Book Bags 2 Go

Memorial Hall Library

Tweens (10-12)

Book Bags 2 Go

Aug 20, 2024

$51-100

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Byline

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Book Bags 2 Go is an ongoing partnership between the public library and the local public schools to deliver customized selections of library materials to students. We created an online form for students to fill out to describe their reading interests. Then we select books for them, check them out to their cards, put the books in special bags and deliver the bags to the public schools.

Advanced Planning

This program evolved somewhat organically out of the Teen Book Bags program we started at MHL during the peak of the pandemic when the library was still closed to

the public and patrons missed being able to browse. We were able to adapt the webform (where students specify their preferred genres, favorite authors, and other information so that we can tailor a bag to their interests) and the internal tracking spreadsheet we used for that version of the program to the school delivery program.

It's hard to quantify how far in advance we really started planning, but when we finalized the idea to bring the bags to the school, we approached the librarian at one specific middle school and asked to pilot the program with only 8th graders to get a sense of the scale. If every 8th grader requested a book bag, we would have been overwhelmed but the program was used by a manageable number of avid readers and students who were getting extra reading guidance. We had a great collaborator in the school librarian at our nearest middle school. Our most unexpected challenge was seeing students request adult fiction titles like Colleen Hoover's books. We had to adapt our request form to clearly state that we would only deliver materials from our library's teen and children's room.

We also benefitted from a COVID-era library card drive that worked to make sure all public school students had library cards.

Marketing

We were fortunate to have great collaborators at the school. We promoted the event through school visit sessions where we pitched the program personally to students, and the school librarian and ELA teachers also posted flyers in their library, classrooms and online Schoology portal. It did seem that the in-person visits were most successful. We always had a spike in requests after a visit to a school.

Budgeting

Other than the cost of staff time, the major cost for this program was the paper bags we used, which were $17.95 for 30 bags on Amazon. We liked these sturdy, bright orange bags but they could easily be replaced with cheaper brown paper bags or donated grocery store bags. So far we have needed to spend around $60 on bags.

We also spent $32 on plastic tubs (4 tubs at $8 each) to leave at each public school for book returns. Again, to cut costs these could probably be replaced with a cardboard box or something else already on hand, but we liked the look and sturdiness of the plastic tubs

We also benefited from the library's purchase of a collapsible beach-style wagon. Our department did not directly purchase it but we were able to make use of it and it made the delivery very helpful. The wagon's cost was around $100 and we would recommend having something like this to help with deliveries if possible.

Day-of-event Activity

This is an ongoing event. On the day of each delivery, the two of us packed up one of our personal vehicles with our bags, drove them to the schools, and brought them into the school libraries. We set up a schedule to visit each school once per month (every Tuesday morning a different one of the 4 schools). On average we'd spend about an hour putting together the bags and thirty minutes delivering them. This could be done with one librarian if needed (we each occasionally did it solo if the other was out) but having two people is helpful for delivery for helping with loading, unloading, door opening, etc.

Program Execution

Since we started in December of 2022, we have distributed 78 bags totaling 390 books through the program. We also made sure that each bag included at least 20% of titles written by an author of a marginalized identity.

Some of the more motivated readers requested multiple bags throughout the year and we heard that they really enjoyed being introduced to new genres and titles. It was great to hear from the school librarians that students were asking about the bags and were excited to receive them.

The program also helped our circulation stats and gave us good opportunities to visit the schools and connect with students so it’s a program we plan to continue.

Advice

Find a good partner and start slow! Doing the program as a pilot for the first couple of months really helped us to find our groove and figure out best practices. Another piece of advice is to talk up the program every chance you get since we found that we would get requests after we went to the schools to talk about it but then students and teachers would inevitably forget if it wasn't forefront in their minds.

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





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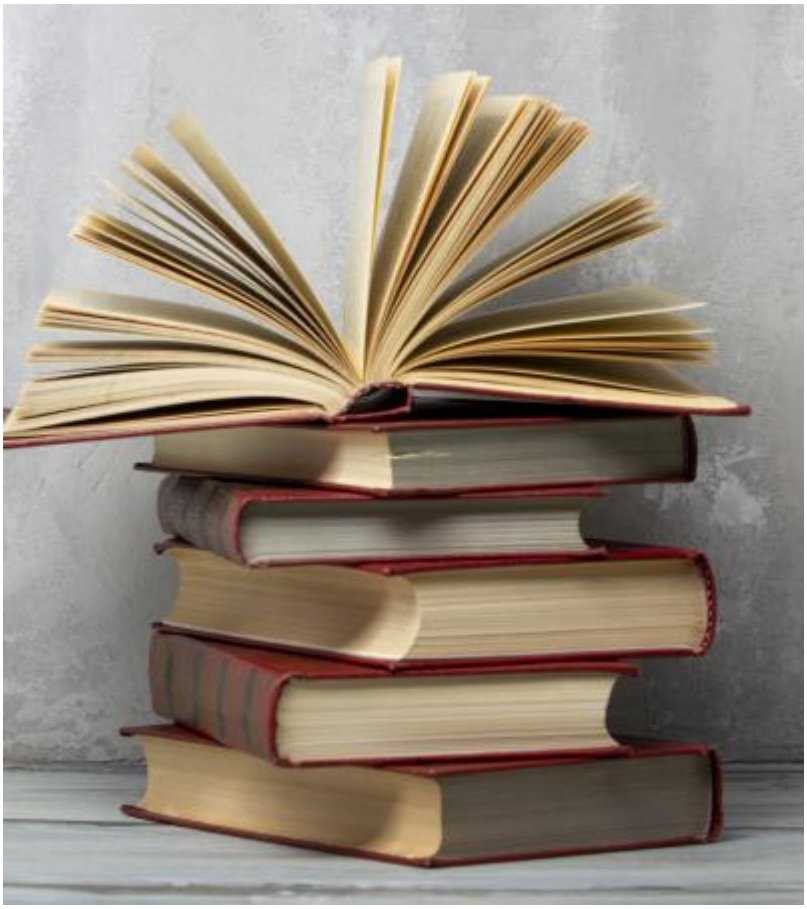
Mar 13, 2024
Tweens (10-12)+ | □□
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Intergenerational Book Club

Audiences:

Tweens (10-12)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Sep 10, 2020
Teens (13-16)+ | $$$
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BookFix

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Jun 25, 2024
Teens (13-16)+ | $
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Fix It Workshop

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)