Panel Discussion: How to Start a Community Garden

High Point Public Library

Children

|

Tweens (10-12)

|

Adults

Panel Discussion: How to Start a Community Garden

Mar 14, 2019

Free

Byline
Mark Taylor, Librarian I, High Point (N.C.) Public Library

This panel discussion about community gardens increased awareness for High Point Library's seed-sharing program, its gardening classes and the local farmers' market, which is held on library grounds.

Advanced Planning

Our panel discussion grew out of planning for Seeds to Share, our library's seed-sharing event, in fall 2018. The goals of the panel were to raise awareness in the community about Seeds to Share, community gardens and the gardening classes offered at the library's Teaching Garden.

At the time, we agreed that we needed something to bring patrons into the library on the day of the Seeds to Share event that could be beneficial to both programs and help us reach our goals. We met with the community coordinator for North Carolina Extension Services and created the panel discussion. We sent invitations to community garden leaders in early January asking if they would participate. Our facilitator was Quina Weber-Shirk, extension agent, community and school gardens, North Carolina Extension Services, and our panelists were Mark Taylor, librarian, High Point Public Library, and community garden leaders Sara Sanders-Purnell, Missy Preston and Jerry Mingo.

Last year, the library’s parking lot was renovated to allow for flexible use of the space. As a result, there is an onsite farmers' market, managed by the library, from April through October, and the space is a popular venue for small- to medium-sized musical acts and other events. In 2016, the library received an EPA technical assistance grant (Local Foods Local Places from the EPA), and the resulting action plan is guiding the activities of the farmers' market and the use of the library plaza, as well as the library’s involvement in our community’s work in addressing issues such as food insecurity and local health and nutritional issues.

Marketing

Marketing was done by North Carolina Extension Services and the High Point Public Library. We used Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to promote the panel and program.

Budgeting

This program was planned at no cost to the library.

Day-of-event Activity

Meeting room set-up for the panel discussion took place alongside of the second event that followed, Seeds to Share.

Chairs were moved into a circle configuration. One person from North Carolina Extension Services and one librarian were in charge of the panel discussion.

Program Execution

Sixteen people attended along with the four panelists and the facilitator. While the library's Teaching Garden began in 2014, this was the first time the panel on community gardens had been offered at the library. The expectation was four to six people would attend, so that turnout was a huge success!

Attendees asked a variety of questions, including what funding sources were available for community and school gardens, where to find information regarding city ordinances, and where to obtain soil, mulch and water hookups. They also discussed resources on starting a garden.

One patron, a teacher, asked questions and shared her own experience with her school garden. With the help of a small subgrant from the Greater High Point Food Alliance, she was restoring the garden at her school that had not been in use for a couple of years. People were happy with the discussion and most stayed for Seeds to Share, which immediately followed. (Seeds to Share is a program where excess seeds are given to community members for use in school gardens or community gardens. This will be an ongoing program as we continue to collaborate with local organizations to disseminate information on community gardens and gardening.)

Advice

Keep it simple. Reach out to other agencies who are interested in the same goals. Partnerships and networking are the key to success.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
seeds_to_share_flier.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

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Creating a Community Garden with Impact

Audiences:

May 21, 2015
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$$
Image



Get Started Gardening at Your Library

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Dec 22, 2017
Children (9 and under)+ | $$
Image



Mechanicville Farmers Market & Garden

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational