Community Friendship Quilt Project

Nevins Library

Adults

|

Children

|

Intergenerational

|

Teens

Community Friendship Quilt Project

Jun 25, 2021

$251-500

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Byline

Sarah Sullivan, Head of Reader Services, Nevins Library, Methuen, Mass.

In the mid-1800s, Friendship Quilts were a way to commemorate events and memories, often with a large group of people creating the quilt for a particular person or family. These quilts were often personalized with the signatures of those who made the squares in the quilt.

With this in mind, the Nevins Library developed the Friendship Quilt Project. Starting in December 2020 and continuing through March 2021, the library requested quilt squares from the community to be included in the Friendship Quilt.

Crafty citizens of all ages contributed enough squares to create four quilts, now displayed throughout the library this summer.

Advanced Planning

We started planning this program in late October 2020, and we were ready to start asking for quilt squares in December. We asked community members to create a square (or two) for this quilt in any design and color, as long as it did not include anything vulgar or profane. We had a cut-off of square donations at the end of March 2021.

Several key details were decided first (after consulting with those with quilting experience). We learned that all squares needed to be cotton material, 8-inch square, and could be decorated or crafted in any way allowing for a 1/2-inch seam allowance on all sides.

We also decided against using batting and finishing a "true" quilt in the interest of keeping the finished quilt as light as possible.

We originally thought we would display the finished quilt outside (unsure of what COVID restrictions would allow), but we quickly changed to an indoor display of multiple smaller quilts as COVID restrictions eased and noting the care and detail of the squares being created.

Marketing

We started presenting the project to the public in December 2020, at the height of the "second wave" holiday COVID surge, and so we had to be extra vigilant in getting the word out. The library was open to the public for browsing with limited hours, but foot traffic was light.

We conducted interviews with the local cable TV station, included articles in the free local monthly newspaper, highlighted the project on the front page of our website, and had constant updates on our social media page.

We posted photos of each square we received in an album on our Facebook page. We also made available resource lists to help people learn how to sew, applique, or other techniques they may find helpful to participate.

Budgeting

The items we had to purchase included approximately $75 in materials to actually hang the quilts in the building (curtain rods and hooks for the wall). We also spent about $150 to $200 in fabric, which we cut into squares to give to the public in kits for them to decorate and return, as well as for assembling and backing the finished quilts.

Day-of-event Activity

In light of COVID, the library is not hosting indoor programs this summer, but are open full hours and have full browsing. Therefore, we did not have an "unveiling" event.

We did have another big marketing push to announce that the quilts are on display for the full summer with follow-up interviews on the local cable TV show (including the volunteer quilters who assembled the final quilts), Facebook announcements, newspaper announcements, and an article in the city wide newsletter from City Hall.

Program Execution

We have had an incredibly positive reaction from the public — both in Facebook comments and in person. Those that created squares are proud to show off their work with their families, take pictures to show others, and comment on the beauty of the work done by others.

Our primary goal was to create a project that helped people in the community feel connected, and build something together. The anecdotal evidence shows that this was accomplished, with a feeling of pride and positivity among library patrons. Patrons are asking about "what's the next big project?"!

Advice

As one with absolutely no quilting experience or knowledge, I would advise bringing in the experts as early as possible. A lot of time was spent cutting and squaring up the submitted squares with the intention of making it easier for the quilters to finish it off ... but this was not necessarily the case. The quilters did appreciate us laying out the squares in a particular order so they didn't have to think that out.

Also, be ready with an open mind. We left the directions as wide open as possible, and we really impressed by the different interpretations by people in the community. The end result is amazing.

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

Jun 15, 2016
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $

Image



Barn Quilts

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Nov 27, 2019
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



Charity Crochet Day

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Aug 26, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



Junior Virtual Art Show

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)