

Game Night at the Library

University Library at Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Children

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Adults

Game Night at the Library

Mar 18, 2015

\$251-500

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Byline

Sarah Timm, Public Services Manager, University Library at Texas A&M University, San Antonio

During our first ever Game Night at the Library, we offered board games, Bingo (with prizes), a Wii with various games patrons could check out, a library-themed scavenger hunt meant to get attendees familiar with the library's new space and existing services with prizes for the winning team, and pizza, desserts and beverages. This event was open to our faculty, staff and students who were encouraged to bring their family members with them.

Advanced Planning

Our goal for this program was to familiarize students with our new library's location and make them aware of the services we offer. We also wanted students to get to know the library's staff. I started planning in September 2014 and looked to a fellow librarian, who had some experience creating a murder-mystery scavenger hunt, for help getting the scavenger hunt together. We had two meetings: one with all the librarians to discuss the types of clues we wanted to incorporate into the scavenger hunt, and then another with all library staff that would be present on Game Night. At the second meeting, we discussed who would be positioned at which clue during the scavenger hunt. Many library staff contributed board games and one librarian brought in her Wii and games to use for the evening. I asked our communications department and bookstore if they would be willing to donate any goodies for our prize bags. I also reached out to the San Antonio Spurs to see if they would be willing to donate prizes, since the Spurs Coyote mascot was part of our scavenger hunt's theme. We originally wanted the Spurs Coyote to make an appearance, but his schedule would not allow it.

Marketing

I began advertising through all of the following means about a month prior to the event: fliers, both on bulletin boards and smaller postcard size fliers (that were distributed throughout the indoor sitting spaces around campus), media boards (flat-screen TVs on campus that cycle through various flyers for university-wide events), social media, the library's and university's online calendar of events, the library's hours and events webpage, the student newspaper's calendar of events, and mass emails to all faculty, staff and students. We also had a flier with tear-aways that attendees could use to go to our event webpage in Libcal to RSVP so we would know how much food to provide and to let us know if they wanted to participate in the scavenger hunt. We had over 50 people RSVP to the event, so I would say our marketing was successful.

Budgeting

The money spent on this event was for the pizza, small desserts, beverages, plates, napkins, cups and silverware. We were able to save some money by co-sponsoring this event with our Student Government Association, which was willing to purchase the drinks. We also ordered a bit more pizza than was needed, figuring that we would have some people show up that did not RSVP — so ordering less food next time would help to cut the cost. We were able to save money by pooling together board games that library staff owned and by securing free goodies from our communications department, bookstore and the Spurs organization to use as Bingo and scavenger hunt prizes. We were also able to save money because someone on staff had a Wii and games to contribute for the evening, as well as the Bingo game and playing cards.

Day-of-event Activity

On the day of the event, clues for the scavenger hunt needed to be placed throughout the library. For example, one of the clues had teams locate books in the stacks; the teams' next clue was placed in those books. Other clues were placed in various study rooms, in our makerspace, etc. We had the pizza delivered, but we covered specific tables for the food and beverages with tablecloths and laid out the desserts, beverages, plates, napkins, cups, etc. ahead of time. A library staff member brought an ice chest and several staff took care of getting ice from a machine on campus and making lemonade and coffee. The Wii needed to be connected to the TV in one of our study rooms and a list of available Wii games was written out on the whiteboard in that study room. The remaining board games were displayed at the library's information desk. The Bingo game and prizes were set up in another one of our larger study rooms, and prizes for the scavenger hunt winners and participants were compiled in goodie bags.

Program Execution

We had about 35 people attend, all of whom were students, and several brought their spouses and children. This was a great turnout for our first event. It was also just the right size because it allowed everyone to participate in the library scavenger hunt. Since everyone was able to participate in the scavenger hunt that was meant

to familiarize students with our new space and services, I feel we achieved our goal. After the scavenger hunt ended, the library staff were free to play board games with the attendees. This allowed us to achieve our goal of interacting with library patrons. We did ask for feedback at the end of the scavenger hunt and we got positive reviews from the students who said they would come again/recommend this to their friends. During the evening, many of the students asked when we would be hosting our next game night. We have decided to try to host these once per semester.

Advice

The scavenger hunt takes the most preparation! Not only do you have to create clues, but it helps to organize different teams where the same clues are shuffled in a different order, so that you don't have teams running into each other when they are playing. If the scavenger hunt clues have a theme, that makes them more fun and entertaining for participants. Our theme centered around the Spurs coyote wanting to do more research on San Antonio so that he could impress the Spurs basketball players. Having prizes encouraged participation. We even had small participation prizes for all the teams on the scavenger hunt that didn't win. Using Libcal and asking people to RSVP ahead of time greatly helped us plan how much food and beverages to get, but also helped us know ahead of time how many teams/sets of clues we needed to create. Finally, having as many library staff available the night of the event made things flow smoothly.

Supporting Materials

Document

[Game Night 2014 Media Board Version.pdf](#)

Document

[Game Night 2014 Tear Off Flyer.pdf](#)

Document

[Mystery Scavenger Hunt Clue Stations.pdf](#)

Document

[Mystery Scavenger Hunt Yellow Team Clues.pdf](#)

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