

## Bereaved Families of Ontario



Founded in 1978, under the auspices of the Hospital for Sick Children, Bereaved Families is a self-help organization staffed by bereaved persons. Specialists in the area of grief and bereavement from the professional community serve as a resource both in the development of on-going programmes and in the supervision and training of self-help group leaders.

This co-operation between lay and professionals has enabled Bereaved Families to better respond to the needs of the bereaved and has helped guarantee that the best support is provided.

York Region An association of families who have lost a child through death.

**1-800-969-6904**

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# Reading the summer away

Want to keep children and books together during vacation? York libraries have ways to help

BY MITCHELL BROWN  
Staff Writer

“No more pencils, no more books...” Remember the old days when every school child knew the words to that ditty?

Things change. “It’s about a mouse and he goes on adventures and he travels and he’s afraid of stuff,” says Selena Scarmato, a student at St. David Catholic Elementary School in Maple who’s heading into Grade 4 in the fall.

She’s referring to one of her current favourite books, a tale starring Geronimo Stilton, an Italian mouse who is the star of a series of “whisker-licking good” tales about lost treasures and mysteries.

Meanwhile, her classmate, Domenic Albanese, who considers himself a fan of the works of Spongebob Squarepants, has just finished *The Chocolate Touch*, a modern take on the King Midas tale by British author Patrick Skene Catling.

“This boy, John, he eats chocolates and everything he touches turns to chocolate,” he explains. “Then he gets thirsty.”

His friend, Robert Tropea, who’s reading a book about soccer players, just shrugs when asked why he would want to read books during the summer.

“Sometimes I don’t have anything to do and I have a lot of books,” he said. “I like it.”

It’s that kind of attitude Debbie Duce likes to see.

The Vaughan librarian is one of many across York Region running the TD Summer Reading Club, a decade-old program encouraging children to keep reading during summer vacation.

“Children don’t have to sit inside and read all day,” she said. “They can read outside in a hammock. When it gets really hot, they can come inside and visit the library, they can take books with them up to the cottage ... there are a lot of great books out there this summer.”

The program, available at all York Region library branches, offers children free reading-related activities, book suggestions and a bag full of posters, stickers and other material designed to make summer reading fun.

