Día de los Muertos Celebration

North Columbus Public Library

Children

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

Día de los Muertos Celebration

Nov 14, 2019

$51-100

$
Byline

Shannon Smith, Library Assistant, North Columbus (Ga.) Public Library

This all-ages Day of the Dead event was an extremely successful multicultural celebration with food, crafts, games, music and activities. The goal of the program was to educate kids and adults on a different culture while encouraging arts and crafts exploration (with culturally appropriate snacks).

Advanced Planning

Our first step was to come up with the activities and crafts for the event. I started brainstorming four months in advance. I had so many ideas that in the end, I went with stations so each person could get a taste of everything.

We had a pre-made foam skeleton kit leftover from last year's Halloween event, mini sugar skull painting, papel picado (a traditional tissue paper craft), marigold paper folding, coloring sheets and word searches. We also came together at the end of the event for Bingo and a piñata.

We had light refreshments and a Spanish and Day of the Dead culture lesson prior to the crafts. I did research into the holiday and found many free resources online that helped immensely, such as the bingo cards, word searches and coloring sheets. The goal was to be as informative as possible while also having fun.

Marketing

We created a Facebook event for the program, and more than 450 people indicated that they were interested.

I set up a Día de los Muertos library display with the program poster a month prior to the event. The display featured books on the holiday as well as some of the decorations for the event.

I also promoted during my other programs, such as story time and our drive-in movie. In addition, we had sugar skull-themed coloring sheets set out as a passive display during the week leading up to the event. This all combined provided a substantial turnout of over 60 attendees.

Budgeting

Overall, I spent about $75 on supplies, decorations, crafts, food and prizes for Bingo. I utilized many materials we had on hand and purchased some themed plates, streamers, a piñata and centerpieces. I made some of the food items myself, including a sugar skull fruit dip. Making and reusing supplies already on hand kept the price from becoming too outlandish.

Day-of-event Activity

A volunteer and two staff members spent about an hour and a half getting the room ready with decorations, food and crafts. The food was laid out over two tables, and a traditional ofrenda or altar was made with books about Day of the Dead, tea lights and wooden decorations.

We hung the piñata from the ceiling as well as a papel picado banner across the front doors leading into the conference room. I was scrambling a bit to get it all ready as patrons arrived up to 15 minutes early, so advanced set-up is key to a stress-free program.

Program Execution

We began the event with a cultural lesson that included light audience participation and a mini Spanish lesson. We then broke off into groups for light refreshments including chips and salsa, fruit dip, cupcakes and punch.

We left 40 minutes for everyone to complete the crafts in rotation, then came together at the end for two rounds of bilingual Bingo (see Attachments at right).

To close out, we had a trap-door piñata with trailing strings for the kids to pull and let out the candy, as safety was a priority. Altogether, there were about 60 people in attendance, predominantly children ages 5 to 9 and adults. Staff received many compliments post-event, and attendees stayed for pictures.

Advice

Many patrons from different ethnic backgrounds, walks of life and socioeconomic groups interacted in the program and learned about a different culture and holiday. It was so successful, it is sure to be repeated next year. Many patrons reported that they had a good time.

The program attracted substantially more attendees than anticipated, so next time we will spread out the event throughout the library, as well as have more materials for crafts. Be sure to leave plenty of prep time and have a good budget for craft materials and snacks. The bilingual Bingo and pinata were the most fun aspects, but be sure to include some learning as well.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
bingo.pdf
Document
flyer.pdf
Document
marigold_craft_instructions.pdf
Document
sugar_skull_coloring.pdf
Document
dia_de_los_muertos_ppt.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images

Image









Image









Image









More Programs

Oct 11, 2011
+ |

Image



New for October at EDSITEment

Audiences:

Sep 4, 2012
Children (9 and under)+ |
Image



Multicultural Literacy in Libraries

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational