Charcuterie Class

Colchester District Library

Adults

Charcuterie Class

Dec 2, 2024

$501-1000

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Byline

Debbie Sullivan, Director, Colchester (Ill.) District Library

We hired a professional food artist to lead the group through the preparation and building of a 6” charcuterie board. She taught the group several techniques for cutting the food items, arranging them artfully and presenting the finished product with fun and flourish!

Advanced Planning

Our goal was to provide attendees with an enjoyable evening with friends and food. We wanted them to take home a delicious masterpiece and learn some new skills. Our food artist, Callie Downie/Spreadz Charcuterie Creations, is very sought after, and she also has a full-time day job, so we booked our event about six months ago.

Then, we began to promote it and take signups about a month in advance. She took most of the signups and fee collection on her website, with the library doing a few in-person for those who preferred to sign up with cash.

Our biggest challenge was accommodating the large number of people who wanted to sign up. We quickly outgrew the library's meeting room and had to book the much larger community room at City Hall. Artist Callie and I had to communicate often as the group grew — and we finally agreed to close registration at 32.

Marketing

Most of our events are promoted on Facebook with regular posts of our Canva prepared flyer. We also created a Facebook event page, and we hung the flyer around in town in high-traffic locations. I know there were some exciting conversations about it, too, in our small community. We considered starting a waitlist, but did not.

Budgeting

When our town doctor passed away, his family donated a sizable trust to the library to be used for educational programming. So, we paid half of each person's fee ($20) from that trust. The participants also paid $20. This is necessary because the food is prepared per person, and you do not want "no shows".

If cost cutting were necessary, Callie could plan a smaller product that used less food—say, a 4" plate or a pretty cup. Less expensive foods can also be chosen.

Day-of-event Activity

City Hall had the tables already set up, so we just covered them with fall-themed tablecloths and set up the chairs. We allowed space for everyone and then a table up front for the demo. Three of us worked together to place all the needed equipment and supplies at each person's spot. Food items, utensils, plates, wipes, a bottle of water and napkins were all arranged per person. If there was a challenge, it

was making sure each person had enough space — four to six per table is required.

Program Execution

32 paid and attended. They seated themselves with their friends, and Callie used a lapel microphone to open the program with prayer and introductions. She gave me the opportunity for a quick library commercial, and then she began by describing each food (different cheeses, meats, fruits) and utensil and briefly explaining what would be done with each one.

She had a plate already prepared, and she walked around the room so participants could take a picture of it to refer to. She then began teaching them how to slice cheese, cut a strawberry and kiwi, construct a salami rose, use just the right amount of green, and place it beautifully on the plate. Callie provided bakery boxes for taking the plates home.

Advice

The program sells itself. Particularly at holiday time when entertaining is done. Our next plan is to do an intergenerational spring event such as a mother/daughter or Mother’s Day party.

My caution would be regarding the cost. $40 seems like a lot, but participants get a lot!

There may also be concerns about food safety. Callie is licensed, and we did not have to get a permit from our health department.

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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