

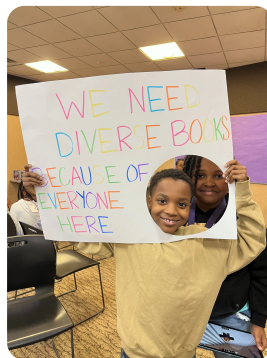


### Library Spotlight

## Maple Valley's Young Leaders: The Kid Librarian Program

Just down the street from a neighborhood elementary and high school, the Maple Valley Branch of the Akron Summit County Public Library in Akron, Ohio, is perfectly positioned as a community hub where kids gather, connect, and grow outside school hours. Children's librarian Chelsea Pisani has tapped that potential with programs that empower young readers to take ownership of their reading journeys. One standout initiative is Chelsea's Kid Librarian of the Week program.

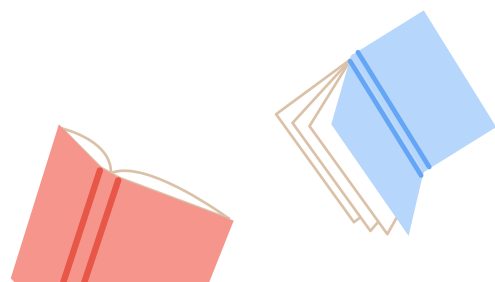
What began as a simple reading challenge became a program that prioritized representation and made young readers feel recognized and valued. Fueled by challenges from The Reading Culture Podcast and powered in part by Beanstack, it has sparked meaningful conversations, boosted participation, and brought library pride to an all-time high.

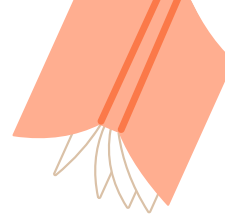
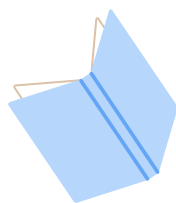


“I know we always talk about having the kids feel seen in stories, and I really want them to know that their reading matters and that they're valued members of the community here.”

**Chelsea Pisani**

Children's Librarian, Maple Valley Branch Library





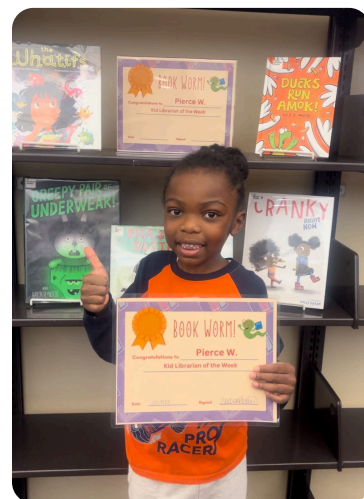
## From “20 for 20” to Kid Librarian Fame

The program started with a “20 for 20” challenge—20 minutes a day for 20 days—rewarding participants with small prizes. Chelsea quickly realized her after-school regulars wanted more than bookmarks or pencils; they wanted to help run the library.

So, Chelsea came up with a new approach. Readers who completed the challenge would earn the coveted title of Kid Librarian of the Week, with perks like:

- An official award and celebration on the library’s Instagram.
- Designing a book display to share favorite reads with the community.
- Shout-outs during Chelsea’s school visits, inviting classmates to visit the library to see their display.

Soon, the title itself became the prize. Everyone wanted to be Kid Librarian!



## Powered by the Reading Culture Podcast

Integrating Beanstack challenges from The Reading Culture Podcast brought exciting energy to the program. Students connected with featured authors like Kwame Alexander, Derrick Barnes, and Jason Reynolds, and explored books tied to themes like identity, race, and grief. Chelsea used the podcast challenges to:

- **Offer year-round reading challenges** with Beanstack, expanding beyond just summer and winter programs.
- **Boost engagement and excitement** with the ready-made printable materials.
- **Inspire displays and spark conversations** about meaningful topics with her readers.

## Big Results, Bigger Impact

The Kid Librarian program has produced measurable growth and a cultural shift at the Maple Valley Branch Library.

- Reading challenge participation grew from a handful of kids to 100+ engaged readers.
- Increase in circulation for the authors featured in the Reading Culture Podcast challenges.
- After-school attendance, book club participation, and book tasting attendance have all skyrocketed.

Most importantly, the program has built ownership and pride among the young readers at Maple Valley Branch Library. They now see the library as their space, and are excited to find books that echo their own experience.

## Looking Ahead

The success of Kid Librarian of the Week has inspired Chelsea and her colleagues to dream bigger. This fall, the program will expand to multiple branches within the system, allowing even more young readers to take the reins and lead at their library.