Highland Park Library: Chicago Reads

Highland Park Public Library

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Highland Park Library: Chicago Reads

Apr 24, 2015

$1,001-2,500

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Byline

Beth Keller, Marketing Specialist, Highland Park (Ill.) Public Library

Literary and cultural icons from the Chicago area read excerpts from their favorite works of literature to celebrate the library's 125th anniversary. The lineup included bestselling authors Elizabeth Berg and Jonathan Eig, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Mary Schmich, former "Today Show" correspondent Mike Leonard, the mayor of

Highland Park, and other well-known journalists, essayists and artists.

Advanced Planning

Planning for the milestone anniversary began almost a year in advance. A committee was formed of library staff, board members, community members, and a representative from the Friends of the Library. The goal for this program was to mark the library's 125th anniversary in a memorable way and to celebrate with the community. We chose to celebrate with stories and words, which we thought was a fitting theme for a public library.

Marketing

The event was promoted in various ways. A special mailing was sent to all households in Highland Park announcing the program and other special events for the 125th anniversary. Press releases were sent to local media, and posters were displayed in the library. A local paper was the media sponsor. In return for listing the name of the publication on the library's promotional material, the library received free ads for the anniversary event(s).

Budgeting

The only cost associated with this event were the honorariums, which were offered to those that presented at Chicago Reads.

Day-of-event Activity

The event was held in the library's large adult services department. Study tables were moved to make room for about 200 chairs.

Program Execution

The audience was entertained and awed by the talent in the room, and moved by the readings as one after another literary or cultural icon took the stage. Readings at the event brought tears, shivers, "awws" and applause from the standing-room only crowd of 300. "Magical" and "spectacular" were used to describe the event by those who attended. It was truly a celebration that was enjoyed by both regular patrons and those who rarely attend a library event.

Advice

It should be noted that we "borrowed" this idea from Rick Kogan, a "Chicago Tribune" columnist who had hosted a similar event. We contacted him and asked if we could hold a similar event at the library and if he would be interested in hosting. When he responded favorably, we began to contact presenters.

Because we were celebrating a major milestone, we wanted to create a memorable afternoon and wanted the caliber of those participating to match the importance of the occasion. To this end, we contacted those who were well known in a variety of arts organizations, along with authors and other cultural icons. We also contacted past presenters who we considered "friends" of the library and who would be an asset to the lineup. In our inquiries, we mentioned the host's name, to which many reacted favorably and may have helped bring the presenters on board. The event seemed to resonate with the community, as illustrated by the large crowd it drew and the remarks of those there.

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Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images





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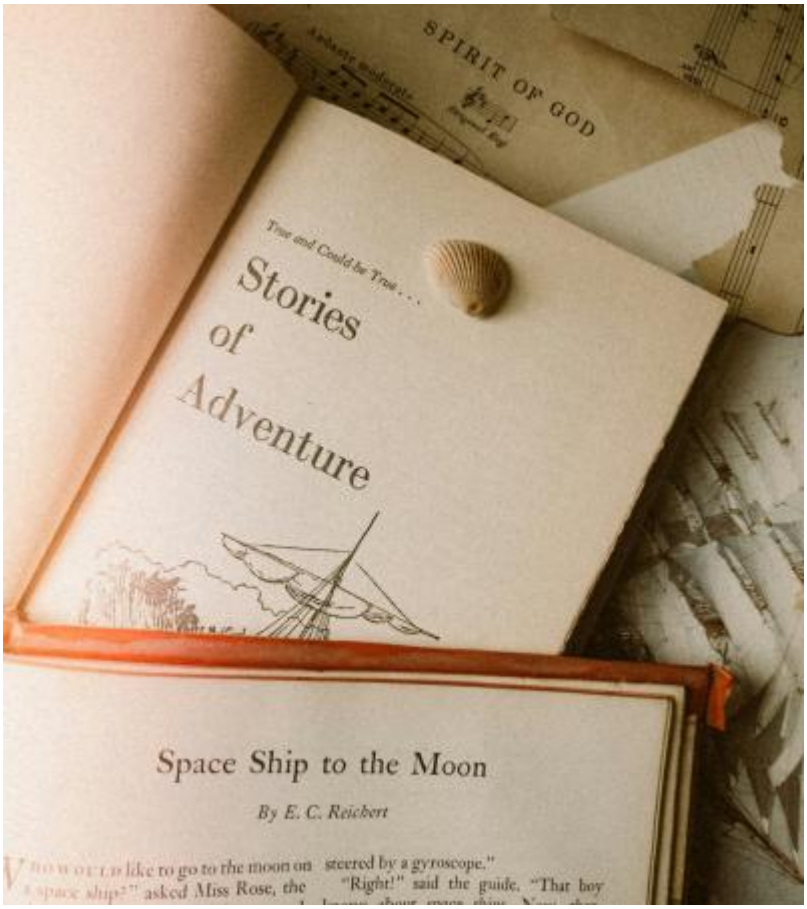
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Children (9 and under)+ |
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One Book, One San Diego

Audiences:

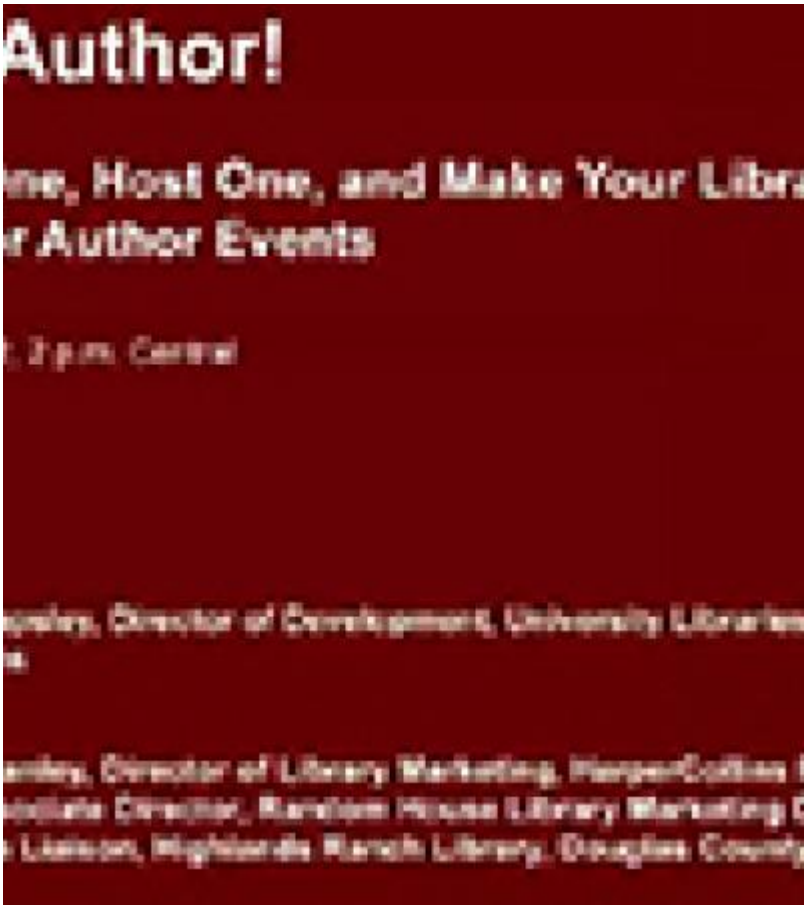
Audience
Children (9 and under)
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Intergenerational
Jul 28, 2011
Adults (21 and up)+ |
Image



One Book, One Community Programs

Audiences:

Audience
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Jul 24, 2012
+ |
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Author! Author! How to Find One, Host One, and Make Your Library THE Go-to Place for Author Events

Audiences: