Finals Week Pet Grams

Thomas G. Carpenter Library and Hoover Library

Finals Week Pet Grams

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Free

Byline

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many academic libraries were faced with the challenge of supporting academic success while most students were off-campus and taking online classes. Many outreach librarians turned to virtual programming.

Pet Grams were developed as a way to reach out and connect virtually with patrons, no matter their location. The main outcome for Pet Grams is to share kindness and motivation during a stressful time in the semester, especially for students but also for other community members who may also need support.

Advanced Planning

While brainstorming Fall 2020 finals week programming ideas, the Outreach & Evening Librarian at McDaniel College's Hoover Library came across a Facebook post from Unleashed Pet Rescue and Adoption advertising their Howl-O-Ween Puppy Grams fundraiser. She immediately thought she could adapt this program as a virtual, asynchronous alternative to the library's usual therapy dog event.

In early November, she reached out to Keystone Pet Enhanced Therapy Services (KPETS), a local organization that typically visits campus for therapy dog events, and to library staff to solicit pet photo submissions using a shared Google Folder. Six Pet Gram templates were created in Canva, and, with the help of a student employee, these photos were added to the design. A form was created to collect Pet Gram requests from students, staff and faculty, and an email template in which the Pet Grams would be sent was drafted. While this planning process took about two weeks initially, preparations in future semesters (Spring 2021 and Spring 2022) took less time because the email template, graphics, and form easily could be edited and reused.

When the Student Outreach Librarian at UNF's Carpenter Library learned of Hoover Library's idea for Pet Grams, she quickly wrote a proposal and submitted it to library administration to host their own effort in Fall 2020. In November 2020, the outreach team asked for pet photo submissions from library staff and quickly designed the Pet Gram graphics in Canva.

Each Pet Gram from Hoover Library and the Carpenter Library includes a photograph of a library pet, a colorful and seasonal or thematic background, library logo, and a motivational saying, such as "You Can Do It!" or "Keep Going!"

Marketing

Hoover Library began advertising the call for Pet Gram requests at least one and a half weeks before finals week began. A promotional image and link to the submission form were shared on social media (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter), in a weekly newsletter, in daily campus announcements, and in an email sent to faculty and staff.

The Carpenter Library accepts Pet Gram requests two weeks before the Monday of Finals Week, and the submission form is promoted heavily to students, faculty and

staff. Pet Grams are promoted on social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) as well as in official university communication channels such as the weekly e-newsletter. Pet Grams are also featured prominently on the library website and shared with campus departments and partners. Additionally, due to word of mouth, Pet Grams have become more popular on campus.

Budgeting

Because Pet Grams are designed in Canva and sent via email and/or Instagram Direct Message (DM), they are completely cost-free.

Day-of-event Activity

Hoover Library began sending Pet Grams to recipients on the Monday and Tuesday of finals week via email and, during Spring 2021, Instagram direct message (DM). The Outreach & Evening Librarian sent all of the emails and DMs personally, half on Monday and half on Tuesday. This process took about an hour each day.

Due to the volume of requests, Carpenter Library staff (three or four people) split up the number of Pet Grams to send via email on the Monday of finals week. This process typically takes three or four hours per library staff member, depending on the number of staff involved.

Program Execution

Hoover Library set goals of 50 Pet Gram requests in Fall 2020 and 70 in Spring 2021, and both goals were surpassed. The library received many emails and direct messages in response to the Pet Grams, expressing how fun they thought this idea was, that it made their day, that it was just what they needed at the end of a tough semester, etc. One Pet Gram recipient, a college staff member who is also a KPETS volunteer, wrote: “I just wanted to say how much I love the pet-grams, such an awesome way to end the Fall Semester. Thank you for organizing this – it brought smiles to the HR Team.”

Carpenter Library Pet Gram requests included multiple recipients, such as a professor who wanted to send Pet Grams to all 200 students in UNF's Honors College. In Fall 2020, the Carpenter Library received 182 form requests and sent Pet Grams to 478 recipients. In Fall 2021, the Carpenter Library received 307 form requests and sent Pet Grams to 447 recipients. Selected responses include one response from a faculty member: "Omg I love you both and I love the library. I had no idea there were pet grams. My heart is bursting." Another Pet Gram sender responded: "Thanks so much for sending out these fun pet grams to our students! I appreciate the creative ways that the library has found to connect our campus community."

Advice

Pet Grams might seem like a large investment in time and effort, but once the requesting and sending processes are decided, most of the hard work is already done. Pet Gram graphics are fun to create, but gathering high-quality pet photos from library staff might take time, so we recommend sending out the call for photos and designing the templates early.

Consider giving Pet Gram senders the option of including a personal message to the recipient.

If multiple staff members are sending Pet Grams to recipients, we recommend creating a template for everyone to use.

Send the Pet Gram from an official library email address or social media account and make sure to add library branding and contact information to the Pet Gram email message so recipients know who to thank (the library)!

