ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, READ!
KICK-START THE SUMMER AT YOUR LIBRARY!

PLUS
profile
calendar
book review
Those of you who know me know that my son plays volleyball at 352 Elite Volleyball club here in Ocala. Since he turned 18 and has now graduated, he is finishing his final year of club play. However, for the last several years our family vacations have consisted of going to tournaments throughout Florida, and to places such as Richmond, Virginia, Columbus, Ohio, St. Louis, Missouri and Dallas, Texas. And, rather than fly, amazingly, we drive to all these places. It saves money and is a great opportunity for family time.

One thing we love to do while in the car is to listen to audio books. Zach and I love our SciFi/fantasy and my husband likes his suspenseful action-adventure. Of course, I pick them out so anything we listen to is okay by me. In the end, a good story is a good story and it doesn’t really matter if the book was a mystery, action adventure or SciFi/fantasy.

Additionally, we like to catch up on what is happening with each of us and talk about the upcoming tournament or dissect the tournament, after the fact. Thinking about these conversations and the progressive skill development, I think about the journey my son has taken over the years. He has matured and developed as a result of being part of a team effort. I am sure that many of you can relate. In addition to athleticism, he has developed life skills which will serve him well in his next chapter of life. Some of the many skills he has developed include: perseverance, goal setting, being a leader, self-assurance, the ability to get along with varying skills and personalities, good sportsmanship, overcoming obstacles, accepting correction, and last, but not least, being supportive and encouraging of others.

As our travel team days are numbered, it is with pride and wonderful memories that I appreciate the growth and development of one fine young man.
Hit a home run with books! This year’s summer reading program is “On Your Mark, Get Set… Read!” We’ll be celebrating sports, health and fitness and, of course, reading. Whether you’re running, biking, hiking or rowing this summer, make sure reading is part of your workout. Reading keeps us in shape mentally to be ready for school, to succeed in school, and to keep our brains at peak performance throughout our lives.

FOR SCHOOL READINESS
It’s the reading preseason and young children are in training! From the earliest age, reading and interacting with books are the best ways to set the pace for school readiness. Reading to your child will spark creativity, curiosity and imagination by opening the door to new worlds. Children will learn how to listen and that letters are more than just squiggles on the page. Board books introduce babies to nursery rhymes and the names of everyday objects, while teaching them how to handle a book. Concept books help toddlers and preschoolers learn letters, numbers, shapes and colors. Cover all
the bases: the more books you read, the more words and ideas will be exposed to your child. Doing these activities with your child is the best way to ensure that success in school is a slam dunk!

**FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS**

The game’s not over when the final school bell rings. The more picture and chapter books children have in their home, the greater the chances are they will go farther in school. In the blink of an eye, children will go from being read to, to reading easy reader books on their own and to fluently reading chapter books and beyond. Reading nonfiction books exposes children to advanced vocabulary and helps them to strengthen their knowledge base. Develop your children into heavyweight readers and they will have greater confidence and self-esteem. Here’s the game plan. Let’s equip children to succeed with books and more books.

**FOR YOUR HEALTH**

By becoming a lifelong reader, you’re going to bat for your own health. One key to enjoying a long life is keeping your brain healthy and strong. As physical activity strengthens your muscles, intellectual activity exercises different parts of your brain and helps prevent disease and memory decline from throwing you a curve ball later in life. You don’t need fancy apps or gadgets. Reading is one of the easiest ways to exercise your brain! Reading improves concentration, focus and problem-solving skills. It’s like a full-body workout for your brain. When you read, you are using your memory, imagination and critical thinking. Warm up with some light reading. Sprint through some short stories. Tackle that heavy nonfiction. Pace yourself through a trilogy marathon. A boost from books will help keep you in the race at any age!

**FOR FUN**

There’s a good reason we say that we “play” sports, because it’s fun. Reading is too! Reading is the original virtual reality experience. Whether you’re in the game or watching from the stands, books put you in the middle of the action. Learn to play a new sport, cook a healthy dish or read about a favorite athlete. A great book will provide hours of pleasure when rainy weather keeps you sidelined. If life has you benched, a good book can raise your spirits. Want your children to be champion readers? Coach them along, let them see you reading. There is nothing better than being snuggled up with a good book after an active day!

The ball is in your court and the Marion County Public Library System is in your corner. “On Your Mark, Get Set…READ!” this summer and join us for exciting events for children, boredom-busting activities for teens, inspiring programs for adults and lots of FUN. Because everyone who reads is a winner!
My mother was a southern cook extraordinaire. Not a gourmet; there was never a truffle oil-infused anything on her table. But supper was the highlight of our day. We gathered together to celebrate my mom’s famous golden, tender and crispy fried chicken, accompanied by her interpretation of mac and cheese, which included hundreds of flawless al dente elbows drenched in a rich, buttery, homemade cheese sauce, along with greens swimming with bacon and begging for cornbread.

I grew up encouraged to overindulge in those buttery, sugary, and fried foods and many more lip-smacking dishes just like them. I also grew well rounded in all the wrong ways. I handled the situation by gnawing and grazing during the day, then tiptoeing from my bed in the wee hours and inhaling a large amount of banana pudding with a sweet tea chaser. I don’t think anyone ever caught on.

Another thing that never caught on in my house is the idea that food can be both good for you and delicious. In fact, “Paula Deen Cuts the Fat: 250 Favorite Recipes All Lightened Up” is a terrific example of how it can be done. Paula made a few small changes, like swapping the fat in her famous Lady’s Cheesy Mac with something lighter, and managed to drop 40 pounds.

If you feel fancy, or if southern cooking isn’t your passion, try “Jacques Pepin’s Simple and Healthy Cooking” for a lighter spin on French cuisine. Or just go completely wild for Abel James’ “The Wild Diet” in which he extolls the virtue and variety of raw foods, raising my former habit of gnawing and grazing to a new and appetizing art form.

