

Air Dry Clay Pottery

Harrisburg Community Library

Teens

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

Air Dry Clay Pottery

Apr 16, 2024

\$51-100

\$

Byline

Cheyenne Chontos, Library Director, Harrisburg (S.D.) Community Library

The Harrisburg Community Library (HCL) hosts Teen and Adult Craft Nights every other month. This craft night series focused on air dry clay pottery and was held on two consecutive Thursday evenings. Each evening was an hour-long session. During the first night, participants shaped their clay and on the second night, they painted their dried creations.

Advanced Planning

The library previously didn't have regular teen or adult programming so my goal was to introduce a fun program for those ages. We're a small library so I was the only one involved in planning this particular program. I started planning about a month in advance.

I first purchased the materials for the event to ensure they would arrive on time and so that I would have time to make some sample projects. When the materials arrived, I made some samples and determined that it would be helpful to order more tools. During this time, I started to advertise the event and collect registrations. I also created a [document of air dry clay pottery ideas](#) for participants to reference during the event.

About a week before the event I created a survey for participants to fill out after the program. I emailed the program participants the day before to remind them of the event and to wear clothes they felt comfortable getting clay or paint on.

Marketing

I used Canva to create [a poster](#) for our library and our Facebook page. I also put the event on our website. I started advertising a little less than a month before the event. I limited the number of participants to 20 because we had not had an event quite like this before and I wasn't sure what the turnout would be.

I was glad that I capped attendance because the event had filled up with more on the waiting list within the two weeks of advertisements. I had only posted the event twice on our Facebook page before the program filled up. After it was full, I did not post it again on Facebook and took down the poster in the library.

Budgeting

I budgeted about \$60 for the event. A little over half of this was spent on [Crayola Air Dry Clay](#). The rest was spent on tools like [wire clay cutters](#), cookie cutters, [rolling pins](#), sponges, [small tools for shaping clay](#) and paint palettes. We also utilized paint, paint brushes and cleaning materials (wipes, towels, soap), which we already had.

The benefit of purchasing tools, such as wire clay cutters and cookie cutters, is that they can be used again and again for future clay programs. To cut costs, you can only purchase the air dry clay and the wire clay cutters. The paint is not necessary if you would like to make this a one-day program.

Day-of-event Activity

I took about 30 minutes to set everything up for the first day. At each seat, I put a sponge, water, towels and the document of ideas for air dry clay pottery designs. I pre-cut about ten pieces of clay and set out a station of clay tools. I also set up a check-in table where I printed the registration list.

On the second day, I took about 30 minutes to set up. At each seat, I put water, towels and a paint palette. I set up a station of paint and paintbrushes. I also had a check-in table with my registration list.

Program Execution

On the first day, I started with a short introduction and then talked about some of the basics of working with clay. I then let people come up to grab their clay. I gave everyone about one pound of clay to work with and whatever tools they wanted.

Once they had their clay and tools, everyone quickly got to work and I stayed busy cleaning and helping people troubleshoot. Once the patrons were done, they left their projects at the library to dry.

The second session also started with a brief introduction and some instructions on painting. Some of the clay projects had pieces that broke off while drying, so I provided those patrons with super glue. I then let patrons start getting their paint and brushes, and everyone got started working. Again, I remained busy with

cleaning and troubleshooting. The patrons were able to take their projects home with them.

On both evenings we had two people who had registered but "no showed." We didn't have anyone who was not registered attend. Everyone who attended the first session came back for the second session.

Out of the 18 participants, 13 completed a survey after the second session. All the participants reported being either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the program. Positive comments included that they enjoyed the craft and that it was a free event they could do with their friends and family. The only negative comment was that someone stated they did not feel they were good at coming up with ideas for their project.

Since this first Teen and Adult Craft Night, we have had a few others, all of which have been at full capacity. Participants in these programs also rate the programs highly. We regularly see non-users of our library at these programs, which is always exciting for us.

Advice

Having two staff members or a staff member and a volunteer to help manage supplies would be very helpful. Limiting the number of participants was also helpful for us, as we had limited clay and supplies (though we did not run into any issues with patrons sharing).

While determining how many patrons to have at the event, first map out where each of their clay projects will dry and "live" in your library the week between them creating the pottery and painting. We had not thought of this and ended up with clay projects everywhere!

[Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.](#)

Supporting Materials

Document

[Flyer.pdf](#)

Document

[Air Dry Clay Ideas.pdf](#)

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

Slideshow Images

