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In the Bag: Prospect Park Library Offers Kits to Help Babysitters

PROSPECT PARK—Babysitters, daycare providers and grandparents with little visitors have a new resource at the Prospect Park Public Library: a series of themed bags containing books, games and toys to entertain children of a variety of ages.

“The contents of these bags are useful year-round, but especially during the summer when care-givers are looking for additional ways to entertain children without resorting to television,” says Library Director Mary Alice Walsh. “Each bag has books and toys appropriate for children of several different ages.”

Conceived, created and donated by Walsh's teenaged daughter Megan for her Girl Scout Silver Medal project, the fabric bags feature five themes: Animals, the Beach, Imagination, Transportation, and Games and Puzzles. Each bag contains a number of books—ranging from board books through early reader—and a selection of related toys. Supported by a \$68 funding grant from the Prospect Park Library Board after presenting a completed prototype, Megan shopped thrift stores and book sales for the contents and sewed the cloth bags herself.

“I remember sitting and watching a lot of TV with my babysitters,” says Megan Walsh, who patterned the bags after a similar one she takes to babysitting jobs. “I later read the *Baby Sitters’ Club* series of books and the characters in those stories used kits of toys. I added books to make these kits more educational, and so kids can learn something with their sitter.”

The “Baby Sitter Bags” are available to all walk-in patrons at the Prospect Park Public Library. They are not available for county-wide circulation.

The Girl Scout Silver Award is the second highest award in scouting, and requires approximately 40 hours of planning and service to complete. Megan, who earned the award as a Cadet and is now a Senior Scout, is the daughter of Prospect Park residents William and Mary Alice Walsh.

Bag Sidebar

Here’s What’s in Those Prospect Park Bags

Looking for something fun to do with the kids? Use Prospect Park Public Library’s new set of “Baby Sitter Bags,” created and donated by Megan Walsh for her Girl Scout Silver Award, for hours of thematic fun. Choose from:

- *Animals*: includes *Albert’s Ballgame*, *Duncan and Dolores*, *Animal Homes*, *The Day the Dog Said Cock-a-Doodle-Do*, and *Curious George* books; bear and moose puppets, and wild animal pick-up pairs; directions for “Hand Horse” and

- “Paper Plate Pig” crafts; and such activities as eating animal crackers and playing animal charades.
- Beach: includes *My Summer Vacation*, *Nate the Great and the Boring Beach Bag*, *At the Beach*, and *Hotter Than a Hot Dog* books; duck and fish toys, a beach ball, Go Fish cards, ocean-themed felt board, and giant sunglasses; and such activities as eating Goldfish crackers and pretending to be at the beach while using the bag contents.
 - Imagination: includes *Where the Wild Things Are*, *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt*, *Flat Stanley*, *365 TV-Free Activities You Can Do with Your Child*, *Handmade Secret Hiding Places*, and *Pooh and Piglet* books; a set of story blocks; and suggested activities including cloud gazing and playing restaurant during a snack.
 - Transportation: includes *The Berenstain Bears on the Road*, *I’m A Tractor*, *Round Trip*, *Take a Hike*, *Snoopy* books; a road playmate and cars; activities such as singing “The Wheels on the Bus”; and instructions for a “Traffic Light Snack.”
 - Games and Puzzles: includes *I Spy Mystery*, *I Spy Super Challenger!*, *I Spy Little Bunnies*, and *What’s Wrong With This Book*; a variety of puzzles, Candyland and Cracker Jack cards; and suggested activities such as playing “I Spy,” tic-tac-toe and other games.

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