So, we don’t have to compromise flavor to eat well, but there may be more to learn about living healthy (like exercise) than just swapping out butter and sugar. Check out books available at your local branch of the Marion County Public Library System. At the library you’ll find the information needed to take you from fluffy to fit, no matter what your cravings.
Did you know that learning a second language can enhance the way your brain performs? New research also shows that learning a second language at any age can help ward off the effects of aging and dementia.

Maybe you’re planning to take a trip to an exotic land and want to immerse yourself in the culture? Or perhaps you need to learn a second language to further your career opportunities? Whatever your language learning needs are, your public library’s online language learning resource Pronunciator has you covered.

There are lessons designed for multiple age groups, including early learners: 3-6 years old; young learners: 7-12 years old; and adult learners. Pronunciator even has travel prep and health care courses.

There are also numerous options to learn phrases and essential core vocabulary words. Worried about your pronunciation of the language? Use the app or website with a microphone-enabled device and test your progress. You’ll be speaking like a native-born individual in no time.

Pronunciator has 81 total languages you can learn and 4,000 phrasebooks you can download in PDF format and take with you as you travel. Prefer to listen to your lessons? The streaming audio lessons can be downloaded in MP3 format and even burned to a CD if you prefer. Maybe your learning preference is to connect with a real live person? Pronunciator now has 256 live 30-minute classes per week with real teachers with ProLive.

For those who are bilingual, you can choose the specific language you wish to learn. For example, if you are a French speaker and want to learn Indonesian, you can choose to be taught Indonesian in either English or French, or in any of 50 different language options. This is a great option for people who need English as a second language.

Pronunciator can be accessed on your computer, and the website will work on mobile devices. There are apps for Apple, Android and Kindle Fire devices, and your progress is automatically synced between any and all of the devices on which you install the app.

Exercise your mind by learning a new language. Go to library.marioncountyfl.org and click on Pronunciator to get started.
On Your Mark, Get Set…Marion County Reads!
Visit any library location, check out library materials and get a chance to win a gift certificate from Barnes & Noble. Prize drawing will be held on Friday, July 29, at the Headquarters-Ocala Library location. One entry per library card per visit is allowed. Prize winners will be notified.

May 31-July 22
All ages, all library locations

Finders Keepers
There’s a geocache hidden at each library facility. Find it and earn a chance to win a summer prize pack! View the Marion County Public Library System’s geocache holdings at www.geocaching.com or ask a librarian about how to get started. The hunt is on!

June 1-July 22
All library locations

On Your Mark at the Park!
End the summer with games, activities and stories in the great outdoors. Show your library card and gain free admission to the park!

Co-sponsored by Marion County Parks and Recreation.

Tuesday, July 19, 10 a.m.-noon
Carney Island Recreation and Conservation Area
Ages birth-12 and their families

Homeschool Expo
Thinking of schooling at home?
Vicki Leist, Florida Parent-Educators Association’s Scholarship Foundation chair, provides an introduction to homeschooling and tips for navigating the process. Vendors and local homeschool support groups will be available for further guidance and conversation.

Saturday, Aug. 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Headquarters-Ocala

SPECIAL EVENTS
Youth Job Fair
Interested in summer or regular employment? Hiring managers from local food service, customer service, labor and retail businesses will be on hand for interviews, along with representatives from area post-secondary schools and services. Note: Proper business attire is required. This dress code will be strictly enforced. For complete details, visit www.careersource.com or call 352-732-1700, ext. 2260. Presented by CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion and its youth services provider, Eckerd Youth Alternatives, in cooperation with the Marion County Public Library System.

Thursday, June 2, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Headquarters-Ocala
Ages 16-24 only

Lights! Camera! Action!
Teen Filmmakers’ Workshop
Turn your ideas into movies with Bronson Mosley and crew from Day Break Studios. Get hands-on experience with film production equipment under the guidance of professionals! Open to ages 13-18. Registration required. Lunch provided. Call 352-671-8551.

Saturday, July 16, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Headquarters-Ocala

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Juggling Mike Stillwell
How does he do it? Enjoy the extraordinary and hilarious juggling of Mike Stillwell, part of the Jongleur Juggler duo! Keep your eyes open and learn a few new tricks!

Thursday, June 2, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Bellevue Public Library

Saturday, June 11, 2 p.m.
Dunnellon Public Library

Thursday, June 23, 2 p.m.
Forest Public Library
**MEET THE ILLUSTRATOR**

**Michael White**

Love a good story, especially one with pictures? Acclaimed children’s book illustrator Michael White uses simple shapes, storytelling and imagination while he works with the audience to create a unique and hilarious tale. Drawing tools provided for this highly energetic, interactive program! On your mark…get set…DRAW! Note: White’s works include “The Library Dragon,” “Return of the Library Dragon,” “The Secret of Old Zeb” (Deedy) and “Harriet’s Horrible Hair Day” (Stewart). Check these out and extend the fun!

Saturday, July 23, 2 p.m.

Headquarters-Ocala

Ages 8-16

**Stories in the Park:**

**Reading With a Ranger**

Fridays, 11 a.m.

Nature never sounded so good! Come to a city park and listen to stories read by your favorite park rangers. For more information call 352-368-5535. For addresses of the parks, visit www.ocalafl.org/recpark.

Presented by City of Ocala, Dept. of Recreation and Parks, in cooperation with the Marion County Public Library System.

**Drum It Up!**

Make a joyful noise with the drums of Ray DeVries! Everyone welcome!

Wednesday, June 8, 2 p.m.

Fort McCoy Public Library

Thursday, June 9, 2 p.m.

Forest Public Library

Saturday, June 11, 12:30 p.m.

Marion Oaks Public Library

Wednesday, June 15, 2 p.m.

Freedom Public Library

Tuesday, June 21, 2 p.m.

Dunnellon Public Library

Thursday, June 23, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Bellevue Public Library

**MEET THE AUTHOR**

**Connie Mann**

“Tangled Lies”

Combining her captain’s career with her writing, Connie Mann takes us on a behind-the-scenes look at her new suspense novel. Get in on the secret of why perseverance matters and how to get your imaginary friends to talk to you.

Thursday, June 9, 3:30 p.m.

Bellevue Public Library

Tuesday, June 14, 2 p.m.

Dunnellon Public Library

Wednesday, June 15, noon

Reddick Public Library

Brown Bag luncheon

Friday, June 17, 2 p.m.

Forest Public Library

Tuesday, June 21, 2:30 p.m.

Freedom Public Library

**The Drums of Mamadouba Mohamed Camara**

**Marion Oaks Public Library**

Raised in Conakry, Guinea, West Africa from the SuSu tribal nation, Mohamed Camara, dubbed the “Master of Masters” of the Djembe drum, is a performer known worldwide for his high-energy drumming and amazing percussive talents. Bring the whole family and add to the rhythms of the summer!

Wednesday, July 13, 6:30 p.m.

Drum Concert

Wednesday, July 20, 6:30 p.m.

Drumming Techniques From the Master!

**Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park Puppeteers**

The Wildlife Puppeteers from the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park present “What Animal Am I?” Meet the animal puppets, sing songs and enjoy a craft project. All ages welcome.

Tuesday, June 7, 2 p.m.

Forest Public Library

Wednesday, June 22, 2 p.m.

Fort McCoy Public Library

Saturday, July 9, 2 p.m.

Dunnellon Public Library

**Meet the Champions!**

**Gold Medalist Matt Cetlinski and Super Bowl Champion Tom Crabtree**

Here’s your chance to personally meet world-class athletes! Matt Cetlinski holds a gold medal from the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, Korea, where he was a member of the first-place U.S. team in the men’s 4x200-meter freestyle relay. Tom Crabtree is a former American football tight end in the NFL. He spent most of his career with the Green Bay Packers, with whom he won a Super Bowl ring in Super Bowl XLV. Relive the glory days!

Thursday, June 9, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Bellevue Public Library

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Forest Public Library

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Marion Oaks Public Library

Wednesday, June 15, 2 p.m.

Freedom Public Library

Tuesday, June 21, 2 p.m.

Dunnellon Public Library

Thursday, June 23, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Bellevue Public Library

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Tuesday, June 7, 2 p.m.

Forest Public Library

Wednesday, June 22, 2 p.m.

Fort McCoy Public Library

Saturday, July 9, 2 p.m.

Dunnellon Public Library
**HEADQUARTERS-OCALA**

2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala FL 34470
352-671-8551

Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Ocala Public Library.

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**SPECIAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS**

**Youth Job Fair**  
Thursday, June 2, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Ages 16-24 only  
Business dress required.  
See Program Spotlight.

**Lights! Camera! Action!**  
Teen Filmmakers’ Workshop  
Saturday, July 16, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Ages 13-18  
Registration required. Lunch provided. Call 352-671-8551.  
See Program Spotlight.

**Meet the Illustrator:**  
**Michael White**  
Saturday, July 23, 2 p.m.  
Ages 8-16  
See Program Spotlight.

**Homeschool Expo**  
Saturday, Aug. 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
See Program Spotlight.

**ADULTS**

**Wired Wednesdays**  
Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.  
Learn about computers and databases. Space is limited.

- **Computers for Beginners**  
  - Jun 1  I Turned on My Computer, Now What?  
  - Jun 8  Basic Keyboarding  
  - Jun 15  Basic Internet  
  - Jun 22  Basic Word

- **Online Potpourri**  
  - Jun 29  Gateway to Summer Adventure  
  - Jul 6  Find Your Way  
  - Jul 13  Happy 100th Birthday, National Park Service!  
  - Jul 20  Holiday Projects to Start Now

**Technology Help Center**  
Wednesdays, 2-3:30 p.m.  
June 1-Aug. 31  
Bring your device and drop in!

**The Monday Matinée**  
Mondays, 2 p.m.  
Movies for adults. Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Light refreshments.  
Jun 6  
Jun 13  
Jun 20  
Jun 27  
Jul 11  
Jul 18

**Novels at Night Book Club**  
Tuesdays, 6 p.m.  
Enjoy a lively book discussion, treats and coffee.  
Jun 14  “The Lost City of Z” by David Grann  
Jul 19  “And the Mountains Echoed” by Khaled Hosseini  
Aug 9  “Room” by Emma Donoghue

**Wednesday Widgets**  
Wednesdays, 3 p.m.  
Stir your curiosity!  
Jun 15  Understanding Your Credit Score  
Jul 13  Fraud, Scams and Identity Theft

**Times Gone By**  
Thursday, July 21, noon  
Amaze your friends! Learn local history from Sharon Dion, our remarkable local librarian and Marion County native! Fun facts, photographs, library resources and more about Ocala and Marion County.

**Florida Gardening 101**  
Saturday, Aug. 20, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Get the dirt on gardening as the Marion County Master Gardeners present consecutive workshops designed to get your patch of land growing!  
Presented by UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service.  
11 a.m.  Pests in the Florida Garden  
Noon  Fall and Winter Gardening

**Genealogy Help Center**  
Wednesdays, 12:30-3:30 p.m.  
June 1, 15  
Genealogy gurus from the Marion County Genealogical Society assist with your search.

**Manga-licious! Teen Book Club**  
Tuesdays, 4 p.m.  
June 7, July 5, Aug. 2  
High-energy talks about all things manga and anime.

**YALLA!**  
Wednesdays, 5 p.m.  
June 8, July 13, Aug. 10  
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

**Teen Movie Feast**  
Fridays, 2 p.m.  
Movies for teens. Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Light refreshments.  
Jun 10  
Jun 24  
Jul 8  
Jul 22

**Snacks in the Stacks**  
Wednesday, June 29, 4 p.m.  
Beat your hunger! Discover how to make delicious snacks with certified health coach Claudia Pache.

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**FAMILIES**

**Score BIG! Scavenger Hunt**  
May 31-July 22  
Have fun searching the children’s area for sports-related items!

**Family Film Fest**  
Fridays, 2 p.m.  
Movies for the whole family! Children under the age of 13 must be accompanied by an adult.  
Jun 3  
Jun 10  
Jun 17  
Jun 24  
Jul 1  
Jul 8  
Jul 15  
Jul 22

**TEENS**

**How to Ninja!**  
Wednesday, June 1, 4 p.m.  
Learn martial arts basics from the experts at the Martial Arts Center of Ocala.

