Come hang out!

JLE media center sets summer hours

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

ARCHDALE — Whether you call it the “summer slide” or the “summer slump,” instead of a popular dance it is a crisis that can mean a reading deficit of three months when students return to school in the fall.

Research shows that once they fall behind, younger elementary students rarely make up deficits in reading.

John Lawrence Media Specialist Kathy Somero thinks she has a solution. She is opening up the media center to visitors one day a week.

“Kids these days know what their Lexile score is and they work so hard during the school year to bring it up,” said Somero, who is working on her master’s in library science. “You don’t want to see them slip.”

Last week the first visitor to the John Lawrence media center was Page Stewart, a veteran Battle of the Books team member. Page selected two books to take with her as she was headed out on vacation.

Children can enjoy a wide range of activities designed to combat the summer reading slump. Join Kathy Somero — and Clifford the Big Red Dog — in the John Lawrence media center from 10:30 to 5:30 on Wednesdays for books, games, puzzles and other fun.
Media specialist Kathy Somero used points earned through the John Lawrence Book Fair to obtain some of the child-friendly educational activities in the media center, including this magnet set. By following guidebook projects or coming up with their own designs, builders develop hand-to-eye coordination and engineering design skills.

Reading isn’t the only skill focus of the media center. A foundation for science and technology exploration can be found in this Little Bits Kit.

LITERACY begins with parental involvement — often, reading aloud — and continues with the development of a genuine enjoyment of reading. Books play an essential role in a child’s development and are the building blocks for a better future. The John Lawrence media center is well-equipped with books that range from pre-readers to chapter books designed to entice and challenge more skilled readers.

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As the Disney movie “Finding Nemo” played on a big screen in the media center, Somero showed off some of the resources available to visitors.

“We have puzzles and pop-up books that smaller siblings will enjoy,” she said. “Summer is a really great time to pull them out. We have Legos and other building sets, a Connect Four game, magnet sets and Little Bits kits. They can just come in and have themselves a grand old time.”

According to Reading is Fundamental, illiteracy is a pervasive problem with 43 percent of American adults ranking as functionally illiterate. As many as 65 percent of fourth-graders read below grade level, contributing to 8,000 students dropping out of high school every day. Rather than a three-month summer slump, students who are voracious readers over the summer have the potential to gain three months on their lexile reading level.

According to Scholastic Books, an overwhelming 52 percent of kids say they are more likely to finish a book they picked out themselves.

Continued reading is important so that readers don’t lose the skills they have acquired over the summer. For the second summer, Media Specialist Kathy Somero invites students to use John Lawrence Elementary resources. Students, younger siblings and friends may visit the library, but those who check out books must be students of John Lawrence Elementary School.