

SMART Kicks Off First-Ever Readathon Contest in Bend on July 14

Book and t-shirt giveaway during unique mountain biking event

Bend, 11 July 2007 – Encouraging kids to read throughout the summer, SMART® (Start Making A Reader Today) will give away 20 books and 20 youth t-shirts at the Bend Public Library this Saturday, July 14. This event kicks off SMART's first-ever Readathon Contest for kids entering K-5 who reside in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties. Reading begins August 1 and culminates in a fun-filled celebration on September 22.

This Saturday between 11am-12pm at the Bend Public Library, 20 kids between 5 and 11 will be selected at random to receive a free SMART t-shirt or hat and copy of the book *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood, winner of the 2007 SMART Book Award, as well as a SMART Readathon Log.

Kids will be photographed wearing the t-shirt and reading *Silly Sally* with a professional mountain biker in town for the third stop of a photo scavenger hunt called Wham Bam Thank You Jam. Guardians must be present to sign a photo release form.

"We're thrilled to host our first-ever Readathon Contest in central Oregon, and are grateful to be included in the photo scavenger hunt to help spread awareness about the contest," said Ellen Valway, SMART Program Manager for Central Oregon. "The Readathon Contest is open to kids whether or not they participate in the SMART program. We hope it further encourages children in Oregon to develop a love for literacy inside and outside the classroom."

SMART's Readathon Contest runs from August 1 to September 7. Reading logs are available starting this weekend the Bend Public Library, and later this month at Barnes & Noble Bookstores, as well as public libraries throughout Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties.

Save the date for SMART's Readathon Celebration on September 22 in Bend. The day-long event will include cameos by favorite children's characters such as Clifford the Big Red Dog, readings by children's authors such as Bill Hash and K.T. Lund, Readathon contest awards, games, crafts, music, story telling and a few other surprises. Admission is free.

The photo scavenger hunt is part of a larger mountain biking series called the Wham Bam Thank You Jam. In its second year and growing in scope, the Wham Bam Thank You Jam is organized by TAOW Productions and hailed as one of the premiere freeride lifestyle mountain biking contests.

For event and contest info, or to download the Readathon Log, visit www.getsmartoregon.org or call 541-383-6466. Photos from the scavenger hunt will post online after the event.

About SMART® (Start Making A Reader Today)

Oregon's leading nonprofit early literacy organization, SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) mobilizes thousands of caring adult volunteers to read one-on-one every week with two K-3 children for a half hour each. Participating children also receive new books every month to keep and read with their families. SMART served 12,000 children across Oregon in 2006-07. For more information, contact SMART at 877-598-4633 or visit www.getsmartoregon.org.

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Contact SMART

SMART Program Manager - Central Oregon:
Ellen Valway, evalway@getsmartoregon.org, 541-383-6466

SMART PR & Marketing Manager:
Melissa Logan, mlogan@getsmartoregon.org, 503-937-4813