Small Business Saturday® Craft Fair

Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, Eleanor E. Murphy

Children

|

Tweens (10-12)

|

Teens

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Small Business Saturday® Craft Fair

Nov 29, 2018

$1-50

$
Byline

Annie Phillips, Eleanor E. Murphy Branch Manager, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, Huntsville, Ala.

Together with American Express, our library branch celebrates Small Business Saturday® by hosting a craft fair where local artisans can sell handmade goods, such as jewelry, pottery and handmade cards. The fair draws at least 100 visitors to the library and gives local entrepreneurs a chance to share their work at a low cost.

As a Neighborhood Champion, our branch also promotes Small Business Saturday® throughout the community by encouraging residents to Shop Small®. We do this by hanging signs (provided by American Express), giving away tote bags, and distributing “passports” that shoppers can get stamped at various small businesses around town. When they return their passports, they are entered into a prize drawing.

Advanced Planning

We start soliciting craft fair vendors a few months in advance. For our first craft fair in 2015, we started by contacting a few artisan friends; from there, word of mouth helped attract more vendors. Now, we also create fliers to hang in the library and around town.

Our branch is quite small, so we limit the fair to 10 or 11 crafters. Each participant gets a six-foot table and two chairs for a $15 space rental fee, which is donated to our Friends group. We’re told $15 is very inexpensive compared to other craft fair fees. (There is no admission fee to attend the craft fair.)

Meanwhile, as we are lining up our vendors, we are reaching out to the business community to get local shops on board with our larger Small Business Saturday® plans. We usually recruit around 10 businesses and supply them with Shop Small® swag to hand out to shoppers. We also ask the businesses to donate items, such as a gift basket, to our passport prize drawing.

Marketing

We promote the craft fair to the public through paper fliers and posters, in our library newsletter and in Facebook posts. We also post the fair as an event on Nextdoor.com.

This year, we partnered with our local South Huntsville Business Association, and they advertised the fair on their channels as well. Our sister branch, the Bailey Cove library, also participated as a craft fair participant and Small Business Saturday® Neighborhood Champion. This let us cover both the east and west sides of the city and provided more spaces for crafters who want to join. We have always had a waiting list in the past.

Budgeting

The cost to our library is minimal — mainly just the cost of printing fliers. Also, the event brings in approximately $150 in donations to our Friends group from vendor fees.

Day-of-event Activity

We normally stop into the library on the Friday after Thanksgiving — the day before Small Business Saturday® — to put the vendor tables in place. The library is closed for the holiday on Friday, but setup begins on Friday.

The library opens at 9 a.m. on Saturday, and at that point the vendors are invited to set up their goods and decorate their tables. The fair officially starts at 10 a.m. and goes until 4 p.m. This gives us an hour for everyone to clear out before the library closes at 5 p.m.

Program Execution

The craft fair has a nice, festive atmosphere. Last year, we had a good range of goods for sale, including jewelry, homemade carts, pottery, candles and a book

published by a local author about the history of beer brewing in Alabama.

While people are shopping, library employees are handing out free Shop Small® totes and other giveaways. We sometimes do a raffle for something craft-related, such as a tote bag filled with crafting supplies.

Last year, we also started setting up an empty table for a crafting supply swap. I pull some items from the library's leftover crafting materials, and people are welcome to take what they like and leave their own crafting supplies for others.

Advice

Our Small Business Saturday® craft fair has turned into a really fun, feel-good event. As you're planning for Small Business Saturday® 2019, we recommend partnering with a local business group, such as our South Huntsville Business Association — they can help you make inroads with the business community when you're seeking businesses to participate.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images

Image









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Nov 8, 2018

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Image



Last-Minute Ways to Be Part of Small Business Saturday®

Audiences:

Sep 20, 2017
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



Small Business Saturday® - Shop Small®

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Nov 29, 2018
+ | □□
Image



Shop Small® Pickens

Audiences: