

# Every summer has a story (or 25)

One of the highlights of my childhood summers was joining the Harford County Public Library's Summer Reading Program. My brother and I would tear through chapter books at home, alongside the Chesapeake Bay on Tilghman Island, or on the beach in Ocean City in a race to see who could get to the required 25 books first. Along the way there were games and prizes – and t-shirts, to boot. The real glory, of course, was the fact that rather than allowing our brains to reduce to mush while we were away from school, we were challenging our minds to create worlds beyond our own.

This summer, I signed all three of the boys up for the Harford County Public Library Summer Reading Program, with one-year-old Leo and three-year-old Frank enrolling in the “Read to Me” program and “almost” six-year-old Collin joining the Every Hero has a Story campaign. (When you've got a teacher/writer for a mom, you're a bibliophile before you can say the word “read.”)

Upon registering, we received a variety of coupons for free treats at places like Rita's, Bertucci's, and my absolute favorite cupcake place, Flavor. Completion of ten books by Monday, July 6th enters participants in a raffle for passes to the Maryland Science Center. If you don't win that round, you're immediately entered into a drawing for Orioles tickets. And when you finally reach your goal of 25 books by August 22nd, you will receive a certificate, a free book (!), and a voucher for Aberdeen Ironbirds tickets.

One of the best parts of the new Summer Reading Program is that you can log your books online and even write reviews to share with other readers.

Collin was ready to get started right away. I let him select a few books and even signed him up for his first library card! It was a great way to spend a terribly rainy afternoon.



We've been reading up a storm ever since. First thing in the morning. Outside on the playground. In the car. While waiting for dinner to be ready. And, of course, before

bed.

I've even decided to increase my literature intake, starting with Gretchen Rubin's "Better than Before." "Better than Before." Harper Lee's "Go Set a Watchman" will be on my porch in two weeks!

It's not too late to sign up for the Summer Reading Program at your local library. Let's see who gets to 25 books first!