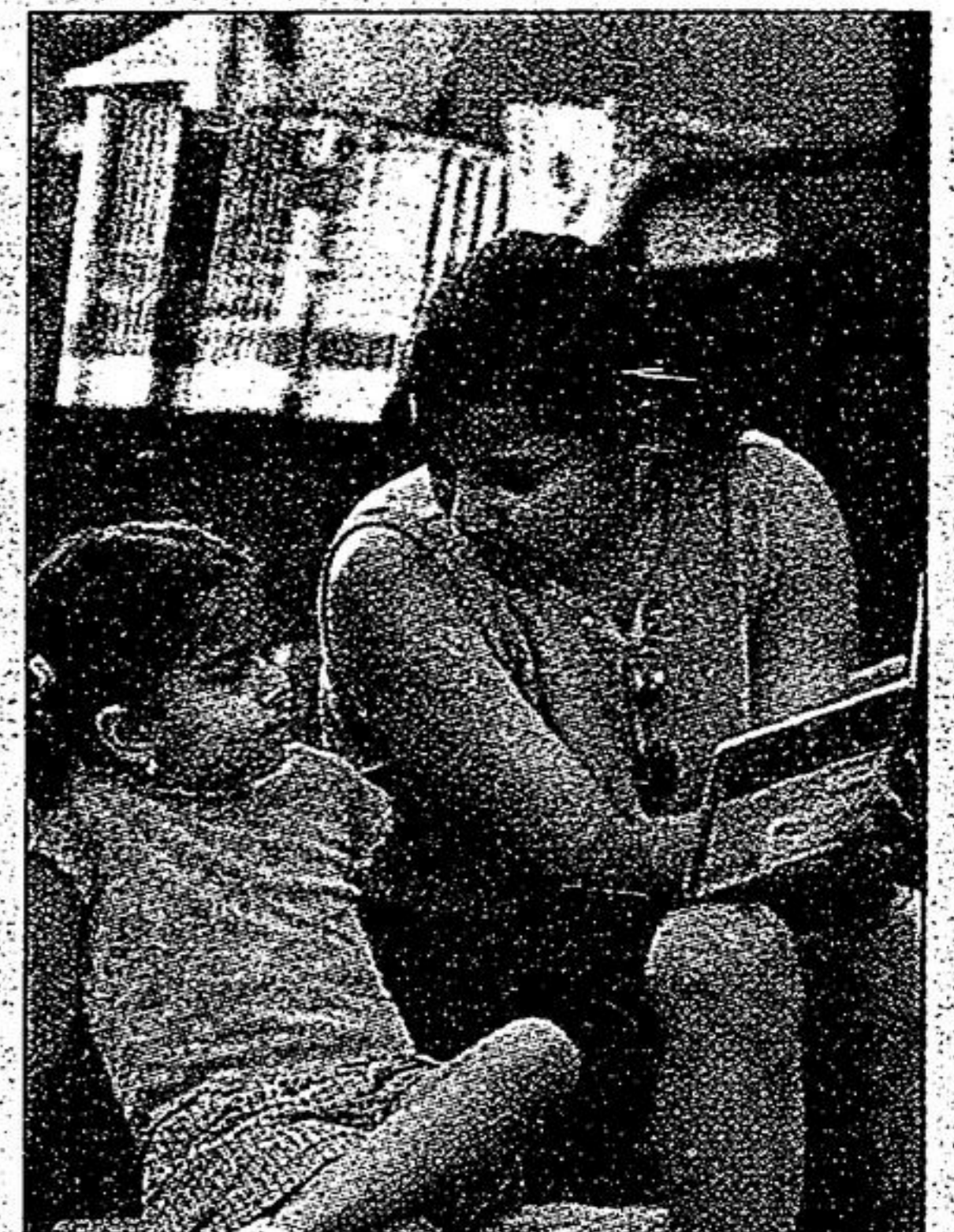
That’s also the philosophy behind Summer Advantage, a series of activity books developed for Kindergarten to Grade 6 students and introduced this summer by York Region educators.

“A lot of parents find the summer to be a long time to go (between school years), even with camps,” said Don Mullin, the Unionville-based president of Summer Advantage.

“I really believe children enjoy learning, much as they protest and as much as the parents drive it, we’ve gotten a lot of positive response from children.”

Even without help from libraries and teachers, parents can do a lot on their own to make sure children keep reading during the summer, starting with picking up a book themselves.

“If children see their parents reading, it will encourage them to read,” Ms



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Srividya Rao reads with daughter Anjali, 3, at the new Richmond Green Library in Richmond Hill.

Duce said, adding she encourages families to make library trips a family event.

Cheryl Ulrig, a Newmarket children’s book author and illustrator who says she has just finished Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* and a John Grisham novel, agrees, adding reading comes easier when certain distractions are out of the way.

“I think turning the computer off is a great idea or putting boundaries around it and saying, ‘These are the hours you can have it.’”

## 12 WAYS TO KEEP CHILDREN READING

1. Pack a book bag and carry it with you everywhere.
2. Read to your children in the car or listen to books on tape on long car trips.
3. Always have a family book on the go for nightly reading.
4. Read to your little ones while they’re taking a bath.
5. Have your children make a list of books they will read this summer and plan a treat for each one they finish.
6. Buy or make a journal and encourage your children to write in it for 10 minutes each day (and perhaps share it with the family once a week if not too private).
7. Read or tell ghost stories around the campfire or under the stars in your back yard.
8. Keep a basket of books and magazines in the bathroom for impromptu reading.
9. Start a D.E.A.R. program at home, where you Drop Everything And Read for 15 minutes on cue no matter where you are.
10. Have your children choose a news story and follow it in the newspaper over the summer.
11. Reward newer readers for reading to babies and toddlers and.
12. For older children, find out what’s hot and give them as “just because” gifts.

Source: [www.neverendingstories.com](http://www.neverendingstories.com)

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