Community Art Swap

Cranford Public Library

Adults

|

Children

|

Intergenerational

|

Teens

|

Young Adult

Community Art Swap

May 3, 2022

Free

Byline

Lauren Antolino, Principal Librarian, Youth Services, Cranford (N.J.) Public Library

A Community Art Swap is an event where new and gently used art materials are exchanged. Community members are encouraged to trade secondhand supplies, all of which are available for free.

Advanced Planning

Most of our planning time went into spreading the word about this event and sorting donations. We began promoting the event three months in advance. We also reached out to community groups who might want to collect unclaimed donations; one had particular criteria and agreed to select a small number of items that their service population might appreciate, and the other would take anything.

We set simple ground rules and included them in all of our promotional materials. In the weeks leading up to the event, we shared more specific guidelines on the event page. We looked at creative reuse centers like Philadelphia's Resource Exchange and Denton's Thistle Creative Reuse when setting these guidelines.

The week of the program, we collected donations from people who had art supplies to share but weren't able to make it to the event. These items were loosely sorted and stored until the day before the event, when they were organized more thoroughly and set up in the event space. Two staff members did the bulk of this work, and it took about four hours.

Marketing

We reached out to local papers and family groups three months before the event date. We also created a Facebook event page and shared it in local "Buy Nothing" Facebook groups, groups focused on sustainability, and a few family groups.

In the weeks leading up to the event, we posted YouTube videos highlighting creative reuse projects and shared them on social media. A week before the event, we created fliers and asked local framing and art-focused stores to hang them in their shop fronts. We also asked local community members with active social media posts to share the event information on their social media channels. Our posts were met with positive responses on Facebook, though our event page only garnered 63

responses.

Budgeting

This program only cost us staff time. All the supplies that were made available were donated by community members.

Day-of-event Activity

Three staff members and a community volunteer facilitated this event.

An assortment of art supplies were organized on tables. Anyone was welcome to take items from this area or leave items for others to take. Anyone who had more precious supplies that they'd prefer to swap directly was encouraged to "pre-swap" materials using the Facebook event page. They could post items they had or wanted, arrange a trade, and then meet up at the event to exchange goods. Buying and selling good was prohibited.

A local group who runs a community pantry visited to select items that their families might appreciate. At the end of the event, anything that wasn't claimed was donated to a local thrift store, who was happy to receive art supplies.

Program Execution

About 80 people attended this program. Attendees were thrilled about the event, and many urged us to hold the event regularly. Some attendees had tips for acquiring more donations, though our preference would be to attract more people to help clear out the available materials. Our goal was to divert materials from landfills and make art materials accessible to a wide range of community members, which we did.

This program attracted local artists and hobbyists from a variety of disciplines. Because the swap lent itself to informal conversation, we were able to tell attendees about upcoming programs centered on art. Given the low cost of this program and

the overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, we would happily host this program again. We relied on feedback from individual library patrons.

Advice

Expect to receive materials that are not fit for donation. Designate a space for these materials and quietly stow unusable materials there. Give staff as much time as possible to set up, and pull as many staff members as possible to help. Set a cutoff time for items to come in; we had a few people arrive minutes before the end of our program, which didn't allow enough time for their items to be claimed.

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

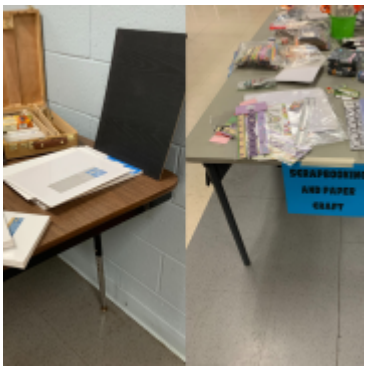
Supporting Materials

Document
flier.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images

Image



More Programs

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
Aug 13, 2021
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image

Adopt a House Plant

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Nov 19, 2021
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image

Fall for Fine Arts 2

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational