's Performance Measurement Task Force, which is comprised of a diverse group of public and state library leaders, consultants, data researchers and analysts. The Task Force revised and pilot-tested the Summer Reading Surveys in early 2016, carefully choosing the survey language to capture the immediate perceived benefits from library summer reading programs, such as changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or application.*

*The surveys were designed to support libraries' efforts to measure program outcomes and use the results to enhance strategic planning, manage resources more efficiently, and support advocacy messages. The results are intended to show the direction of change in the community, not rigorous statistical proof of change.*

## Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile Profile

Population of Legal Service Area: NULL

Annual Operating Expenditures: NULL

Number of Libraries: 40

FTE Staff:

Visits per Capita:

Annual Hours Open: NULL



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<sup>1</sup>Linda Hofschire. "Summer in Colorado Means Reading Programs for All Ages." "Fast Facts-Recent Statistics from the Library Research Service (2011). Accessed April 20, 2016.

[https://www.lrs.org/documents/fastfacts/300\\_SummerReading.pdf](https://www.lrs.org/documents/fastfacts/300_SummerReading.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>John B. Horrigan. "Lifelong Learning and Technology." Pew Research Center (2016). Accessed April 20, 2016.

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/03/22/lifelong-learning-and-technology/>

<sup>3</sup>Mar, R.A., Oatley, K., Hirsh, J., dela Paz, J. & Peterson, J.B. (2006).

Bookworms versus nerds: exposure to fiction versus non-fiction, divergent associations with social ability, and the simulation of fictional social worlds. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 40, 694-712.

<sup>4</sup>John B. Horrigan, Lee Rainie, and Dana Page. "Libraries at the crossroads." *Pew Research Center* (2015). Accessed October 23, 2015.

[http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/09/2015-09-15\\_libraries\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/09/2015-09-15_libraries_FINAL.pdf)

