'Star Wars' Celebration

Burbank Public Library

Children

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

'Star Wars' Celebration

Feb 3, 2016

$251-500

$$
Byline

Carey Vance, Reference Supervisor, and Jen Ullrich, Librarian, Burbank (Calif.) Public Library

The “Star Wars” Celebration was an all-ages event celebrating the popular films, featuring costumed volunteers, trivia, prizes and crafts.

Advanced Planning

Our goal was to attract residents of Burbank to the library by celebrating and promoting interest in the awesomeness that is “Star Wars.” We hoped that the celebration would also encourage people to sign up for library cards, promote early reading habits, educate attendees about the great free services available to them, and ultimately foster a sense of community.

We began planning in July, five months before the program. Our reference supervisor and a reference librarian began brainstorming about the various activities that could be available at the program (passive and interactive), as well as thinking about budget and prizes/goodie bags. We also reached out to “Star Wars”-based costuming fan clubs Rebel Legion and the 501st Legion to get on their calendars. For further inspiration, we searched online and attended the California Library Association 2015 conference panel on “Star Wars” programs.

The only unexpected challenge was being unable to reach the Rebel Legion after they had approved our event. As such, the costumed volunteers were solely from the Dark Side of the Force, but we were incredibly grateful to have them.

Marketing

We promoted the event to our targeted audience through fliers, posters, displays and information placed in the library's print and digital newsletters. We promoted it on the library’s website, the city’s calendar of events page, and talked it up to patrons whenever they came to the reference desk looking for a “Star Wars” DVD.

We also utilized social media to promote the event and drum up even more interest, primarily on Facebook, but also on Twitter.

Budgeting

The only cost associated with the program was purchasing prizes and giveaways. We ransacked all of our local Target's dollar bin sections for "Star Wars"-related merchandise as items to include in goodie bags for the first 100 attendees, as well as prizes for trivia winners and our Lego Guessing Jar contest.

Fortunately, the decorations we utilized were from previous "Star Wars"-related programs, and the materials we used were items we already had in our children's department (crayons, scissors, construction paper, etc.) so we didn't have to purchase anything for the activities, and the costumed volunteers that attended our program were also free.

If a library wanted to implement a similar program and cut costs, they could simply reduce the number of prizes and/or giveaways.

Day-of-event Activity

Staff at our Buena Vista Branch set up tables for us the night before the program. On the day of the event, the reference supervisor and reference librarian arrived three hours in advance to hang up decorations, spread out all of the materials on the various tables, and hang signage to direct people as to where the line for entry began.

We also made sure to have a clean area where our costumed volunteers could get ready, and made sure to have fresh coffee, water and snacks on hand for them. One additional librarian met up with them an hour before the program, as did four volunteers.

Program Execution

The program went very smoothly. People lined up where they were supposed to, and all went according to plan. People made Yoda ear headbands, folded "Star Wars"-themed origami, colored handouts, played trivia, guessed at the "Star Wars" Lego jar, wrote their favorite things about "Star Wars" and posted it on our giant sign, took photos with each other (many came in costume, which we encouraged), as well

as the costumed volunteers (we brought them in about 20 minutes after the program began).

We had about 250 people attend. We handed out goodie bags to the first 100 attendees, prizes to those that answered trivia questions, and gave bags to those that arrived in costume. People were thanking us for hosting the program throughout the evening, some even making a point to locate staff and tell us how much fun they had before leaving. The costumed volunteers mentioned how much fun they had with the children as well. I think we absolutely achieved our goals.

Advice

We would absolutely recommend contacting the 501st Legion (and the Rebel Legion as well!) to have them come to your program. They are a nonprofit organization, and costumed volunteers will show up to your program, much to the delight of everyone, for free. They are an invaluable resource - just make sure to contact them several months in advance as they are in high demand.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
star_wars_2015_flier.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

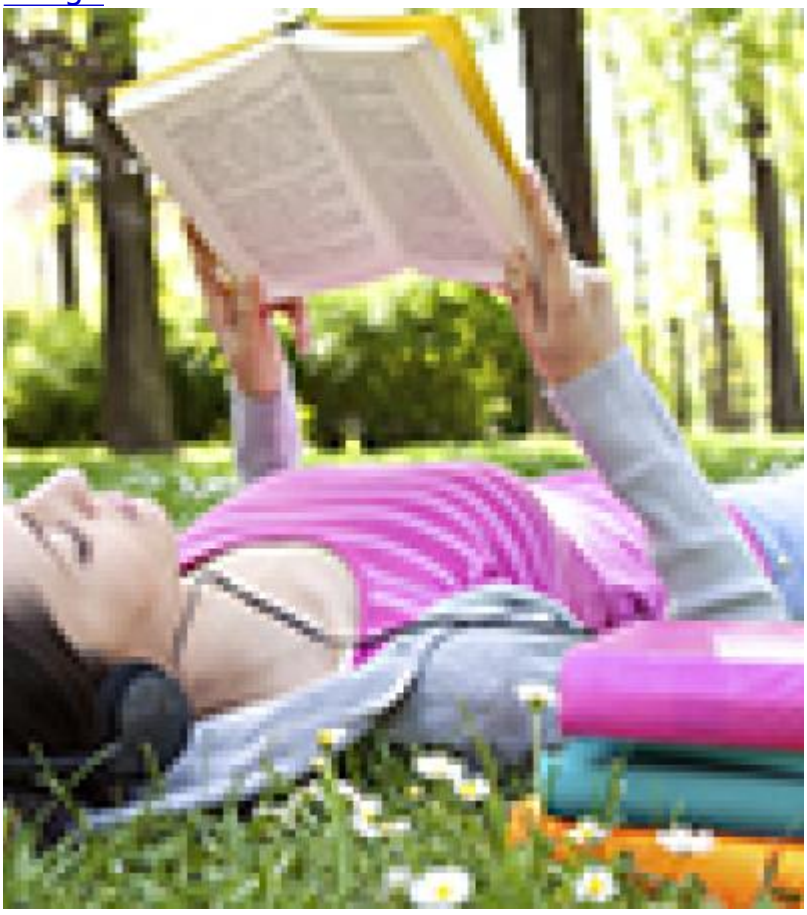
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Spring Teen Programming Ideas

Audiences:

Audience

Young Adult (17 - 20)
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Adults (21 and up)+ | $
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'Downton Abbey' Viewing and Tea

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)