

Book festival gets kids reading at North East Branch Library

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NORTH EAST — Despite a scramble to get out of the rain and into the library itself, the North East Branch Library's annual Children's Book Festival drew over a thousand young readers and their families to the library on Saturday.

While traditionally held in tents outside the building, rain and air quality concerns caused Cecil County Public Library organizers to move the authors and attendees indoors. Despite the weather, the event had drawn over 1,000 attendees by noon, which was rapidly approaching last year's 1,200 attendee total, according to North East Library Branch Manager Jennifer Carter.



"In my opinion, it's the best thing we do all year," said Carter.

Each family selected a free book upon arrival, and then was free to speak to the many children's authors present, or take part in the numerous activities on offer. These ranged from magic shows to facepainting to musical performances.

Local author Annette Whipple, a former Elkton and North East resident who now lives in nearby Oxford, Pa., said that the change in venue didn't seem to affect the enthusiasm at the event.

"It's been incredible. The families have turned out in full," Whipple said. "Although we are inside, it hasn't dampened our spirits at all."

Whipple, whose bibliography features such titles as "Woof! The Truth About Dogs" and "Scurry! The Truth About Spiders", writes what she calls "fact-filled, fun" books.

"I think facts are fun," said Whipple. "So I write nonfiction for kids. And I love animals."

While many of the activities and authors were popular among attendees, little could compare to the crowds near the water ice and ice cream trucks that set up shop on the street.

Members of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library were present at the event, helping families sign up for the program and conducting surveys of members. According to them, the festival was a great example of the Imagination Library's mission to get kids reading at a young age.

"The crowd here shows the county's families are interested," said Sharon Rosenberg. "It's a tribute to the libraries themselves."