Finals Fairy

Indiana University Libraries

Young Adult

|

Adults

Finals Fairy

Jul 9, 2025

$251-500

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Byline

Lindsey Schaffer, Events and Hospitality Coordinator, Indiana University Libraries

The Finals Fairy “visited” five Indiana University Library branches and spread cheer through hands-on activities and giveaways. Our goal was to create engagement opportunities throughout finals week that connected students to library resources.

Advanced Planning

Inspired by Lafayette College’s successful campaign, the Finals Fairy was brought to life at Indiana University (IU) Libraries in full in the spring of 2025. The concept of

the Fairy is simple: a mysterious entity travels around the Libraries and brings little bits of chaos to entertain and support students during exams. These activities, including food giveaways, candy giveaways, and passive programming like coloring sheets and Play-Doh stations, are accompanied by custom IU Fairy branding, including squirrels (an IU Bloomington campus cultural touchpoint) and giveaways to help students study.

Michelle Crowe, Assistant Dean of Library Communications, conceptualized IU Libraries' interpretation of the Finals Fairy. She commissioned graphic designer Ellie Pursley to design a custom fairy to represent the IU Fairy. Railsback Fellow Taylor Burnette researched, designed, planned, and executed the campaign and facilitated many of its activities. She also served as a liaison to the Branch Libraries as they created their own programming within the campaign's brand guidelines. Anne Haines, IU Libraries Content Strategist, promoted the Finals Fairy activities on our social media. She also collaborated with our fellow to create a marketing strategy for the FF. Finally, the IU Libraries event coordinator, Lindsey Schaffer, was responsible for setting up and cleaning up the giveaway stations and ordering the materials.

Marketing

We promoted the Finals Fairy mainly through Instagram. These posts included "notes" left by the Fairy, as well as mysterious "Fairy Sightings" miraculously captured on camera. Our Finals Fairy posts had 24 shares, an increase from regular posts. Due to the nature of the Fairy's activities, designed as primarily passive programming that students could engage with during study breaks, it is challenging to put a number on engagements with the Fairy. However, we estimate over 2,000 students interacted with the Fairy across the participating Libraries, calculated by the number of items given away (and the probability that many students took multiple items).

Budgeting

$3,000 went towards buying fairy-themed decorations, snacks, and prizes for giveaways. We also printed custom IU Libraries study note cards. You could do this event at a much smaller scale if desired.

Day-of-event Activity

Our Railsback Fellow and Event Coordinator worked together to set out tables in the library lobby each morning of finals week. They set up either a giveaway, an activity, or a food item, which changed day to day. The labor of setting up and ordering the materials took more time and energy than originally planned. Some of the branches chose to select their own items/ activities and put them out themselves. Some examples they chose included fresh fruit and puzzles.

Program Execution

We observed many students who remarked how happy they were with the surprise giveaway. One vivid image that comes to mind is of a student crying due to the stress of finals, but with a free sucker in hand. Our hope was to make students' lives a little bit better during finals week, and we believe this initiative was able to do that. We also created a library printout with a barcode that led to library resources. Students did take and use this resource, demonstrating that we were able to share library resources during this week.

Advice

We would recommend to anyone considering this program is to think of ways to survey engagement. Because of the grab and go nature of the pop ups we struggled to equate value to the program besides just supporting student wellness and connecting them with library resources. This project also entailed a lot of manual labor (unboxing goodies) and creativity (coming up with fairy puns). Enlisting students is a helpful start when it comes to brainstorming and rollout.

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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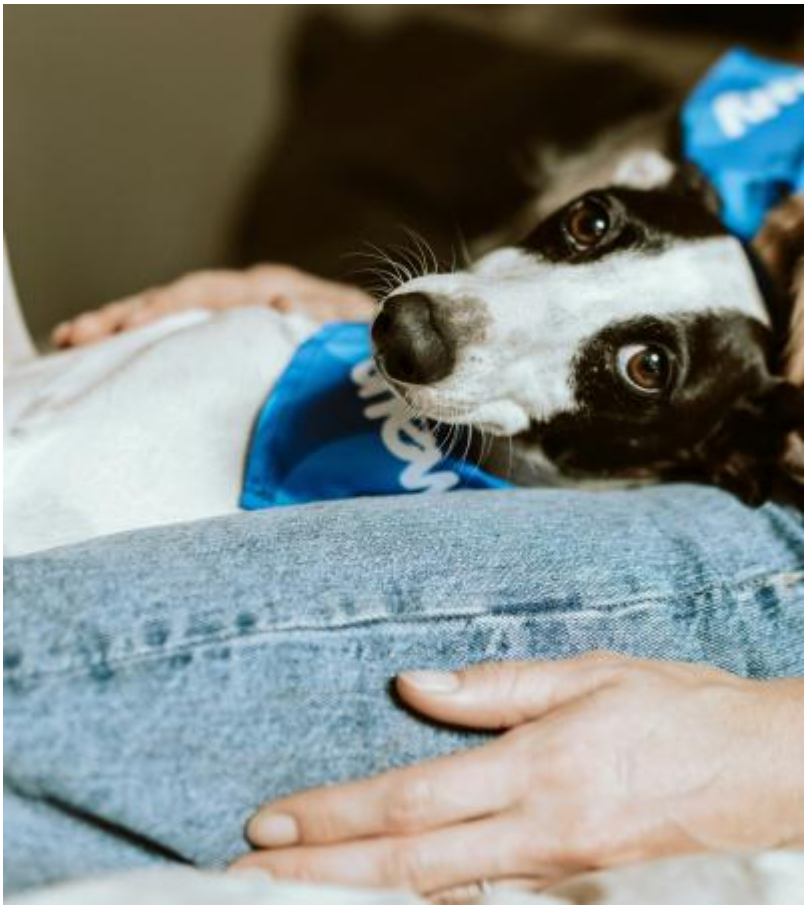
Apr 19, 2022
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Finals Week Pet Grams

Audiences:

Mar 3, 2025
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image



Take a Paws

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
May 9, 2023
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | □□
Image



Book Bathing

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)