



Vermont Fairy Tale Festival

Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington, VT
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What is it exactly?

The Vermont Fairy Tale Festival is a library sponsored event that promotes the reading of fairy tales and offers children and families an opportunity to learn together through creative play. The festival is free to the public with the donation of a non-perishable item for either the food bank or the humane society.

Public libraries volunteer to showcase the fairy tale of their choice by using storytelling, puppetry, crafts, music, whatever they can imagine. For the first year, the festival provided the tents and the libraries decorated according to their chosen theme. Each library was directed to have a craft or a trinket to give away for up to 300 children and the festival committee would help monetarily any library that needed assistance to make that happen. Add craft vendors, food vendors, a Viking reenactment group and sprinkle with a variety of costumed characters and you have a wonderful day of activities for the whole family.

Why are we doing it?

For years, we, as librarians, have been work-shopping and conferencing together to share ideas and celebrate each other. We thought it was time to turn that celebration out toward the public to show them what libraries can do for children and families. The festival allows families to have a different view of libraries and each family was given a bag to carry their handmade goodies home which also contained lots of info about Vermont's public libraries. There was also a card that they could take back to their own library to turn in. Those cards were then sent back to the festival and three winners were pulled for a basket of prizes. This was in the hopes that we could encourage families to visit their own libraries after enjoying the day at the festival.

What does it cost to do something like this?

That all depends on the host library. Our biggest cost was renting a 40x40 tent to house the food vendors and tables and chairs in case of rain. We initially raised money so that we could purchase smaller tents for each library that participated and by agreeing to be a part of the festival, they were allowed to keep their tents with the stipulation that other libraries could borrow them for future events. If you plan to do this indoors, you don't have to deal with tents at all. Tables could simply be set up. We did pay our storytellers for their time and purchased costumes for the event in November, when all the Halloween costumes went on sale. We did our best to stay away from anything "Disney" and tried to stick with the original tales. The public libraries that participated were able to fund their booths for the most part and some were sponsored by local businesses in their individual towns to help with the cost. We printed our own posters and used Staples Business Card services to make hand outs to promote the event. We used the public library system to get the word out with the help of our state library and library association. So the cost is ultimately up to the group hosting and how readily volunteers are available.

What did we do for fundraisers? Mad Hatter Tea Parties for both kids and adults, Mystery Nights, Sip & Spells, Library Book Sales, Basket Raffles, and a wildly successful .5K Dash for Donuts. (yes, that's a point five K....1640 feet.)

What was the result? Was it successful?

Because the event was free to the public, we had no idea how many people to expect our first year. Our library is located on six acres off the beaten path, so we were a bit nervous. The day was a huge success! Even the weather cooperated! It was almost 90 degrees! We estimate over 600 folks were here to celebrate all things Fairy Tale with us. The feedback on Facebook after the event was overwhelmingly positive and all were anxious to hear that we were going to do it again. To keep our public libraries from getting burned out by doing a festival each year, we opted to do it every two years to give us time to plan and give the libraries who participate a year off. On our off years, we host the Vermont Viking Invasion: an opportunity for authentic encampment, history, and training for Viking Reenactors in our area. The Vikings were a big hit at the Fairy Tale Festival, so with their help with fundraising, we offered them the opportunity to host their own event.

We are planning our Second Vermont Fairy Tale Festival this September 21, 2019, and are expecting about 800-1000 in attendance this time around. With the help of some very generous sponsors, we expect it to be even more successful than the first!



Jane Ramos, Director

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