# The Great Brookie Bake-Off (Online)

Emmet O'Neal Library

Adults

## The Great Brookie Bake-Off (Online)

May 20, 2020

### $101-250

$$
Byline

Amanda Westfall, Adult Services Librarian, Emmet O'Neal Library, Mountain Brook, Ala.

Cooking and baking competition programs have been popular at our library for years, so when COVID-19 caused the library to close, I conceived a way to do it online via Zoom in the style of Netflix's "Nailed It."

Teams were asked to prepare two baked and cooled round layer cakes as well as the ingredients for chocolate icing. Participants wouldn't know what they were making until the Zoom competition began. The teams then found out they had to make a hedgehog cake using only what they had on hand! Lots of creativity ensued!

## Advanced Planning

My goal was to host a virtual program that wasn't a lecture or a film/book discussion. Our library normally has in-person hands-on programming for adults, so I wanted to continue that during the COVID-19 closure.

I planned this program about three weeks in advance. I watched "Nailed It" on Netflix and searched the internet for the right cake for the challenge. Once I decided on the challenge, planning fell into place. I came up with the rules by myself and then recruited charismatic library staff to serve on the judging panel with me.

## Marketing

I marketed this program on the library's new Virtual Programming webpage, through Constant Contact emails, a Facebook event and Instagram.

I typically do programming for adults in their 20s and 30s, but was not terribly concerned with targeting that age group for this. Mostly, I wanted to target bakers of all ages who would be up for the challenge!

## Budgeting

Our budget was $200. We paid our go-to craft teacher for hire, Virginia Brasher, to make the "model" cake and serve as an expert judge during the event. We also gave gift cards to the winners.

The program could be done for way less since the participants are providing their own supplies. To cut costs, I could have used a picture of the hedgehog cake found on the internet instead of having Virginia make one from scratch, not paid an outside judge, and given different prizes.

## Day-of-event Activity

The day of the event I made sure that I emailed the Zoom link to everyone again and reminded teams to have their cakes and icing ingredients ready. I also had to contact two people from the wait list to see if they could join us after some cancelations.

We had three staff members serve as judges. You can certainly get by with less, but staff wanted to participate.

## Program Execution

We had 11 teams compete. Many were families with multiple kids. We counted about 40 people total.

I introduced the judges and we introduced the teams to "Mr. Prickles," the hedgehog cake (created by Virginia) that they had to recreate.

The teams were then told that they had one hour to make their own hedgehog cake. We asked them not to search the internet for instructions to do so.

The judges then watched and commented while the challenge ensued and asked the teams questions. When the hour was up, the teams presented their cake to the judges and told us what they used to make it.

I wanted this program to be a "place" where people with similar interests could interact safely during social distancing. I feel like the teams did get to know each other throughout the night, and one attendee happily said that it is was "the most people I've seen in a long time!"

I put the pictures of the teams' finished cakes on our Facebook and Instagram accounts. Both posts received more likes and comments from community members than any post in our recent past. There is already demand for another bake-off.

## Advice

This was only my second time using Zoom as a host, and the first using features such as screen sharing. I wish I had been more well versed in it, because I did have some technical hiccups.

Also, an hour was too long for the challenge. I would cut it down to 45 minutes.

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







## More Programs

Jan 10, 2019
Teens (13-16)+ | $
Image



## Nailed It / Failed It: Holiday Edition

### Audiences:

Teens (13-16)
May 7, 2020
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



## Virtual Beer Tasting

### Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
May 12, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



## Virtual Literary Legos

### Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
May 14, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



## Virtual Art Show

### Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Intergenerational