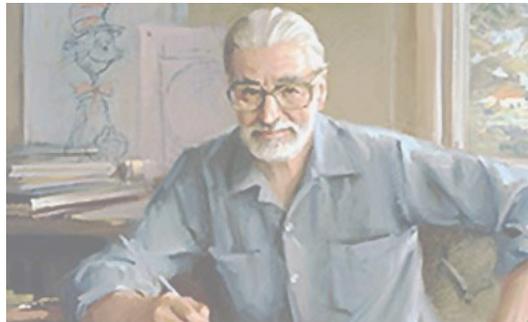


“The more you read, the more you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

- Dr. Seuss



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Crazy 8's: Math for Kids and 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten



On more than one occasion I have heard patrons compliment the beauty of our library and our friendly staff. I personally, without bias, believe we have one of the strongest youth service departments in the universe. This month's newsletter will be dedicated to defining family literacy and promoting some literacy offerings right here at FCPL.

Because literacy is so complex and dynamic, definitions of what make up literacy vary widely. One of the most common threads throughout definitions of early childhood literacy is preparation. Key is building a foundation that prepares children for further stages of learning.

As the director of literacy at the FCPL I understand the foundation of literacy to be two sides of a coin. The ability to decode language and to think in patterns, solve problems, and categorize. These two concepts are commonly called literacy and numeracy. There are many ways to engage learning for kids, but the key is to make it fun.

Nancy Visceglie and Natalie Damer, in our youth services department, have started two projects to meet these specific needs: Crazy 8's Math Club and 1,000 Book Before Kindergarten. Nancy and Natalie are dedicated to helping families learn together and to keeping it fun and lively.

The 1,000 books challenge meets every other Monday, November 7th and 21st, if you are interested in joining. It is a nationwide project that is intended to strengthen the child-parent relationship while tracking the literacy progress of your child. Ask Nancy in our youth services department to get signed up and “keep on reading.”

“Crazy 8s is a recreational after-school math club that helps kids enjoy the math behind their favorite activities (#crazy8'sbedtimemath)!” K-2nd grade meets at 3:15 every Monday and 3rd-5th grade meets directly afterward at 4:15. After the first meeting, one little girl, Gwenivere Voorhees said, “This isn't a math class, this is fun!” If you have any questions come by our youth services department.

Patron: Traci Norman

“Patron” is a column in *Athenaeum* that focuses on an individual who regularly visits the FCPL. This month I interviewed Traci Norman, better known as Mama to her friends. She has been attending *Learn*, FCPL’s literacy dept., to “work on her education.”

Who has been the biggest influence in your life?

My mother, Eddie Swanson. She has always stuck by me through everything.

What do you think makes a good friendship?

I have always felt that what you put into a relationship is what you will get out of it.

What is your reason for attending literacy project *Learn*?

To work on my education. It is something that I feel like I put off for many years, but always regretted. I am now committed.

What is something about yourself that you take pride in?

I have always been a hard worker. As a kid I always wanted to be a farmer, a dairy farmer. I worked with my grandpa who owned a dairy farm. He taught me how to work hard.

Do you have a nickname? If so what is the meaning?

All of my friends call me Mama Traci, because I am naturally a caretaker. I like to look over others and take care of their needs. Its just part of who I am.

What wisdom would you pass on to your grandchildren?

Don’t be hard on yourself, just do your best. Stay out of trouble and don’t do drugs!

What is your greatest fear?

I only fear failure. It is better to overcome fear, because what you fear will come true. Sort of like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What were you like as a kid?

I was silly and hyper-active. I loved to ride bikes and beat people up.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Many people are credited with saying it but, “Life is what you make of it.”

If you got a tattoo, what would it be?

“Mama” on the left-side of my neck.

If you could invite one person from history to dinner, who would you invite?

Elvis Presley. I would make sure my mom was able to be there at the dinner table also.

Do you believe that people have a “calling,” or in the concept of fate?

I have always wondered. I currently believe that people make their own lives by the decisions they make, but I may be wrong.

If there were one question you could have the answer to what would it be?

The one you just asked. Do people make their own lives, or is life destined to turn out in a particular way, beyond their control.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

Kicking my addiction to methamphetamines. I do not want to go back to that dark hole again.

If money was no object, what would you do with your time?

I would be a counselor to help others through the process of addiction. I have been through it and I know I could help.

What would you change about yourself?

Nothing, I am content. I don’t think a lot of people can say that about themselves.

If you were an animal, what would it be?

An eagle because they symbolize freedom. I even collect antique decorative eagles.



Traci at the YMCA in South Bend where she committed to a new life.