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**ON YOUR MARK, GET SET... READ!**

Library.marioncountyfl.org
On Your Mark, Get Set…Read!  
Tuesdays, 2 p.m.  
Win big! Join this high-energy race through the summer! Ages 5-12.  
Jun 7  Take It Outside  
Jun 14  Exercise Your Mind!  
Jun 21  Skeletons: Animals Unveiled  
Jun 28  Calling All Ninjas  
Jul 5  What’s the Score?  
Jul 12  Florida Teaching Zoo

STORY TIMES

Family Story Time  
Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.  
June 1-July 13  
Infants-age 5 with caregivers

Saturday Stories  
Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.  
June 4, 18 and July 2, 16  
Infants-age 5  
June 11, 25 and July 9  
Ages 6-12

BELLEVUE PUBLIC LIBRARY

13145 SE Highway 484, Belleview FL 34420  
352-438-2500  
Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Belleview Public Library.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Juggling Mike Stillwell  
Thursday, June 2, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.  
See Program Spotlight.

Meet the Champions!  
Gold Medalist Matt Cetlinski and Super Bowl Champion Tom Crabtree  
Thursday, June 9, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.  
See Program Spotlight.

Meet the Author:  
Connie Mann  
“Tangled Lies”  
Thursday, June 9, 3:30 p.m.  
See Program Spotlight.

TEENS

YALLA South!  
Tuesdays, 5 p.m.  
June 7, July 5, Aug. 2  
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

Get in the Game!  
Wednesdays, 4 p.m.  
Challenges await. You in?  
Jun 8  Improv!  
Jun 15  Get in the Video Game With Gamer’s Edge  
Jun 22  Life-Sized Games  
Jun 29  Amazing Library Race  
Jul 6  Indoor Lawn Games  
Jul 13  Rock On! With Gamer’s Edge  
Jul 20  Food, Fun and Fitness presented by Jessie Driggers, Florida Department of Health

ADULTS

Genealogy Help Center  
Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m.  
June 1, July 6, Aug. 3  
Genealogy gurus from the Marion County Genealogical Society assist with your search.

Tuesday Movie Matinée  
Tuesdays, 1 p.m.  
Movies for adults. Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Light refreshments.  
Jun 7  
Jun 14  
Jun 21  
Jun 28  
Jul 5  
Jul 12  
Jul 19  
Jul 26

Technology Help Center  
Tuesdays, 2-4 p.m.  
June 7-Aug. 30  
Bring your device and drop in!

Wednesday Morning Book Club  
Wednesdays, 10 a.m.  
A gathering of exceptional people who share a love of literature.  
Jun 8  “The Gods of Guilt” by Michael Connelly  
Jul 13  “Save Me: A Novel” by Lisa Scottoline  
Aug 10  “The Finisher” by David Baldacci

Tuesday Evening Book Club  
Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.  
Another gathering of exceptional people who share a love of literature.  
Jun 21  “Bettyville: A Memoir” by George Hodgman  
Jul 19  “The Book of Speculation: A Novel” by Erika Swyler  
Aug 16  “Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital” by Sheri Fink

Florida Native Plant Society  
Mondays, 6 p.m.  
Join Taryn Evans, president of the local chapter, and guest presenters in special topics about native plant life in Florida!  
Jun 27  At the Seed of the Crime: Did the Plant Do Him In? presented by Dr. David W. Hall  
Jul 25  Designing Landscapes Using Native Plants presented by Amanda Martin  
Aug 29  Native Plants and Beneficial Insects presented by Taryn Evans

TEENS

YALLA South!  
Tuesdays, 5 p.m.  
June 7, July 5, Aug. 2  
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

Get in the Game!  
Wednesdays, 4 p.m.  
Challenges await. You in?  
Jun 8  Improv!  
Jun 15  Get in the Video Game With Gamer’s Edge  
Jun 22  Life-Sized Games  
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Jul 6  Indoor Lawn Games  
Jul 13  Rock On! With Gamer’s Edge  
Jul 20  Food, Fun and Fitness presented by Jessie Driggers, Florida Department of Health

FAMILIES

Family Games Unplugged  
Wednesdays, 4 p.m.  
June 1, July 6, Aug. 3  
Learn a new game every month!
Knotty Knitters
Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m.
June 1–Aug. 31
Learn to knit or crochet with our local expert Petra Trapp.

On Your Mark, Get Set...READ!
Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Win big! Join this high-energy race through the summer!
Jun 2  Juggling Mike Stillwell
Jun 9  Meet the Champions: Gold Medalist Matt Celtinski and Super Bowl Champion Tom Crabtree
Jun 16 Martial Arts World Taekwondo Exhibition
Jun 23 Drum It Up With Ray Devries
Jun 30 Extreme Biking presented by Chris Fernandez, Santos Trailhead Bicycle Shop
Jul 7 Set a Record!
Jul 14 Filmmaking presented by ThatsHowItsDone Productions
Jul 21 Safe Journeys Through Florida’s Woods and Waterways presented by Asa Dias, Florida wildlife officer

Art Before Your Eyes
Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon
June 3, July 1, Aug. 5
See the creative side of life with the artists from Gallery East!

Family Flicks
Tuesdays, 10 a.m.
Movies for the whole family!
Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult.
Light refreshments.
Jun 7
Jun 14
Jun 21
Jun 28
Jul 5
Jul 12
Jul 19
Jul 26

B.E.A.R. Time!
Tuesdays, 3:30 p.m.
June 7–Aug. 30
Be excited about reading and hear great stories!

DUNNELLON PUBLIC LIBRARY
20351 Robinson Road, Dunnellon FL 34431
352-438-2520
Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Dunnellon Public Library.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
Tony the Balloon Guy
Friday, June 3, 2 p.m.
Silly antics, corny lines, and expert balloon sculptures! Lots of laughs abound as balloons take on spectacular shapes! Fun for the whole family.

