Wonder Time

McCracken County Public Library

Children

|

Tweens (10-12)

|

Teens

|

Young Adult

Wonder Time

Jul 19, 2018

$5,000+

$$$
Your name
Linda Bartley, Youth Services Manager, McCracken County Public Library, Paducah, Ky.

Wonder Time is an engaging program that encourages curiosity and self-expression. Children discover that learning is fun!

Each Tuesday from 4 to 6 p.m., kids have an opportunity to "wonder" about something. The program is geared toward (but not limited to) children ages 6 to 14.

Advanced Planning

The goal of the program — related to creativity, curiosity and imagination — is for participants to discover that learning is fun and enjoy themselves while learning something new.

Having different themes for Wonder Time has given children multiple opportunities to be creative in different ways and formats. This program stimulates their curiosity with open-ended prompts and divergent thinking. Their imaginations grow from playing in a safe space surrounded by encouraging staff. Wonder Time achieves positive outcomes by supplying children with the support, attention, love, friendship and tools they need to play and wonder.

Planning originally started during the grant-writing process. Now that supplies are readily available, individual programs are quickly implemented without much planning. We collaborated with local partners to engage as many families as possible. Once I had figured out the dates for the Wonder Time set, I called those I wanted to collaborate with and penciled them in. On days when no partner was available, we just did a program with families on our own.

Marketing

Marketing for Wonder Time started early and through a variety of channels: social media, local advertising, in-house and at local events. We sent e-mails to school librarians, day cares, churches, the Boys & Girls Club, the housing authority, the parks and rec center and Easter Seals. Staff shared information about Wonder Time when doing outreach programs. But word of mouth definitely remains the most effective way of promoting our programs.

We created a flier, which you can view under Attachments at right, using freepik.com to create the cloud logo.

Budgeting

We used grant funding for this program. The original funder for Wonder Time, in fall 2015, was [ALA's Curiosity Creates grant](), which was made possible by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) and Disney. With those funds, we purchased items for the programs that would last for a long time, such as instruments, art equipment and yoga mats.

These items are still used for programs today. Of course, one could use supplies or props the library already has to encourage curiosity or action and movement.

Day-of-event Activity

Programs are held on the floor to draw interest and to make young children feel comfortable. Signage is placed on the first floor and at the top of the stairs to help direct patrons. Tables are set up and decorated according to theme.

As an example, one of our themed programs was Wonder Time: Sound. For that program, library materials about sound and music were placed on display along with ukuleles, [bowed psalteries]() and craft supplies.

One staff person and three community members lead the program, with the staff person prepping the space about an hour before Wonder Time begins.

Program Execution

Wonder Time: Sound has been one of our more successful programs. It included community members, crafts, hands-on activities and science. Thirty-one patrons attended, and we had lots of positive feedback from families about how their interaction with this program encouraged music lessons and such.

For the program, one community member taught patrons to play the ukuleles, while another community member taught patrons to play the bowed psaltery. The third

volunteer could play both instruments, so he helped wherever he was needed.

As the staff person, I helped with the craft, which was a [popsicle stick kazoo](#). As children created their kazoo we talked about why the rubber band was required and how it made the kazoo work. We set out balloons on the table, too. The balloons offered another example of sound vibrating; I would talk into the balloon, and the kids would place their hands on it to feel the vibrations. The library also has a whisper tube over the early book collection, so we had lots of different ways to discuss and discover sound.

We had an unexpected beautiful moment when a young boy with autism, who is unable to speak, took to the bowed psaltery. His aggression melted away. His mother and staff were awestruck.

Other Wonder Time programs have included:

- **Yoga:** We partnered with Centered Studio. Participants heard a story as they practiced yoga poses and made [breathing wands](#). The patrons were allowed to cut the ribbon for the wand too short or too long, and we discussed why this was not the best choice for a breathing wand, as well as the importance of breath.
- **Healthy Eating:** The McCracken County Extension Office made yummy green smoothies for everyone to try. Since this program took place on St. Patrick's Day, the craft continued with the green theme.
- **Rocks and Minerals:** We partnered with the [Ben. E Clement Mineral Museum](#), in Marion, Ken. They brought several examples from the museum to show patrons, as well as rocks and minerals to give each child. The craft for this program was pet rocks.

We've also had a Wonder Time Seuss Party. We've had success making buttons with our patrons; it's an easy and fun craft that also allows for mistakes. My Wonder Time [Pinterest pag](#)e has even more resources and ideas we've tried.

Advice

Keep it simple. Don't overthink it. Kids are curious and fun. If you are having fun being with them, then they will have fun at Wonder Time.

Use the internet for inspiration and collaborate with the community. There is a lot of talent in your neighborhood.

Supporting Materials

Document
[wonder_time_flier.pdf](#)
[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- Feedback (Coming Soon!)
- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

Slideshow Images

Image

Image

More Programs

Aug 19, 2015

Children (9 and under)+ | 󠀠󠀠

[Image](#)

Kinetic Literacy

Audiences:

Audience

Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Jun 5, 2018
Children (9 and under)+ |

Image

Books to Get Kids Moving

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
May 25, 2018
Children (9 and under)+ |

Image

[Parks & Rec: A Health Programming Partner](#)

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Adults (21 and up)