

Southaven library's summer reading program kicks off with magic and music

Raven Copeland, USA TODAY NETWORK — Tennessee Published 1:42 p.m. CT June 6, 2018 | Updated 5:30 p.m. CT June 6, 2018



(Photo: Jim Weber/The Commercial Appeal)

Music, magic tricks and laughter filled the room during Tommy Terrific's performance Tuesday.

The show, at M.R. Davis Public Library in Southaven, was the first event of the library's summer reading program. Themed "Libraries Rock," this year's program will include music, reading and other activities.

Magician Tommy "Terrific" Diaz entertained nearly 200 kids with an interactive show that featured magic tricks and rock 'n' roll legends. During the event, Diaz introduced musicians with magic tricks. The Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, The Beatles, Elvis Presley, The Supremes, Bob Dylan and Aretha Franklin were part of Diaz's "Golden Age of Rock and Roll" board.

Diaz has been a full-time magician for 11 years, and entertainment is his favorite aspect of his shows.

"What I enjoy the most is how excited kids get during the show and how they're entertained, not just by the magic, but by the humor and comedy in it, as well," Diaz said.



Marc Washington, 5, gets excited during a performance by magician Tommy "Terrific" Diaz at the public library in Southaven Tuesday afternoon to kick off the children's summer reading program.

Diaz, a Little Rock, Arkansas, native attended Northwestern University and majored in theater.

He participated in children's theater tours in New York a few years ago and acted in a production of "A Christmas Carol" in 2017 in Arkansas.

In addition to Diaz's magic show, arts and crafts, matinees and a puppet show are some of the 32 events offered during this year's summer reading program.

Nettie Moore, M.R. Davis Public Library's children's librarian, said the program serves as a haven for participants.

"It consists of activities for the children to put them in a safe environment," Moore said. "They will be able to come four times a week, and we do have a few programs for special groups, like elementary children."

The program kicked off June 1 with registration, free books, music and local mascots. The program wraps up July 28. The program is open to all ages. Last year, the library registered 4,000 children, and system-wide, registration was at 24,000.

Moore hopes the program will help students maintain their reading skills during the summer.

"Our goal is to help the children to keep their skills up for reading, so that when they start school, they won't be behind and they'll be right on target with their reading level," Moore said.