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**MAYOR'S SUMMER READING CHALLENGE, PRESENTED BY EPSILON,
ENCOURAGES DAILY READING FOR EVERYONE, FROM TOTS AND TEENS TO GROWN-UPS**

*Signup is underway for the free 10-week challenge that offers prizes and programming aplenty;
kickoff activities begin June 3 with registration encouraged throughout the summer*

DALLAS (May 25, 2017) – Ready, set, read! With a goal to get the whole family reading and keep academic skills sharp, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, along with students and community supporters, today kicked off the 2017 Mayor's Summer Reading Challenge. The free 10-week program, which runs June 3-Aug. 12, encourages daily reading of books, newspapers, magazines, audiobooks and e-books. Presented by **Epsilon**, the Mayor's Summer Reading Challenge is a family affair, open to children and adults of all ages. **Signup is underway at any of the 29 Dallas library locations or online at dallaslibrary.org/msrc.** While the Challenge begins June 3, people can sign up all summer long. Also, be sure to check with each local library for special activities surrounding the June 3 kickoff.

Young club members can earn incentive prizes – including books, coupons and passes to local attractions – for every 10 days they read at least 20-minutes. Reading can be reported to any Dallas Public Library or online at dallaslibrary.org/msrc. See details and rules below. Kids who read at least 50 days by Aug. 12 will be entered to win grand prizes, including an opportunity to have a pancake breakfast with the mayor of Dallas! Other grand-prize drawings include special experiences such as behind-the-scenes access to the penguin exhibit at the Dallas Zoo and Dallas Stars tickets with a post-game meet-and-greet with the team.

Mayor Rawlings emphasized that regular reading reduces summer learning loss, keeps academic skills strong, inspires curiosity, enhances comprehension and vocabulary, and helps establish a foundation for young people to become lifelong readers and learners.

“Summer days can be long for kids, so carving out at least 20 minutes a day should be easy, even if it's right before bedtime,” said Mayor Rawlings. “If we can entice kids and adults to keep turning the pages or swiping digital pages this summer, they are more likely to establish good reading practices for life. Reading is a great lifelong habit that is both enjoyable and enlightening.”

Mayor Rawlings introduced and thanked **Epsilon** for coming on board as the presenting sponsor.

“We are honored to support this successful and very fun program that inspires thousands of kids and families to read and experience a medley of enriching experiences,” said Amit Deshpande, Vice President of Analytics, Epsilon. “At Epsilon, we are innovators and believe in the power of reading from early on. It truly carries and propels you through life!”

Delivering remarks today in support of the Mayor's Summer Reading Club were **Amit Deshpande, vice president of analytics, Epsilon; LaMonte Thomas, president and general manager, Cigna North Texas and Oklahoma; Connie Yates, public relations, Tom Thumb; Coach Travis Mays, woman's basketball coach, SMU; Kate Park, executive director of the Friends of the Dallas Public Library; and Jo Giudice, director, Dallas Public Library.** Entertainment and activities were provided by the eccentric mad scientist, **Professor Brainius**, and the **Dallas Zoo**. Music was performed by the energetic **Lizza Connor**. Students from **Oran Roberts Elementary School** were on hand, along with **Mavs Man, Champ, Mavs ManiAACs, Dallas Mavericks dancers, SMU's mascot Peruna, Dallas Stars mascot Victor E. Green and the Dallas Cowboys mascot Rowdy.**

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FULL STEAM AHEAD. Throughout the summer, activities are held weekly at all Dallas library locations thanks to **The Dallas Foundation** and the **Friends of the Dallas Public Library's** funding of the library's STEAM initiative (science, technology, engineering, arts and math). The weekly STEAM activities will include making slime, learning binary code, playing with magnets and much more, plus special performers, visits by unusual animals and insects, and musical shows. Interactive programs will be presented by partner organizations such as the Dallas Children's Theater, Dallas Museum of Art, and Perot Museum of Nature and Science.

And to make sure learning stays active, Dallas Public Library hosts a mid-summer education boost in partnership with the Dallas City of Learning. Kids and families can get hands on with 3D printing, robotics, science experiments and other maker activities at the *Turn Up! Discovery Faire* on Saturday, July 15, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library (1515 Young St, Dallas).

READING CLUB RULES AND PRIZES. Children ages 0 to 18 can earn incentive prizes by reading at least 20 minutes a day. Readers can log each day they read online at dallaslibrary.org/msrc or at any Dallas Public Library location. Books, e-books, audiobooks, newspapers and magazines all count towards reading, but video games and websites do not.

