



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

[312.744.3334](tel:312.744.3334)

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY LAUNCH REDESIGNED RAHM'S READERS

*Kids Encouraged to Read Books and Participate in STEAM
Activities Across the City as Part of Summer of Learning*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon today in launching the annual Rahm's Readers summer program, which will serve as a cornerstone of the city-wide Summer of Learning initiative. Rahm's Readers was redesigned to encourage more kids to participate and provide additional activities as opportunities for kids to grow and learn, and this summer's program will focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math (STEAM) skills.

"Studies show that children lose up to three months of math and science learning during the summer months, so incorporating STEAM skills into the already important reading program made perfect sense," said Mayor Emanuel. "This new and improved Rahm's Readers promises to bring even more of Chicago's children into the library and its partners this summer, keeping them actively learning over their summer breaks. I know the kids of Chicago can beat last year's total by reading more than 2 million books and have a great time doing it."

Under the updated program, children of all ages will be given recognition for engaging these activities aimed at encouraging 21st century skills: READ (300 minutes), LEARN (take part in one program or visit a participating museum), DISCOVER the Library's online components and recommended websites and CREATE visual/written art or design solutions to specific challenges.

"We know that all kids learn differently - some take to reading immediately and others prefer to learn through hands-on activities. While reading is still central feature of our summer program, the expansion into learning, creating and discovery will enable us to reach more kids with broader interests. CPL will be the first major library to also incorporate digital badging into the summer programming," said Library Commissioner Brian Bannon. Partnering with the Museum of Science and Industry, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Goodman Theatre offers kids various ways to experience Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math, including family field trips for special STEM, theater and art related events.

Children who meet the Mayor's challenge will earn a pencil pouch with school and art supplies and will be eligible to enter a raffle to win an eReader. Parents and caregivers who participate and reflect on their family learning will be eligible to win a tech package, which includes a laptop and tablet.

Rahm's Readers runs from June 17 through August 10 and is privately funded through the Chicago Public Library Foundation and sponsored by the James and Madeleine McMullan Family Foundation, Cubs Care, Dr. Scholl Foundation, Kraft Foods Foundation, Macy's Foundation, Motorola Solutions Foundation, Helen M. Harrison Foundation, RR Donnelley, ComEd, RPM Advertising and the Pearson Foundation.

The program is presented in partnership with the Museum of Science and Industry, the Art Institute of Chicago, Goodman Theatre, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools and the National Summer Learning Association.

In January, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced that the City is embarking on a new Summer of Learning initiative, which represents an innovative public-private coordination to infuse learning into summer programs that young people across the city attend when school is out.

The Chicago Summer of Learning recognizes that student learning happens outside of school and gives learners digital recognition that communicates the skills they have developed. Chicago is first city to pilot such a citywide digital badge system across hundreds of organizations and learning opportunities to visually represent and reward students' achievements. Chicago Summer of Learning has more than 100 local and national organizations offering opportunities to earn badges, with more than 1,000 badge-earning possibilities—across Chicago's communities and connected to the world online.

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