

Taking the first steps to becoming a writer



WRITERS CORNER

By Darien Gee

Quote of the Week: "You learn to write by writing."
William Zinsser

Prompt of the Week: A woman who goes to the beach for an early morning swim. Write about what happens when she steps into the water.

Hello, fellow writers! Yes, if you are reading this, chances are you are a writer in some way. All writers are readers first, and here you are, reading this column.

Summer is here, and with it a myriad of ideas on how to spend these sunnier days: camps, classes, vacation, and the ever-popular summer reading programs offered through libraries and schools (bless 'em both.) I'd like to add another activity for your consideration: a summer writing program. Ages kindergarten through infinity

and beyond. A self-study program, if you will. Follow these instructions and by the time August rolls around, you might be surprised with what you might have.

There are two ways to do this: each day commit to writing one page or write for ten minutes. If you already write daily, consider this extra writing practice. Start that new writing project you've been thinking about. Write a story or begin a novel. Play with language and write poetry. If you're not sure where to begin, let it be a journal entry. What you did, who you saw, how you felt (this last one is important.) If you have school-aged children, consider making it a family event. If your child needs help, help them. Help them write it down or write it down for them.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Keep your hand moving. Don't stop to edit or overthink your words—the goal is to get them down on paper first. If you get stuck, just write "I'm stuck" over and over again until a new thought comes in (yes, this really works.)
- Let yourself go off on a tangent. It's okay if you end up writing something different from how you started out.
- Schedule your writing time. Put it on the calendar or set a reminder on your cell phone. If possible make it a routine by writing at the same time everyday.
- Yes, you can have weekends off.
- Ask a few friends to join

you. Meet weekly and share your best writing from the past week. No critiquing, just listening.

In addition to the writing prompt above, here are a few more:

- Write about what happened last summer.
- Write about your house.
- The next time you're in town, observe two different people. Now imagine them meeting. Why are they meeting and what happens?
- You wake up in the morning and find a stray dog and chicken in your yard. Write about that.
- You are flying from Honolulu to Kailua-Kona when the person sitting next to you says they have a secret and have to tell someone. That person is you. What do they tell you?

Keep this writing in a special notebook or folder. Label the notebook or folder, "Summer Writing 2012." Date each entry. If you miss a day, it's not the end of the world: you don't need to make it up, but start again the next day. Keep your laptop or notebook handy because you can do this almost anywhere. A quiet space is nice, yes, but if that time or place doesn't avail itself to you, figure something else out. I know you're a creative person, so come up with a creative solution.

Until next time, write well!

Darien Gee aka Mia King is a national bestselling author based in Waimea. For more information visit dariengee.com or miaking.com.



Youth work on crafts with their parents at the Thelma Parker Library summer reading program party on June 2. (LISA MARIE DAHM | NORTH HAWAII NEWS)

Library kicks off summer reading program

BY LISA MARIE DAHM
North Hawaii News

The Thelma Parker Library started their summer reading program with a Kick-Off Party at 1 p.m. on June 2 with about 50 youth attending. Students had a chance to sign up for the month-long program that challenges youth to read over the summer. The program ends July 7.

For 10 books read per week, students receive an extra prize and have an opportunity to play games.

There are teen and adult reading programs, also with prizes and events.

For youth, on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. is a "Craft Hour with Ms. Pam" for ages 7 and older. On Thursdays at 10 a.m. is "Story Hour with Ms. Eva" for infants to 5 years and on Fridays at 1

p.m. is a movie with snacks for ages 14 and older.

Last year, about 700 youth participated in the program, according to Ashley Spencer, 20, a student helper from Waimea. She said that this year, their goal is to attract even more readers to the program.

Following the statewide theme, "Dream Big, Read!" and the Thelma Parker Library transformed the library's youth section into a camping under the stars scene, complete with duck pond, a forest, wishing well and a camp fire.

Pam Akao, branch manager, said they start planning for the annual event about a month before. She said there are seven young adults who help her prepare and who volunteer during the day with the program.

"The point is really just to get them to read," Akao said. "We want to keep them reading and keep them advancing. I want to make it so it's enjoyable here. And it's something fun to do."

Other summer reading program events include: "Jungle Tales," a one-man performance at Honokaa Public Library at 2 p.m. on June 28 on the sights and sounds of the rain forest by Antonio Rocha, a Brazilian entertainer and mime.

North Kohala Library summer reading program also started June 2 and will end July 13 and the Honokaa Library program ends June 7. For more information on any of the state library summer reading programs, visit www.librarieshawaii.org or call your area library.

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