Free Trees

Bedford Public Library

Children

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Free Trees

Feb 16, 2016

$101-250

$$
Byline

Linda Trinkle, Marketing Specialist, Bedford (Ind.) Public Library

We host Free Trees every year on or near Earth Day as part of our National Library Week celebration. The program is very popular and brings people into the library who have never been inside it before. We usually give out small trees such as

flowering dogwood and redbud. This year we will give away 500 trees. Our state Department of Natural Resources sells tree seedlings at around $30 per 100; we order the trees in October and pick them up at the nursery in April. A community partner has paid for the trees for the past two years.

Advanced Planning

Trees must be ordered in October of the previous year. In preparation of the event, we create a tree planting guide to be given with each tree. We strive to educate customers about how to plant and care for a tree seedling, while improving our environment.

The trees that are given out are year old seedlings, most of them ranging from two to three feet tall.

Marketing

This year, we will mention the Earth Day Network's goal of planting over 7 billion trees by Earth Day's 50th anniversary in 2020. We believe that many people are concerned about the environment and would like to do their part to help our planet, so we will emphasize this aspect of our program.

We begin marketing the program three weeks out, but many people look forward to the event and check out the events calendar on our website farther in advance. We put the Free Trees program on the calendar at the beginning of the year. This event is hugely popular.

Budgeting

Our community partner pays for the trees, and we send our property manager to the nursery about 20 miles away to get them. We have volunteers package each seedling in a plastic bag the day before the giveaway, so there's the cost of the plastic bags.

We also print half-sheet fliers explaining how to plant the trees. When we first started giving away trees, the library paid for them, and we only purchased 200 trees. Since then, the program has become so popular that we've more than doubled that amount of trees we distribute.

Day-of-event Activity

We set up a table at the end of a long hallway where people will get their trees. The line of people goes past our circulation desk and down the hallway. Our marketing specialist has a table set up on the route, which has an iPad on it showing a movie downloaded from our website. The video we choose to play is typically a popular children's movie, since we want to pull their attention to our downloadable movie database.

Signs and people talking about upcoming events are also part of the activity going on during that day. Last year, our marketing specialist took a one-question survey, "Do you know how much it costs to get a library card?" The answers received were illuminating as many people in the community didn't know how much a library card cost.

Program Execution

Free Trees is a very easy program to facilitate. Customers leave happy and with more knowledge about the library than they may have had before they arrived. We hear many comments expressing appreciation for the program and for our library in general. Our main goal is to get people into the library and to distribute all of our trees. We meet our goals every year.

Advice

Get a community partner and have fun.

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

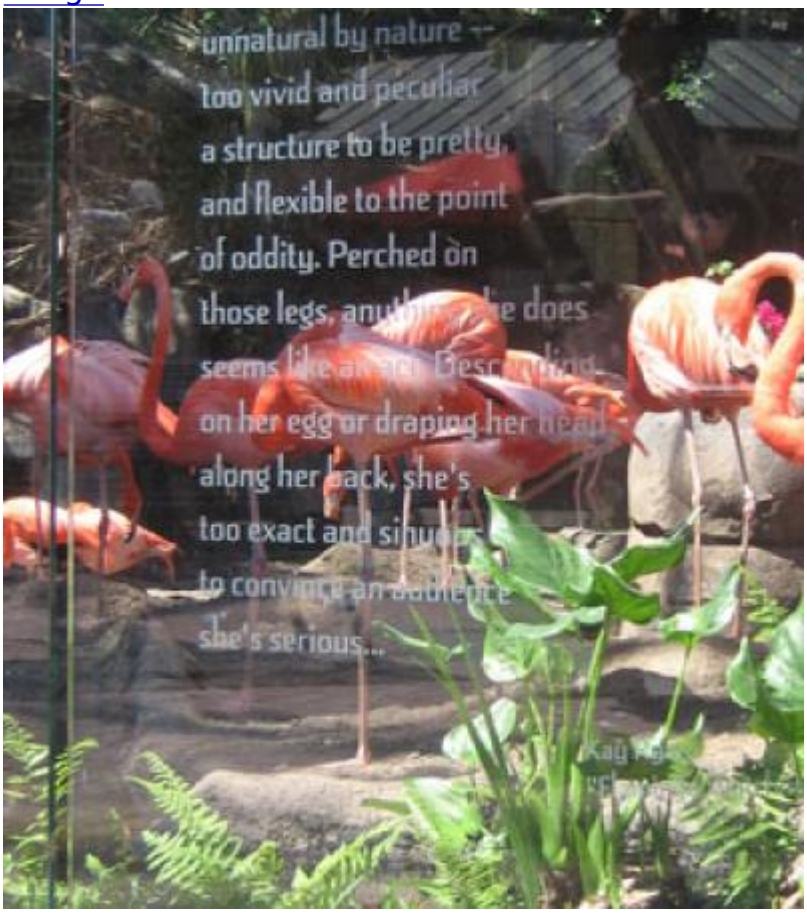
Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

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