Senior Socials

Falls City Library & Arts Center

Adults

Senior Socials

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Byline

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Our program provides space and activities for seniors to meet and socialize with one another. We meet weekly for crafts, games, movies, special speakers, chair exercise, and more.

Advanced Planning

This program was funded by the Peggy Barber Tribute Grant, with the goal of providing time and space for senior citizens to combat senior isolation. We were providing monthly crafting for a group of senior women, mostly widows. Several would comment that the crafting day was the only time they really left their house

to socialize. We wanted to do more, but didn't have the funds... and then the grant opportunity arose.

We went to work, discussing with the original group and other seniors (as well as local medical personnel, social service agencies, and library patrons) the specifics of what seniors wanted and what we could provide. The grant application was completed and we WON!

Materials and supplies were purchased from Amazon. A calendar of events was created. We are a small, rural library with limited staff, so only one staff person was involved in putting the program together.

An unexpected challenge is more personal; I have become very attached to the seniors participating in our program. We unexpectedly had someone pass away last fall and it was heartbreaking. We all grieved, and several people stopped coming to our group - I feared they and potentially others would stop coming altogether. Fortunately, with a little time, they all returned, and we now have more attendees than ever.

Marketing

Press releases were shared with local newspapers, radio stations, and cable stations. Fliers were created and shared with local medical offices, social service agencies, and community bulletin boards. The Chamber of Commerce shares our fliers in their weekly email. We regularly use social media, as well as our weekly email list.

Despite reaching out through various media, regularly sharing on social media pages, displaying fliers on community notice boards, and sharing info in weekly library and Chamber of Commerce emails, we still have people comment that they didn't know the program existed. We have a great group, but always room for more.

Budgeting

Funds were spent with the intention of allowing the program to continue indefinitely. We purchased a large TV/DVD player/DVDs/cart to use for our movie days, chair

exercise DVDs, streaming specials, and speakers.

We purchased a popcorn machine and accessories, a coffee carafe, a hot pot, tea, coffee, cups, etc. We purchased a variety of games (BINGO is the fave) and puzzles (large print games and large piece puzzles). Crafting supplies, both consumable (craft kits, paper, paints, etc.) and non-consumable (glue guns, scissors, etc.), were also purchased. Many of the items purchased are certainly not necessary for the program (the popcorn maker/beverage station/etc.) and could have been cut had the funds not been available.

However, the smell of the popcorn alone will often bring others into our movie day program. We feel it was well worth the cost.

Day-of-event Activity

We set up weekly. We have a program room we use and set up for the day's activity. I am the only staff member to lead the program on a regular basis, however, our director can step in if necessary. Fortunately, our group has also become more self-sufficient and can run game weeks independently if need be. Craft week takes the most setup. I try to have samples made up at least a month in advance so I can offer a photo in our advertising.

Program Execution

Attendance varies widely depending on the activity. Chair exercise is the most popular - in fact, it has developed into a secondary program that meets three times each week, averaging 14 attendees. This group was even featured on the NebraskaNewsNetwork as part of their Stretch Across Nebraska campaign. Game weeks average eight people. Craft weeks average eight. Movie day averages six.

I regularly ask for feedback and encourage suggestions or advice. Our participants are so polite and don't seem to want to share anything but positive words. They appreciate the program and did share concern that it would end at the end of the grant year. We are not ending. As long as I am here and as long as they keep coming, our program will continue.

We have mostly women attending and I would love to recruit more men to participate. Each Monday, after our program, the group gets together at a restaurant across the street for lunch. They have bonded in such a beautiful way.

Advice

If you have the capabilities to offer such a program, dive in. Do your research. Get to know your potential audience and ask them which activities they would like to participate in.

My professional experience is with children, so offering a senior program was a bit of a stretch for me, but I can honestly say that I look forward to this program each week more than any other.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
Senior Socials year in review.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



More Programs

Dec 16, 2024
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image



Let the Good Times Roll Retirement Fair

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Oct 23, 2024
Intergenerational+ | $
Image



Portraits by Primary Schoolers

Audiences:

Intergenerational
Mar 13, 2024
Tweens (10-12)+ | □□
Image



Intergenerational Book Club

Audiences:

Tweens (10-12)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational