

# Day of fun activities helps keep kids reading through summer



Shotten Singer/The Herald-Dispatch

Nahdi Bropleh, center, teaches 5-year-old Allon Tarry how to make ice cream as Cabell County Schools hosts a National Reading Day event Thursday at Rotary Gardens in Huntington.

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HUNTINGTON — In celebration of National Summer Learning Day, several local organizations in Cabell County teamed up Thursday to bring fun and educational activities to Rotary Gardens.

From inflatables and face painting to free books and science-based art and cooking projects, Angie Ware, curriculum supervisor for Cabell County Schools, said the activities ensure that learning doesn't stop when the school year does.

Ware said programs like these, especially ones that emphasize literacy, are essential because students risk losing months of their reading skills when they go home for the summer.

The program also ties in with a nationwide plan called the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. The goal of the campaign is to have children reading at their equivalent grade level by the end of third grade.

"By the time the students hit the third grade,

if they aren't reading at their grade level it is very hard for them to catch up, making them more likely to later drop out of high school," Ware said.

Partners of the event include Cabell Huntington Hospital, Huntington Museum of Art, Cabell County Public Library and United Way of the River Cities.

Lena Burdette, director of the Education Initiative for the United Way, said she was thrilled to be part of the celebration by offering free books to the students who attended.

Throughout the summer, students in Rotary Gardens have also participated in a Literacy and Art Camp.

Eight-year-old Seth Robertson said the camp has made him a better reader and gives him something fun to do in the summer.

Ware said she hopes to expand this program to other neighborhoods next year.

National Summer Learning Day is an annual national advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association to highlight the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer.