Virtual Scary Stories

Aram Public Library

Teens

Virtual Scary Stories

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Free

Byline

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Scary Stories originated with the desire to connect with our tween/teen audience during COVID-19 and the Safer-at-Home order.

Library staff record and edit the scary story videos at home to be eerie as possible. The videos go live Saturdays at 9 p.m. on our Instagram and YouTube accounts.

Advanced Planning

Once the idea came to mind, planning went relatively quickly. Costuming and location needed to be decided, as well as compiling a collection of titles that fit our desired demographic. All the initial planning was done in under two weeks while we

were leading other quarantine programs.

The primary staff members involved were Katherine Schoofs, youth services librarian/assistant director, and Linnea Bergstrom, library assistant.

The first step was promotion and deciding on the overall feel of the program. While Linnea created original artwork, social media posts and promotions, Katherine scouted out the location she thought would best suit the program and began compiling stories.

After setting the scene, Katherine and her husband worked together to figure out camera angles, lighting and set dressing. Meanwhile, Linnea created an opening credits sequence involving creepy noises and imagery, including an eerie video shot by Katherine and her husband in their cellar-esque basement.

Marketing

The event was promoted on the library's website, Facebook and Instagram accounts, both in still posters and short videos.

Budgeting

This program can be done at little to no cost, should you so choose to be creative and utilize equipment and costuming on hand.

I would recommend purchasing a tripod for your camera or phone and a microphone attachment. If you don't have a space to use, you could also factor in the cost of a backdrop. However, the setting can vary from place to place and, with a few strategically placed set pieces, you might have the perfect location already on hand!

Day-of-event Activity

On the day of the program, Katherine finalized the set layout, took a few still shots to ensure the lighting was as desired, the "all quiet on the set" was given (Katherine

has a 7-year-old daughter and three dogs) and filming began.

Given that this was launched during quarantine, the only staff member on hand was Katherine, but she had the assistance of her husband.

Program Execution

One unexpected challenge was gathering a backlog of stories that were creepy but still age-appropriate. For example, we all know Stephen King is a master of horror, but many of his works contain specific language and/or themes that you might not want to read aloud to your tween and teen patrons.

Additionally, there was a concern that "littles" looking for Ms. Katherine's story times might stumble across this particular creepy program. To ease some of the concern, it was decided that the program would premiere only on Aram Public Library's Instagram account and would later find its way to the library YouTube channel. Facebook was only utilized to help promote the upcoming program series.

The program went over well and is progressively gaining a following! Given that it was only provided virtually, the build has been slow moving, but our viewers come back regularly and that number keeps growing!

We received positive feedback, overall, with the only negatives being "the next story should be scarier." As you might imagine, there's a wide variety in what folks consider scary. In terms of numbers, we have had anywhere from 33 to 45 views on the Instagram posts thus far.

Advice

There was definite interest in the program, though were we to reintroduce it, I would create a countdown to the launch of the program to build the hype.

We suggest having a minimum of two staff members. Over the course of the reoccurring program thus far, Katherine has both read directly from a book and used a teleprompter. Having an extra set of hands to run the teleprompter was essential.

One problem we experienced was the lack of ability to schedule posts on Instagram. The program airs at 9 p.m. on Saturdays, so having the option to pre-schedule the post would be helpful. Going forward, we will be investigating apps and/or web services that allow for scheduled posts on Instagram. Many of these services do have a subscription cost, so be aware of this when figuring out your necessary budget (should you choose to offer this program online).

Don't be afraid to utilize what you have on hand, whether it be location, costuming or what-have-you. And don't be afraid to show off your inner creepy and BE OK with looking/feeling silly! If you're having fun and embracing the eerie vibe, your patrons will buy in!

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

Mar 24, 2015
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $
Image



Ghost Hunting at the Library

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)

Adults (21 and up)
Apr 3, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



Virtual Story Times at Denton Public Library

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
May 14, 2020
Teens (13-16)+ | □□
Image



Dream Careers: Virus Hunter

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)
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