Juggling Mike Stillwell
Saturday, June 11, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Meet the Author: Connie Mann
“Tangled Lies”
Tuesday, June 14, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

I Scream for Ice Cream Social
Thursday, June 16, 2 p.m.
We all scream for ice cream! Enjoy a scoop as you get the scoop on the history of ice cream with ice cream aficionado Jim Phillips. History was never so sweet!

Drum It Up With Ray DeVries!
Tuesday, June 21, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park Puppeteers
Saturday, July 9, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

ADULTS
Master Gardener’s Plant Clinic
Tuesdays, 10 a.m.
June 7, July 5, Aug. 2
Bring your plants and questions for diagnosis by the experts.
Presented by the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service.

Drop-In Book Club
Thursdays, 11 a.m.
Gather with exceptional people who share a love of literature.
Jun 16 “The Martian” by Andy Weir
Jul 21 “Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America” by Leon Dash
Aug 18 “The Girl on the Train” by Paula Hawkins

Ask Your Master Gardener
Tuesdays, 1 p.m.
Learn gardening techniques from the masters!
Presented by the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service.
Jun 21 Organic Gardening
Jul 19 Florida Friendly Landscaping

Help Center for E-Books and Digital Audio
Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon
June 2–Aug. 25
Bring your device and drop in!

TEENS
YALLA West
Wednesdays, 5 p.m.
June 1, July 6, Aug. 3
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

Wii Games
Thursdays, 2 p.m.
June 2-July 21
Virtual fun with a different game every week. Are you up for the challenge?

Story Boxes
Saturday, June 18, 2 p.m.
Use found objects to decorate sports memorabilia boxes. Supplies provided. Light refreshments.

Karma Coloring
Saturday July 16, 2 p.m.
Color mandalas and kaleidoscopic-designed pictures. Materials provided. Light refreshments.
FAMILIES

Crafts and More!
Wednesdays, 2 p.m.
June 1-July 20
Stories and craft activities for the entire family! Create all sorts of sporty stuff including a foam finger!

Family Film Fest
Fridays, June 10-July 29, 2 p.m.
Movie fun for the whole family! Light refreshments.

Start Your Engines!
Tuesdays, 2 p.m.
June 7, 28
Compete in our remote control car obstacle course and races. Open to all ages.

Construction Junction
Tuesdays, 2 p.m.
June 14, July 5
LEGO® architects unite! Put your imagination in gear.

It’s a Fire Truck!
Tuesday, July 12, 2 p.m.
Get a close-up view of a fire truck while the Dunnellon firefighters talk about fire safety.

Martial Arts Demonstration
Tuesday, July 19, 2 p.m.
Martial arts instructor and author Jerry Heines demonstrates the basics.

Preschool Adventures
Fridays, 11 a.m.
Ages 3-5

PAWSitive Fun With Terra, the Therapy Dog
Fridays, 11:30 a.m.
Listen to great stories or read to Terra, our canine listener.

FOREST PUBLIC LIBRARY
905 S. Highway 314A, Ocklawaha FL 32179
352-438-2540
Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Forest Public Library.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Summer Program Kickoff!
Tuesday, May 31, 2 p.m.
Get a head start on summer reading with stories, games and lots of fun!
Co-sponsored by Publix Super Markets, Inc., and Walmart Stores, Inc.

Drum It Up With Ray DeVries
Thursday, June 9, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Meet the Author: Connie Mann
“Tangled Lies”
Friday, June 17, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park Puppeteers
Tuesday, June 7, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Juggling Mike Stillwell
Thursday, June 23, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Irish Dancing
Thursday, June 30, 2 p.m.
Kick up your heels with the Hogan School of Irish Dance, North Central Florida’s premier certified Irish Dancing School.

ADULTS

Technology Help Center
Wednesdays, 10 a.m.
June 1-July 27
Bring your device and drop in!

Color Your Way to Calm
Thursdays, 11 a.m.
June 2, 16, July 7, 21
Be creative while letting your inner artist color inside and outside the lines.

Crafts for a Cause
Mondays, 10 a.m.
June 6, July 18
Help our community!

Forest Readers Book Club
Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.
Gather with exceptional people who share a love of literature.

Jun 8  “Dead Wake: the Last Crossing of the Lusitania” by Erik Larson
Jun 22  “In the Unlikely Event” by Judy Blume
Jul 13  “A Tale of Two Cities” by Charles Dickens
Jul 27  “We Never Asked for Wings” by Vanessa Diffenbaugh
Aug 10  “Twenty Wishes” by Debbie Macomber
Aug 24  “The Cuckoo’s Calling” by Robert Galbraith

The Friday Matinée
Fridays, 2 p.m.
Movies for adults. Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Free popcorn!
Jun 10
Jul 1

Gardening With Nature
Saturday, June 11, 2 p.m.
Ranger Jeffrey Kneisley, Silver Springs State Park specialist, discusses landscaping.

Facebook Tips
Tuesdays, 6 p.m.
June 14, July 12
Keep your social networking sites under control and up-to-date.
Self-Defense for Women
Monday, June 20, 11 a.m.
Take care of yourself with these personal safety strategies demonstrated by martial arts master Silvester Edwards of Pasa-Taekwon.

Living in Bear Country
Tuesday, June 21, 6 p.m.
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission representative Natalie Almeter provides tips on living with our neighborhood wildlife.

Ride Out the Storm!
Wednesday, June 22, 2 p.m.
Don’t get caught unprepared! Clay Electric representative Dustin Echols and Marion County Emergency Management’s Lt. Chip Wildy provide the necessary steps to stay safe during hurricane season.

Recognizing the Signs of Alzheimer’s Disease
Friday, June 24, 2 p.m.
Mike Sever, pharmacy manager of Hospice of Marion County, discusses the important need-to-know warning signs of this dreaded disease.

Ask Your Master Gardener
Saturdays, 2 p.m.
Get your garden growing! Learn gardening techniques from the masters! Registration recommended.

Presented by the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service.

On Your Mark, Get Set…Read!
Tuesdays, 2 p.m.
Win big! Join this high-energy race through the summer!

Jun 7 Homosassa Springs Puppet Show (See Program Spotlight)
Jun 14 World Records
Jun 21 Martial Arts With Master Silvester Edwards
Jun 28 Great Races
Jul 5 Ninja Training Camp
Jul 12 Feed Your Brain With Chef Nancy
Jul 19 Finish Line Celebration!

Family Flicks
Thursdays, 2 p.m.
Movies for the whole family! Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Free popcorn!

Jun 30
Jul 7
Jul 14

YALLA East
Thursdays, 5 p.m.
June 16, July 21, Aug. 18
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

FAMILIES

Get in the Game: Wii Sports
Thursday, June 2, 2 p.m.
Test your sports skills!

Family Game Time
Thursdays, 4 p.m.
June 2, July 7
Don’t be bored, play board games.

Women’s Health
Thursday, June 9, 11 a.m.
Discussion about breast and cervical cancer.

Ask Your Master Gardener
Saturdays, 10 a.m.
Get your garden growing! Learn gardening techniques from the masters! Registration recommended.

Presented by the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service.

Cats! Cats! Cats!
Wednesday, June 8, 2 p.m.
Have a feline friend? Marion County Animal Services provides helpful information about great ways to care and keep our cats happy. Adoptions available after the program.

YALLA East
Thursdays, 5 p.m.
June 16, July 21, Aug. 18
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

FAMILIES

Get in the Game: Wii Sports
Thursday, June 2, 2 p.m.
Test your sports skills!

Family Game Time
Thursdays, 4 p.m.
June 2, July 7
Don’t be bored, play board games.

On Your Mark, Get Set…Read!
Tuesdays, 2 p.m.
Win big! Join this high-energy race through the summer!

Jun 7 Homosassa Springs Puppet Show (See Program Spotlight)
Jun 14 World Records
Jun 21 Martial Arts With Master Silvester Edwards
Jun 28 Great Races
Jul 5 Ninja Training Camp
Jul 12 Feed Your Brain With Chef Nancy
Jul 19 Finish Line Celebration!

Family Flicks
Thursdays, 2 p.m.
Movies for the whole family! Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Free popcorn!

Jun 30
Jul 7
Jul 14

FORT MCCOY PUBLIC LIBRARY
14660 NE Highway 315,
Fort McCoy FL 32134
352-438-2560
Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Fort McCoy Public Library.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park Puppeteers
Wednesday, June 22, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Drum It Up With Ray DeVries
Wednesday, June 8, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

ADULTS
Ask Your Master Gardener
Saturdays, 10 a.m.
Get your garden growing! Learn gardening techniques from the masters! Registration recommended.

Presented by the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service.

Cats! Cats! Cats!
Wednesday, June 8, 2 p.m.
Have a feline friend? Marion County Animal Services provides helpful information about great ways to care and keep our cats happy. Adoptions available after the program.

YALLA East
Thursdays, 5 p.m.
June 16, July 21, Aug. 18
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

FAMILIES

Get in the Game: Wii Sports
Thursday, June 2, 2 p.m.
Test your sports skills!

Family Game Time
Thursdays, 4 p.m.
June 2, July 7
Don’t be bored, play board games.

On Your Mark, Get Set…Read!
Tuesdays, 2 p.m.
Win big! Join this high-energy race through the summer!

Jun 7 Homosassa Springs Puppet Show (See Program Spotlight)
Jun 14 World Records
Jun 21 Martial Arts With Master Silvester Edwards
Jun 28 Great Races
Jul 5 Ninja Training Camp
Jul 12 Feed Your Brain With Chef Nancy
Jul 19 Finish Line Celebration!

Family Flicks
Thursdays, 2 p.m.
Movies for the whole family! Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Free popcorn!

Jun 30
Jul 7
Jul 14

FORT MCCOY PUBLIC LIBRARY
14660 NE Highway 315,
Fort McCoy FL 32134
352-438-2560
Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Fort McCoy Public Library.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park Puppeteers
Wednesday, June 22, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Drum It Up With Ray DeVries
Wednesday, June 8, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

ADULTS
Ask Your Master Gardener
Saturdays, 10 a.m.
Get your garden growing! Learn gardening techniques from the masters! Registration recommended.

Presented by the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service.

Cats! Cats! Cats!
Wednesday, June 8, 2 p.m.
Have a feline friend? Marion County Animal Services provides helpful information about great ways to care and keep our cats happy. Adoptions available after the program.
I Scream for Ice Cream Social
Wednesday, July 13, 2 p.m.
We all scream for ice cream! Enjoy a scoop as you get the scoop on the history of ice cream with ice cream aficionado Jim Phillips. History was never so sweet! See Program Spotlight.

ADULTS

Technology Help Center
Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-noon
June 1-July 20
Bring your device and drop in!

Ask Arnold!
Comprehensive Computer Assistance
Thursdays, 12-2 p.m.
June 2-July 21
Staff and volunteers are available to help with all computer needs.

Ask Your Master Gardener
Fridays, noon
Get that garden growing!
Learn gardening techniques from Norma Samuel.
Presented by the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service

As the Page Turns Book Club
Tuesdays, 2:30 p.m.
Join the club and turn the page! Everyone is welcome!

The Tuesday Matinée
Tuesdays, 3 p.m.
Movies for adults. Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Light refreshments.

B.E.A.R. Time!
Mondays, 4 p.m.
June 6-July 18
Be excited about reading and hear great stories!

TEENS

Film Feast!
Thursdays, 2 p.m.
Movies for teens. Anyone younger than age 13 must be accompanied by an adult.

YALLA Free!
Thursdays, 5 p.m.
June 23, July 28, Aug. 25
Be part of the library experience! Earn volunteer hours for service.

FAMILIES

On Your Mark, Get Set...Read!
Wednesdays, 2 p.m.
Win big! Join this high-energy race through the summer!

Color Your Way to Calm
Monday, July 11, 3 p.m.
Be creative while letting your inner artist color inside and outside the lines. Light refreshments.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Name That Bear!
A giant teddy has come to live at the library but, alas, without a name! Make your suggestions in June and vote for your favorite in July.

Healthy Herb!
Wednesday, June 1, 2 p.m.
Who is that fellow covered in food? Join in the food and fitness frolics. Nutrition facts were never more energetically experienced!

Drum It Up With Ray DeVries!
Wednesday, June 15, 2 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

Meet the Author:
Connie Mann
“Tangled Lies”
Tuesday, June 21, 2:30 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.
Pajama Party!
Tuesdays, 6 p.m.
June 7–July 19
Make those summer nights spe- cial with stories, songs and activi- ties. Light refreshments. Fuzzy slip- pers and jammies welcome!

MARION OAKS
PUBLIC LIBRARY
294 Marion Oaks Lane, Ocala FL 34473
352-438-2570
Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the
Marion Oaks Public Library.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
Reptiles of Florida
Saturday, June 4, 11 a.m.
Encounter Florida wildlife with the Park
Rangers from Silver Springs State Park.

Drum It Up With Ray DeVries
Saturday, June 11, 12:30 p.m.
See Program Spotlight.

The Drums of Mamatouba
Mohamed Camara
Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.
July 13, 20
Experience the rhythms of West Africa!
See Program Spotlight.

ADULTS
Reading Group for Writers
Mondays, 6 p.m.
June 27, July 25, Aug. 29
For all writers who need encoura- gement! Bring your stories, poetry and
works-in-progress for critique and
inspiration. Register your interest at
the library and let’s get writing!

Ask Your Master Gardener
Friday, Aug. 19, 4 p.m.
Get that garden growing! Learn gar-
dening techniques from Bill McCue.
Presented by the UF/IFAS Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS
Marion County Extension Service.

TEENS
YALLA Oaks!
Wednesdays, 5 p.m.
June 8, July 13
Be part of the library experience!
Earn volunteer hours for service.

FAMILIES
Summer Pajama Parties!
Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., June 8–July 20
Make those summer nights spe- cial with stories, songs, activi- ties and popcorn! Fuzzy slippers
and jammies welcome!

Chess With Coach
Bobby Whipple
Saturday, June 18, 11 a.m.
Explore the game of chess with
certified U.S. Chess Federation
coach Bobby Whipple.

REDDICK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
15150 NW Gainesville Road, Reddick FL 32686
352-438-2566
Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the
Ocala Public Library.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
Brown Bag Luncheon With
Author Connie Mann
“Tangled Lies”
Wednesday, June 15, noon
Bring your bag lunch. Beverage
and dessert provided. Contact
the library to reserve a piece
of pie! Co-sponsored by Heart
of Florida Health Center.
See Program Spotlight.

Happy Birthday,
Mayor Jim!
Tuesday, July 12,
1 p.m.
Shhhhh! It’s a surprise! Join
us in celebrating Mayor Jim
Stroup’s birthday. Cake and ice
cream will be served in honor of
Jim’s special day. Hip hip hurrah!

Robotics With
Vincent Vaughns
Saturday, July 23, 2 p.m.
Be inspired! Yale-bound Vincent
Vaughns, a former North Marion
High School and Phillips Exeter Acad-
emy (NH) student, demonstrates his
award-winning robotic care system.

On Your Mark, Get Set...Read!
Thursday, 4 p.m.
Win big with the North Marion
High School athletic teams!
Read and play games with our
local athletes and coaches.

ADULTS
Grow Gorgeous Roses!
Saturday, June 11, 11 a.m.
Treat your garden to beautiful
flowers with tips from Barbara
Georgius and Connie Bonbrest.
Presented by the UF/IFAS Master Gardeners; UF/IFAS
Marion County Extension Service.

Keep the Pressure Down
Tuesday, June 7, 10:30 a.m.
Registration by June 2
Eat well and live life! Whatever your
pressure, understanding the benefits
of the DASH eating plan (Dietary Ap-
proaches to Stop Hypertension) is es-
ternal to creating a heart-healthy life-
style. Walk-ins welcome. Pre-registrants
will receive take-home materials.
Presented by Nancy Gal, UF/IFAS Marion County
Extension Service.

FAMILIES
On Your Mark, Get Set...Read!
Thursday, 4 p.m.
Win big with the North Marion
High School athletic teams!
Read and play games with our
local athletes and coaches.

Jun 2 Kick off With North Marion
HS Athletic Director Donald Tucker
Jun 9 Football Fun With Coach Willie Offord
Jun 16 Basketball Basics With Coach Stephanie Brown
Jun 23 Softball Skills With Coach Bob Panitzke
Jun 30 Track Action With Coach David Waters
Jul 7 Basketball Basics II With Coach Tim Yarn
Jul 14 Volleyball FUNdamentals With Coach Douwyna Montalvo
Jul 21 Wrap-up
EXHIBITS AND DISPLAYS

Headquarters-Ocala Public Library
June  Original Artwork by Cheryl Wright
July  Paper Craft Art by Esmeralda Arribas
August Lake Wales Ridge Exhibit by Heartland Cultural Alliance

Bellevue Public Library
June  Acrylic Paintings by Jim Cochell
July  Weaving and Painting by Poff Studio
August Paintings by Judith Kaiser

Dunnellon Public Library
June  Gourd Art by Glenda Damm
July  Metal Jewelry by David Kellner
August Wood Carving by Gene Maier

Forest Public Library
June  Games From Around the World
July  Hawaiian Plates by Robert Lyn Nelson from Robin Wayne
August Calm Colors!
Jun-Aug Hand-Blown Borosilicate Glass by John Freeze

AT YOUR SERVICE

Early Voting
Saturday, Aug. 20-Saturday, Aug. 27, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Available at Headquarters-Ocala, Bellevue, Dunnellon, Forest and Freedom public libraries. Contact the Supervisor of Elections for more information.

