Dating Dante

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library at University of Illinois

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Dating Dante

Mar 18, 2015

$251-500

$$
Byline

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Yes, it happened: Speed dating came to the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois. But it was not exactly what you think. Ten book-loving students offered six-minute presentations on a variety of remarkable books and/or manuscripts. Each of them discovered and researched a rarity that “spoke to them,” or perhaps we should say a book “that made their spines tingle.” Guests were

invited to wander from treasure to treasure every six minutes. After "speed dating" an amazing book, newly enlightened book friends were encouraged to socialize while enjoying refreshments and heart-shaped pizza.

Advanced Planning

Our target audience for this program was college students, though this event was open to the public. Our goal was to increase attendance among students who have never visited our library. Another program goal was to give our student-instructors presentation and class preparation experience. A group of undergraduate and graduate students who work in our library led the presentations on a rare book or manuscript of their choice, highlighting lesser-known works. Planning took place about a month and involved recruiting student presenters, developing a publicity strategy and deciding on refreshments. This event was organized by staff at The Rare Book & Manuscript Library and student library employees.

Marketing

We implemented a print and digital marketing strategy, including displaying posters in high-traffic student areas, using Twitter and Facebook and digital marketing screens in the library.

Budgeting

Funds were directed toward advertising, refreshments, an acoustic guitar player (student) and decorations.

Day-of-event Activity

Set-up entailed arranging and decorating tables with heart-shaped balloons and Valentines, displaying rare books and manuscripts and arranging refreshments. The acoustic guitarist also required an amplifier, which one of our staff members was able to provide.

Program Execution

We were very pleased with the attendance at this program — there were around 70 attendees. Guests expressed positive feedback and our student presenters gained valuable experience. Students made up the core group of attendees. Our event was also open to the general public, faculty and staff.

Advice

Make sure to have plenty of staff on hand during the event. We were fortunate to have five staff members available during this 90-minute event, and about 10 staff members assisted with cleaning up afterwards.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
press_release_dating_dante.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

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Image



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Audiences:

Audience
Young Adult (17 - 20)
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Image



Game Night at the Library

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
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