Sunshine Strummers

Livingston Parish Library System

Children

|

Young Adult

Sunshine Strummers

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$251-500

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Byline

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This six-week course for tweens is designed to teach the basics of how to play a ukulele. At the end of the course, the students perform the song “You Are My Sunshine” at the library for parents, friends and members of the community. Ukuleles are provided to patrons for the duration of the course.

Advanced Planning

This class was registration only. The confirmation message patrons received indicated that their registration was pending and they would receive a phone call from a staff member for further instructions. These calls were made to parents to discuss the time commitment of the course and to let them know they must come to the library to sign a waiver that specifies the financial responsibilities of checking out a ukulele.

Marketing

We opened registration for Sunshine Strummers two weeks prior to the program and then began displaying fliers and posters inside the library. We only had 12 ukuleles available, and the class and waiting list was completely full the first day of registration. At that point, we removed the fliers and posters. No further marketing was necessary.

Budgeting

We purchased the 12 ukuleles from Musician's Friend at $35 apiece. They came with bags and chord books. That totaled $420, and Friends of the Livingston Library System donated the money to purchase these items.

Day-of-event Activity

Very little set-up was needed for this program during the first five sessions — just a few tables and chairs for the students. The day of the showcase, we created a stage for the performance and offered snacks to guests. We had two staff members available at all six sessions.

Program Execution

First class: Check out the ukuleles to each individual and have a parent/guardian sign the waiver. Introduce the students to the ukulele, teach them how to hold it correctly, show them the chords, play a few songs and show them the three chords in "You Are My Sunshine." Ask them to practice switching between chords at home. Recommend free tuning apps for those with smart phones.

Second class: Practice chord changes and show the students different strumming patterns. Play things such as C, F, C, F, C or C, C, F, F, G and make up silly lyrics as the class plays along to make it fun. Demonstrate how different strumming patterns change the song. Ask them to practice at home. They can write a song for the class to hear if they want.

Third class: Those who wrote a song can show it to the class. Teach the song “You Are My Sunshine” and demonstrate how the chords and strumming pattern work together to create the music. I also brought a long list of easy ukulele songs to practice, which I found online. Let the students select a song they would like to learn and have a staff member make copies while you continue hosting the class. Have the students practice both songs as homework.

Fourth class: This was a catch-up day. Provide one-on-one help to those who need it to learn "You Are My Sunshine." Give each individual something to focus on when he or she practices at home. Some students pick it up faster than others.

Fifth class: Have the students perfect the song chord changes, learn the strumming pattern and practice playing while standing. Put it all together! If time permits, let them show you their progress on the song they selected during the third class. Encourage the students to practice both songs at home.

Sixth class/showcase: Those who want to participate can do a solo exhibition of the song they learned. Once everyone has done their solo song, they will come together as a group to perform "You Are My Sunshine." Parents, friends and members of the community are invited for snacks while listening to the music.

The parents and children were all very pleased with the program's outcome. Many parents reported back to me that their children had insisted they buy them a ukulele because they wanted to continue learning on their own. In fact, about one month after the class, one mom emailed me a video of her daughter playing Cyndi Lauper's

"Time After Time" on her new ukulele. It was a very proud moment for me as a librarian!

Advice

Ukulele is the easiest instrument to learn. It is also the least expensive! If you have anyone on staff who is musically inclined, this is a wonderful program to offer. It had so much interest that we continued offering the classes to multiple age groups. We have an adult class happening now, and we will offer a teen class in November. If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
ukulele_checkout_agreement.pdf
Document
ukulele_waiver.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



Image





More Programs

Apr 23, 2015
Adults (21 and up)+ |
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Library Music Programming Isn't Just Kidstuff

Audiences:

Audience
Adults (21 and up)
Apr 28, 2015
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$$
Image



A Visit to Chicago Public Library's Maker Lab

Audiences:

Audience
Adults (21 and up)