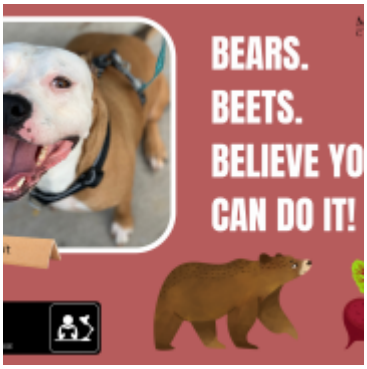
Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

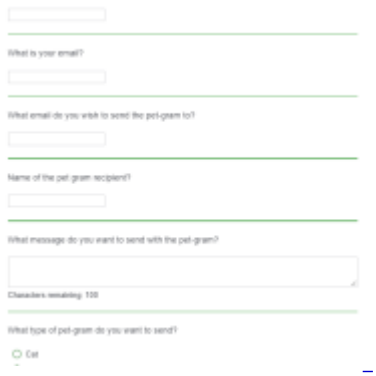
Slideshow Images



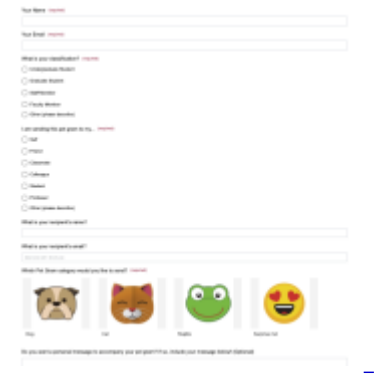
Image

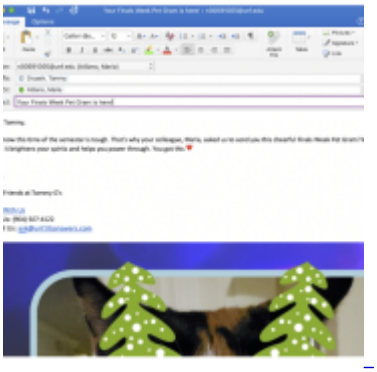
Rocket

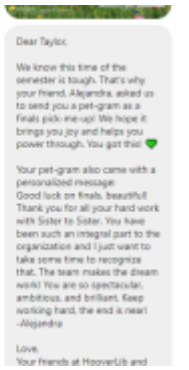
REQUEST A FINALS WEEK PET-GRAM!
Request a Finals Week Pet-Gram!


What is your email?
What email do you wish to send the pet-gram to?
Name of the pet gram recipient?
What message do you want to send with the pet-gram?
What type of pet-gram do you want to send?

Image







More Programs

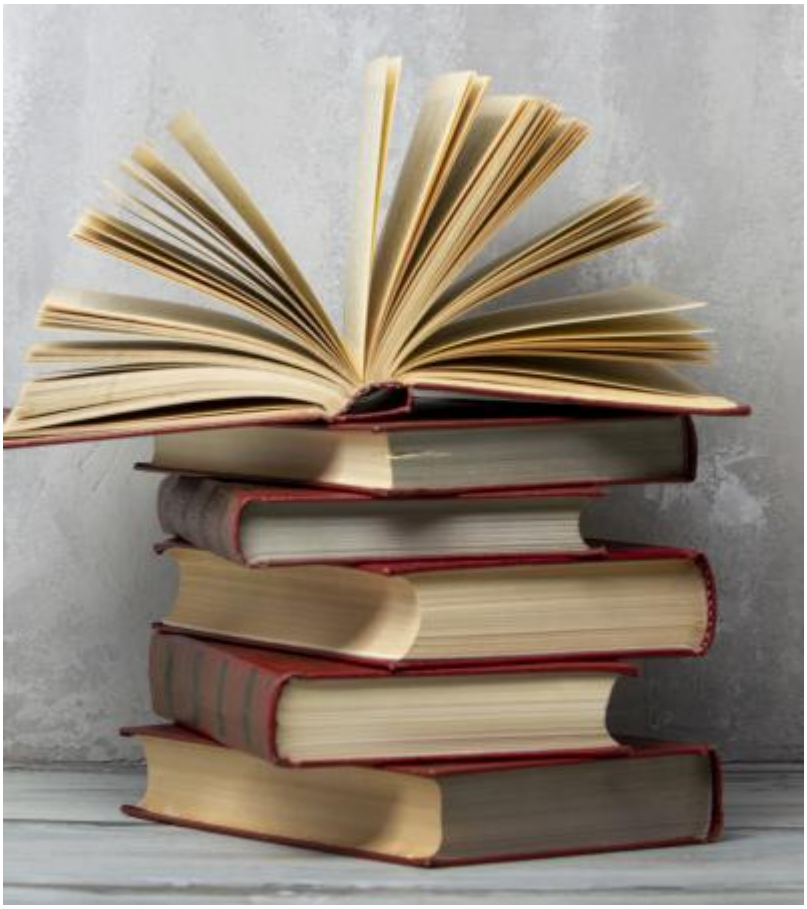
Apr 16, 2019
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$

Image

Stress ReDUCKtion

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Sep 10, 2020
Teens (13-16)+ | $$$
Image



BookFix

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Jul 21, 2021
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image

Library Literary Contests

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)