Telescopes and Tamales

Alpine Public Library

Children

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Tweens (10-12)

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Teens

Telescopes and Tamales

Dec 10, 2021

$501-1000

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Byline
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Everyone loves tamales! Telescopes and Tamales was a community-centered program featuring an outdoor tamale dinner, presentations and videos on the upcoming James Webb Telescope launch, and STEAM crafts for kids. The program was topped off with a chance for participants to look through a telescope and view stars and planets on a clear, beautiful night.

Advanced Planning

As a NASA@ My Library partner, I knew I wanted to plan a community-wide event to kick off the project right away and get everyone excited for it.

I reached out to a neighbor who made 20 dozen tamales and a local family, part of our community's large migrant community from Turkey, made the rice. It really was a community effort! I also planned to get the schools involved right away by contacting teachers and making classroom visits.

Marketing

This event was promoted on social media, flyers, the local newspaper and radio.

I went to the local schools and spoke in their morning announcements to promote the event. I made the announcements catchy to get the students' attention and pretended to be an alien speaking when I went to the elementary school to get the younger kids excited. I also went on the local radio station twice.

Budgeting

In total, we spent around $800 to make this program happen. It was all worth it because the money went right back into the community!

We had to rent chairs from the hardware store ($100), bought play foam, printed flyers and, of course, purchased food.

Day-of-event Activity

It took a full day to get the event set up. We tried to be as COVID-safe as possible and had food outside on the porch of the library that extended to the parking lot. We set up an outdoor children's area with tables, glow-in-the-dark play foam, music and STEAM take-home bags.

We had 14 volunteers and two library staff members help. I reached out to our usual volunteers and did outreach to the high school and local college to help with the day-of STEAM activities.

The high school volunteers not only monitored the kids but were asked to curate their explanations on the glow-in-dark foam based on the age of the child. Our college volunteers came out to serve the food and help orient people once they arrived.

Originally, we planned to show videos in the outdoor theater, but we decided to move the videos inside the library. After dinner, people migrated inside to watch some videos on the James Webb Telescope with Spanish translations. I left the doors wide open to the library and put a red film around the lights to make the inside of the library seem more space-like.

Overall, the event went very smoothly! We were so lucky with the clear skies so people could look through the telescope and clearly see stars and Saturn and Venus. The only slight setback we had was we needed to scramble for some extra Crock-Pots to keep the food warm.

Program Execution

About 175 people came to the event. For our small town, that’s successful! I received emails from teachers who came who loved it, and a few people have stopped me at the store to ask what we have planned next.

Advice

If you’re doing a program that doesn’t seem fun to you, don’t do it. This program was so successful because it had many community members involved and it was fun for all. If you’re planning a similar event that involves food and activities, get organized early and expect everything won’t go smoothly

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

Supporting Materials

Document
event_poster.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images







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Anatomy of a Take-Home STEM Kit

Audiences:

Audience

Children (9 and under)
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STEAM Club at Home: Fossil Dig

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