HamilTeas

Wake County Public Libraries

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

HamilTeas

Jan 10, 2019

$1-50

$
Byline

Erin DeCoeur, Adult Services Librarian, and Rob Cauthen, Librarian, Wake County Public Library, Raleigh, N.C.

To celebrate the arrival of the touring production of "Hamilton," and as part of the WCPL's Becoming American: A Documentary Film and Discussion Series on Our Immigration Experience programs exploring and celebrating the history of immigration in the U.S., we staged "Hamilton" Tea Parties, or HamilTeas, throughout the month of November.

The events included light refreshments, songs from the award-winning musical and trivia games. Participants learned about the show’s production as well as the real-life Alexander Hamilton and his rise from a Caribbean immigrant to “the ten-dollar Founding Father.”

Advanced Planning

While we had the idea several months before the November arrival of the touring production, we began planning in earnest in July 2018. We had a basic model for a library tea party. The two lead librarians, both devoted "Hamilton" fans, simply adapted the model for the show creating new materials and finding appropriate video clips to share with our guests.

Marketing

We marketed the HamilTeas in a variety of ways, including signs and graphics designed by our publicity team (see attachments at right) displayed throughout our libraries.

We highlighted the teas on the library system’s website and utilized boosted social media posts.

As part of the larger Becoming American programming series, the events were marketed by librarians at other programs.

Our publicity team created a beautiful glossy three-page flier highlighting various Becoming American events, featuring the HamilTeas. Wake County’s Communications Office selected the event for a promotional push and local television station WRAL posted it online on their “Best Bets Calendar from Out & About.”

Budgeting

We had a food budget of $35 per host library; most libraries had various boxes of teas from previous programs, so expenditures focused on tea-appropriate treats (cookies, scones, etc.) as well as lemonade and/or iced tea, a mix of sweeteners (honey, sugar, stevia) and cream.

Each library has items on hand like tablecloths, hot water urn and sundry paper products. If more of the latter were needed, they were purchased from the general program supplies budget to avoid depleting the food budget.

Decorations were essentially what we could find and/or create with material on hand; for this program, anything Fourth of July-themed would work nicely for a patriotic display.

Day-of-event Activity

A librarian and library assistant were responsible for the set-up, including:

- Tables and chairs to accommodate our registered patrons. We covered the tables with tablecloths (we like to be as fancy as possible!) and placed at each seat a program, entitled "The Story of Tonight," detailing the activities.
- One table for food and one for the tea station: hot water urn, selection of teas, mugs, various sweeteners.
- A display table featured a curated mix of fiction and nonfiction books about Alexander Hamilton and other Founding Fathers.

We followed the program of events, which was very useful for the flow of the program. However, we were flexible, stopping for discussions or comments (or impromptu sing-a-longs to "The Schuyler Sisters!").

The soundtrack was available on Amazon Prime and Pandora, and having that play as patrons entered and worked on the words games was a fun touch. Following the word games, we watched several selections from the PBS documentary "Hamilton's America," refereed trivia questions and answers, and finished with a viewing of the 70th Annual Tony Awards® (2016) performance of "Yorktown."

Program Execution

The HamilTeas were held at seven regional libraries and one smaller community library, with an average attendance of about 19 people per program. We had the soundtrack playing as people arrived; that really got things off to a good start. People were encouraged to help themselves to the refreshments at any time throughout the program. The feedback was solidly positive at every library; however, a handful of patrons thought we should have gotten Lin-Manuel Miranda himself to stage it!

With the current popularity of the musical and the touring production in town, we hoped for a solid turnout ... and we were not disappointed. Our libraries had registrations that were wait-listed. We tried to find space for every person who was interested, even if we had to sign them up at another library.

The consensus is that the program was a hit! Patron comments as they left the teas were resoundingly positive and the librarians themselves had a great time hosting.

On the back end, a LibGuide was created for the librarians to use, as several were not as familiar with the musical. The LibGuide contained:

- PDFs of all the word games, trivia questions and answers, and a separate librarian version for trivia with more detailed information to share for each question.
- A PDF of the program, which also had a list of suggested readings on the back.
- Direct links to the clips from the documentary, and a half dozen links to articles and other information on Hamilton the man and "Hamilton" the musical, so each librarian could familiarize themselves with things as needed.
- A basic timeline of events and a suggested reading list.

Advice

Set up as much as possible the day before.

Be open to changes; one of our librarians only handed out one set of trivia questions per table to encourage teamwork and conversation. Others gave each patron a copy, so they could work independently. Both options worked out well.

Research whether anything else "Hamilton"-related is happening that you can share with your patrons. For example, Durham Performing Arts Center held a lottery before each show to give away tickets for $10 (“Ham4Ham,” as they call it). Several patrons were not aware of this and were excited at the possibility of trying for tickets, which were a hot commodity.

Best of all, just have fun and enjoy being "in the room where it happens!"

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

Supporting Materials

Document
hamiltea_graphics1.pdf
Document
hamiltea_graphics2.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



Image







More Programs

Jul 15, 2016
+ |
Image



Immigrants Thrive with Library Support

Audiences:

Feb 1, 2016
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



'Downton Abbey' Viewing and Tea

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Mar 9, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $$
Image



Mad Hatter Tea Party

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Jul 20, 2016
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image



The Basics of Tea

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Oct 5, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $$$
Image



Fairy Tale Tea

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Dec 21, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $$$
Image



History Comes Alive

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Dec 19, 2018
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



Pop-Up Tea Library

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)