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Mayor Fischer joins community partners in announcing plans for Virtual Cultural Pass and the Library's Summer Reading Program

LOUISVILLE (May 28, 2020) – Mayor Greg Fischer is reminding parents and caregivers that, despite COVID-19, there are still plenty of fun, free learning opportunities available online for Louisville area students while school is out this summer. The Mayor, and partner organizations the Fund for the Arts, the Arts and Culture Alliance (ACA), and the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL), want to encourage parents and caregivers to register for this year's Summer Reading Program and Cultural Pass—two programs designed to keep kids engaged and prevent summer learning loss—and to let them know how the two programs will work this summer amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're a city of lifelong learning and that means we're a city of year-round learning," said Mayor Fischer. "Now more than ever, it's vital that we keep kids engaged. With our Summer Reading Program and Cultural Pass, parents and children have plenty of fun virtual options this summer to keep kids' minds active so they're prepared for success in school and beyond."

In celebration of both the Library's Summer Reading Program and the 2020 Virtual Cultural Pass, the **Summer Reading Kickoff and Cultural Pass Showcase** will be broadcast on the Lift Up Lou Facebook page on Saturday, May 30 at 11 a.m. This family-friendly event will feature free performances from members of the Arts and Culture Alliance, including the Louisville Zoo, Kentucky Science Center, Squallis Puppeteers, Louisville Academy of Music, library storytellers, and more. For more information and to tune in, visit facebook.com/LiftUpLou.

Cultural Pass

The 2020 Virtual Cultural Pass is presented by the Fund for the Arts, in partnership with Metro Government, the Arts and Culture Alliance (ACA), and the Louisville Free Public Library. The free program supports and encourages summer learning by providing online access to more than 60 of Greater Louisville's arts and cultural institutions—including Louisville Youth Orchestra, Kentucky Shakespeare, StageOne Family Theatre, the Belle of Louisville, and more—for children and young adults up to age 21. The Cultural Pass is valid from June 1 to August 8 and provides pass-holders exclusive access to activities and content they can view throughout the summer from home. Families will not receive paper passes as in previous years.

"While we will definitely miss seeing everyone in person for this year's Cultural Pass, we're very excited to present an incredible lineup of diverse and inspiring activities from more than 60 arts and cultural

institutions in our community,” said KMAC Executive Director and ACA Board Chair Aldy Milliken. “With it being virtual this year, families can participate in the activities as many times as they’d like with just the click of a button and from the comfort of their own homes.”

Jefferson County residents can register for the 2020 Virtual Cultural Pass, access content, and track progress, by going to [LFPL.org/CulturalPass](https://www.lfpl.org/CulturalPass). Starting June 1, registered participants will find badge icons for each participating venue along with special links to virtual Cultural Pass activities.

“2020 has taught us to be more innovative,” said Christen Boone, President & CEO of the Fund for the Arts. “This year’s Virtual Cultural Pass is a perfect example of using innovation and creativity to expand the reach and access of our treasured arts and culture institutions, while respecting our community’s health and safety. We are deeply grateful to our donors and partners who are making this unique initiative possible for our kids to learn, grow, and engage. We’d especially like to thank Bales Foundation, Caesar’s Foundation of Floyd County, Owsley Brown II Charitable Foundation, Humana Foundation, and Duke Energy Foundation.”

Residents of southern Indiana and Bullitt County in Kentucky are also eligible to participate in the 2020 Virtual Cultural Pass. Those residents should register online through their public library. To learn more, visit www.fundforthearts.org/culturalpass.

Summer Reading

Presented by the Library Foundation, the Library’s annual Summer Reading is a free 10-week program that encourages kids and teens to read for fun over the summer by offering prizes and incentives. Every child—from infant through 12th grade—who completes the program will receive a throwback backpack, along with passes to local attractions (when they re-open) like the Kentucky Science Center, Squire Boone Caverns, a Louisville Bats baseball game, Fazoli’s lemon ice, and more. To complete the program, school-aged children simply read ten books, teens read six books, and preschool-aged children and younger need to read, or have read to them, 20 books.

“Summer Reading is the Library’s longest-running and most successful program,” said Library Director Lee Burchfield. “Despite the challenges we are facing as a community and a country, library staff are committed to making this the best Summer Reading possible and to helping our kids stay on reading level and return to school better prepared to learn.”

Every year, LFPL’s Summer Reading Program engages nearly 50,000 children and teens and offers them a wealth of free programming to educate, entertain, and enrich their lives while school is out. This summer however, in-person programming at libraries has been suspended. Instead, LFPL will offer regularly-scheduled virtual programs each week on Tuesdays (storytime) and Thursdays (STEAM Club) available via the Library’s website and social media. PLUS, you can watch us every Saturday at noon on WAVE 3, beginning June 6. This new summer reading-themed show called ***Adventures in Summer Reading*** will feature a different local performer and storyteller each week. Be sure to tune in!

For more information, or to pre-register for Summer Reading, visit [LFPL.org/SummerReading](https://www.lfpl.org/SummerReading), or call (502) 574-1611.