Skincare of the Ancient World

O'Neal Library

Adults

Skincare of the Ancient World

Feb 25, 2022

$51-100

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Byline

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Inspired by a make your own ancient perfume station at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, Skincare of the Ancient World was a program in which I taught patrons how to create their own skincare using the oils and spices that Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans would have used.

This hands-on program combines self-care, sustainability and history to teach patrons how they can use everyday, natural ingredients to create inexpensive, yet effective, skincare products found in ancient times.

Advanced Planning

I wanted to provide a hands-on learning experience that wasn't one of our usual craft programs. I started planning several months in advance because I was starting from scratch. I researched ancient skincare practices and developed recipes using ingredients that would be realistic to implement in a library program. I also tested the recipes ahead of time on myself.

I created a presentation based on my notes and printed out recipe cards for the participants to take home with them.

Marketing

I promoted this event via our usual outlets: email newsletters, website calendar and social media. My previous Perfumes of the Ancient World program was very well attended, so I did not stress much about getting the word out. The program registration filled up weeks before the event.

Budgeting

The cost was spent sourcing supplies. Based on my research, I developed two recipes: Cleopatra's Milk Bath (Dead Sea Salt infused with saffron layered with powdered milk/coconut milk) and the Skin Perfecting Greek Yogurt Mask (Greek yogurt, honey and pomegranate seeds).

Saffron was my biggest expense, but I found a good source for bulk saffron online. The rest of the ingredients were relatively inexpensive and easy to source. I also bought glass containers for the two recipes. I had already purchased several mortar and pestles for our Perfumes of the Ancient World program years before, and we used those for making the saffron salt and juicing the pomegranate arils.

For cost cutting, you could ask participants to bring their own glass containers and mortar and pestle, or borrow mortar and pestles from other staff members for the program.

Day-of-event Activity

I set up the ingredients and tools for the two recipes in the front of the room in two stations, one for the face mask recipe and one for the milk bath recipe. I also set up a few on-theme snacks (for example, olives and pita chips).

Only one staff member was needed, although it did get hectic when I was trying to juggle overseeing the two different stations at once.

Program Execution

After months of preparation, my program date arrived in the throes of the national omicron wave. Less than half of my sign-ups showed up. However, it was still a blast! Participants loved playing with the ingredients and were able to make extra batches of each recipe. I was pleased to receive good feedback about the class itself and the results of the recipes ("My face feels so soft!" "The bath was so relaxing!")

Advice

I would suggest that you perform a slow and thorough demonstration for the group. I had spent months thinking about these recipes, and while the recipes were quite simple, they were brand new to the audience and I feel that I rushed through the demonstration portion. I would also suggest teaching one recipe at a time so that you are not stretched too thin helping participants at two or more stations.

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

Supporting Materials

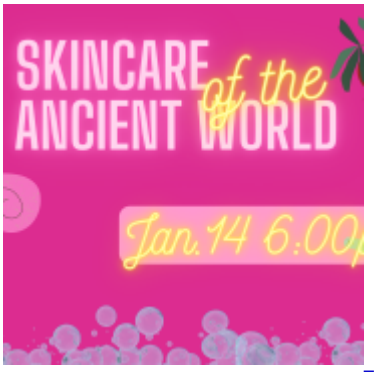
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