Once 10 days of 20-minute reading have been logged, participants may visit their nearest library to pick up a free book of their choice PLUS a pass or coupon to some of the area's top attractions and eateries including **Dallas Children's Theater, Dallas Mavericks, Dallas Stars, Dallas Zoo, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Good Local Market, Nasher Sculpture Center, Pizza Hut, Medieval Times, SMU Meadows Museum and SMU athletic events, Tacos y Mas, Texas Rangers and Whataburger.** For every 10 days of 20-minute reading, they can visit their library for more free books and prizes – with giveaways awarded at 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 days of reading.

Adults who track each book they read at dallaslibrary.org/msrc will be entered in weekly and grand prize drawings. Plus, if they post on social media about their reading and tag @dallaslibrary, they will be entered in weekly drawings to win movie passes from Alamo Drafthouse. Adults can also earn drawing entries by completing online Learning Tracks – a series of thematic activities designed to encourage a deeper exploration of a particular topic.

While the Challenge begins June 3, people can sign up anytime and still have time to earn prizes.

Grand prizes. Kids who read at least 50 days by Aug. 12 will be entered to win the grand prizes, including an opportunity to have a pancake breakfast with Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings; a behind-the-scenes tour of the penguin exhibit at the Dallas Zoo; a breakfast with Dallas ISD Superintendent Dr. Michael Hinojosa; Dallas Stars tickets with a post-game meet-and-greet with the team; pizza maker for the day with a Pizza Hut chef; an SMU women's basketball package featuring seats behind the bench, a locker room tour and meet-and-greet with the coaches and players; a personal meeting with Santa and Mrs. Clause at the Klyde Warren Park tree lighting; a family four-pack of tickets to a Dallas Cowboys game; a chance to be a kick off kid and go on the field for a Dallas Cowboys game; a tour of the dinosaur/paleontology lab at SMU; a chance to shadow a vascular surgeon, cardiologist, cardiovascular nurse and a nutritionist at Baylor Scott & White Health; and much more.

Other grand prizes include passes and gift certificates to area attractions and restaurants including **Addison Improv; Adventure Landing; Al Biernat's Restaurant; American Airlines Center/Center Operating Company; Artisan Center Theater; AT&T Performing Arts Center; Bahama Beach; Baylor Jack and Jane Hamilton Heart and Vascular Hospital; Bibbentuckers; Billy Bob's Texas; Celebration Restaurant, Market and Catering; Creative Arts Center of Dallas; Dallas Children's Theater; Dallas Cowboys; Dallas ISD; Dallas Fire-Rescue Department; Dallas Mavericks; Dallas Mayor's Office; Dallas Plano Marriott at Legacy Town Center; Dallas Stars Foundation; Dallas Zoo; Disco Kids Dallas; Drybar; Fox 4; Frisco Rough Riders; Frontiers of Flight Museum; Hotel Intercontinental; House of Blues; Hyatt Regency Dallas; James Avery; JCPenney; Jumpstreet; Kitchen Dog Theater; Klyde Warren Park; Live Nation; Lone Star Park at Grand Prairie; LOOK Cinemas; Maggiano's Little Italy-North Park; Mary Kay Inc.; Medieval Times; Mudhen Meats and Greens; Nasher Sculpture Center; Nate's Seafood & Steakhouse; North Texas Performing Arts; Pizza Hut; Sea World of San Antonio; SMU; State Fair of Texas; Strikz Entertainment; Studio Movie Grill; Texas Motor Speedway; The Adolphus; The Dallas Arboretum; The Original Pancake House; The Theatre Three; The Westin Galleria; Times Ten Cellars; Top Knot; Total Wine & More; Uchi; and Urban Air.**

For 44 years, the Dallas Public Library's summer reading program has encouraged nearly 300,000 children to read. The Mayor's Summer Reading Challenge is a collaborative effort between the **City of Dallas Mayor's Office, Dallas Public Library, Dallas ISD** and dozens of community sponsors and donors.

Epsilon is presenting sponsor. Other sponsors and partners include **Albertsons/Tom Thumb; Cigna; Dallas Independent School District; Dallas Mavericks; Friends of the Dallas Public Library; Hilltop Securities; The Dallas Foundation; Sammons Enterprises Inc.; and SMU.** Donors are **Carol and Steve Aaron; Billingsley Company; Barbara and Randal Brown; Columbus Realty Partners Ltd.; David Deniger and Mara Batlin; HALL Group; Al G. Hill, Jr.; Lyda Hill; JLL; KDC Real Estate; Herb Kelleher; Erle A. Nye; Howard Rachofsky; Deedie Rose; Joy and Ronald Mankoff; Aileen & Jack Pratt Foundation; Mike A. Myers; and The Perot Foundation.**

Media partners are **Fox 4 and My 27, Univision 23 and UniMas 49, 106.1 KISS FM, K104, Smooth R&B 105.7, Qué Buena 94.1 FM, Latino Mix 107.9/107.1 FM, and Greensheet Media.**

To sign up or learn more, go to dallaslibrary.org/msrc or call 214-670-1671.

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