Jigsaw Puzzle Swap

West Linn Public Library

Intergenerational

Jigsaw Puzzle Swap

Feb 5, 2024

Free

Byline

Sara Chesney, Librarian, West Linn (Ore.) Public Library

Give a puzzle, get a new puzzle in exchange at the Jigsaw Puzzle Swap.

Advanced Planning

Puzzles were accepted at our circulation desk starting one week prior to the event up until the night before the event. One ticket voucher to attend the event was given for each puzzle received.

Patrons were asked to tape two edges of the box, though there were many we had to tape ourselves. Throughout the week, the puzzles were sorted into crates by their piece count: Kids, 300, 500, 750, 1000, 1500, 2000+ using signs made in Canva.

Ticket vouchers would be allowed in the event at 10 am, and the general public at 11 am. The setup began the night before the event. I used the crates I had for additional display space and covered them with colored butcher paper to make them more attractive.

Marketing

This event was promoted in our library and city newsletter, as well as through a $10 boost on Facebook.

Budgeting

There was no cost associated with this program as all of it was dependent on patrons donating their board games for the swap. $10 was spent on a Facebook boost, though most heard about the event through our library newsletter and city newsletter.

Day-of-event Activity

I had expected to do this event alone, but I was fortunate enough to have two wonderful volunteers who helped sort any puzzle donations received at the door (about 5 puzzles), reorganize displays as puzzles were taken and clean up after the event, which alleviated time on my end.

We had 40 people within the first hour. Most were in and out within the first twenty minutes of the event. 15 people visited in the second half of the program. During this time I was able to slowly clean up the program and rearrange the puzzles so I could clear off tables entirely. We had about twenty puzzles left over. These were either given to our library volunteer bookstore, reserved for our future puzzle swap or given to Goodwill.

Program Execution

We had 55 people, which was great for a first-time event. The first 20 minutes were a whirlwind as voucher holders redeemed their tickets. The next forty minutes were quiet until we once again opened it to the general public. Then we had people come in and take two to five puzzles each.

We had significantly more puzzles donated than were taken away, as many were cleaning out space for a good cause. We were able to save many of these puzzles for future puzzle swaps and donate the rest.

People are now aware that we accept puzzle donations for the library and bookstore, that they can purchase puzzles in our bookstore and that we have a community puzzle in the library, which has since seen an increase in activity. With the success of this program, we determined that it would be valuable to hold a week before Spring Break and Thanksgiving when people expect to have more time with their families. Many voiced interest in puzzle-focused programs, such as speed puzzling, and this can be used as a platform to promote these future events.

Advice

In the future, we will be reducing the time between opening and general entry. Ticket vouchers will have 45 minutes to redeem their puzzles, general entry will open for 45 minutes.

The day of, the event should be done and cleaned up within two hours. We will also ask patrons to tape all four edges of the box as smaller puzzle pieces occasionally find their way out of their box.

We've accepted puzzle donations to our volunteer bookstore for a couple of years. Donations increased following the reveal of our community puzzle, and I was able to refresh our collection of puzzles with this event I intend on reaching out to domestic abuse shelters in the future for any excess puzzles we have.

Other libraries in our consortium have started holding Puzzle Swaps as well, and we may be able to support each other by sending excess puzzles to these events.

Since Programming Librarian published this article, our readers have tried the program at their own libraries! Here’s what they have to say:

Feedback
We do this once a quarter and it's one of our most popular activities. Patrons are always asking when the next one will be! We have some patrons bring a bag of puzzles each time to swap!
— Matt Betts, Programmer, Upper Arlington Public Library, Columbus, Ohio

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









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May 3, 2023
Children (9 and under)+ | $$

Image



Titanic Dinner at the Library

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Oct 3, 2023
Intergenerational+ | □□
Image



Community Displays

Audiences:

Intergenerational