Access Florida Volunteers
Forest Public Library
Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m.
June 7-Aug. 30
Get help with filing for food stamp assistance, temporary cash assistance, refugee assistance and Medicaid programs.

CareerSource
Job seeker services available! Call the library nearest you for times and locations.

Free Screenings With FDLRS
The Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System/Child Find offers free screenings for children birth through age 5 who may have difficulty with learning, speaking, playing, seeing, walking and hearing. Screening appointments may be held at your local library. Contact Child Find at 352-671-6051 to schedule.

Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE)
Obtain free Medicare counseling through the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. Contact Headquarters-Ocala, Bellevue, Dunnellon or Forest public libraries for site schedule.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
Many of the Friends of the Library groups do not meet during the summer months. Contact your library for more definite information.

Friends of the Ocala Public Library
Thursdays, 2 p.m.
June 16, no meeting in July, August 18

COMING SOON!
The Marion County Public Library System Pets Caught Reading Photo Contest!
Check out our fall issue of WORDS magazine for information and details about how to enter your furry, feathery or scaly friend.
Photos and Events of the Marion County Public Library System

- Forest Public Library cooks
- Judge Jim McCune visits HQ-Ocala Public Library
- Marion Oaks Public Library PJ Party
- NH Jones students visit HQ-Ocala Public Library
- Dolores Lichatz and E.L.V.I.S. at Dunnellon Public Library
- Seuss-a-palooza Program at Reddick Public Library
Your team is down by three when the quarterback throws you the ball. With defenders on either side, you somehow manage to catch the ball and run it in for a touchdown. The stadium buzzes with excitement because your team just won the game!

You may have scored the touchdown, but the play would not have happened without teamwork. What makes teamwork work? In order to succeed, teams require our finest qualities and values. The best teammates display unity, sharing, commitment, capability, selflessness and purpose. And when a team achieves its goal, success is all the more fulfilling because it’s shared.

In Marion County, there are many fine examples of teamwork. A prime example, and public library system partner, is the Marion County Children’s Alliance (MCCA). MCCA works to ensure a safe, nurturing environment for the children of Marion County. According to board member Scott Hackmyer, the library’s and MCCA’s “missions intertwine, helping children develop to their fullest potential.” Hackmyer stated that “the library system has been a longtime supporter of the Children’s Alliance and the Alliance helps share the message of the vital importance of a strong library system for our community.”

Our public library experience tells us that people who read regularly also tend to be more informed about and involved in their communities. Just the sort of people you want on your team, whatever its purpose.

You can learn a lot about teamwork at the Marion County Public Library System. We have books and materials about teamwork, team building, team management, team leadership and team communication techniques. If you want to be part of a successful team, your public library is a great place to start. You can make the team. Then you can make the team great!
BOOKS NEEDED!

During your spring cleaning, did you find books that you know you’ll never read again? The Friends of the Ocala Public Library want your books! We can sell your gently used books in our Book Market. With the money that we receive from selling these books, we help subsidize many library projects and activities. Help us to help our Library. You may drop off your donations to the Book Market anytime during their regular hours: Monday - Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday closed.

SUMMER SLIDE

Is your child going to have a “Summer Slide?” We’re not talking about the playground-type slide. “Summer Slide” is the term given to the information that children forget during the summer if they do not read. Often during long summer months, students lose skills they developed during the previous school year. Make this summer different. Make the effort to read aloud to your children, whatever their age. This will help them retain and increase vocabulary and language skills. As an additional incentive, bring your children to the library to join in the fun during our theme-related activities, “On Your Mark, Get Set...READ!”

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

AUGUST 6TH

QUARTERLY BOOK SALE

Aug. 6
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Meeting Rooms
Headquarters-Ocala Public Library

Conratulations to the Friends!

Friends of the Library groups in Marion County recently won the new “Library Advocacy Award” from the Florida Library Association (FLA). This award was in recognition of the groups’ efforts in advocating for the Marion County Public Library System. The FLA Executive Director Martina Brawer said, “This new award recognized the efforts of the seven Marion County Friends Groups for their tireless work locally on behalf of the Marion County Library System.”

Seven independent Friends of the Library organizations in Marion County are based at the library branches throughout the county, including Ocala, Freedom, Forest, Marion Oaks, Fort McCoy, Dunnellon, and Belleview. The Friends groups raise money and advocate to support unmet library needs in such areas as materials and programming. They do this through the sale of donated used books and Friends membership fees.
Student athlete. Two seemingly stand-alone nouns unless you’re talking to Coaches Donald Tucker and Willie Offord of the North Marion High School Athletic Department. They believe that academics and athletics go hand in hand and use the term “student athlete” consistently as they talk about their students and the high school’s various athletic programs.

I asked Athletic Department Director Coach Tucker to tell me his definition of a student athlete. He pretty well sums it up by stating that “if you don’t get it in the classroom, you really aren’t going to get it on the field either, whatever your athletic prowess may be.”

The goal at North Marion High School is to help prepare their student athletes for life; preparing today’s students to be tomorrow’s leaders.

Football Coach Willie Offord may still be somewhat new to the North Marion High School Athletic Department, but his presence on both college and NFL football fields spans more than a decade. His take on a student athlete? He believes that you have to put the same energy into both athletics and academics. “Know your assignment on the field and in the classroom,” says Offord.

Offord, who played for the Minnesota Vikings for four seasons until an injury ended his career in 2006, doesn’t believe in talking about what he’s done in the past. He’d rather focus on the future and the teens he’s coaching. “I knew that playing football was going to end at some point. The lessons I’ve learned in life helped to prepare me for what’s ahead,” he said.

Although North Marion High School football has achieved the distinct status of being district champion or in the playoffs since 2000, there are many other athletic pursuits, including basketball, cross country, baseball, softball, swimming, volleyball, golf, bowling, soccer, wrestling and cheerleading to engage their student athletes.

Coaches Tucker and Offord agree on many areas, especially what it takes to make a great athlete. Both concur that it takes a strong will and desire to get better in both the classroom and on the athletic field. It’s a metaphor for life.