Galena LitFest

Galena Public Library

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Galena LitFest

Mar 9, 2016

$1,001-2,500

$$$
Byline

Larissa Distler, Adult Services Librarian, Galena (Ill.) Public Library

Galena LitFest is a daylong event that seeks to elevate literary culture in the area and beyond. Throughout the day we showcase local authors, host writers' workshops and coordinate presentations.

Advanced Planning

In January 2016 we held our second LitFest, so we already had an idea of what was ahead. We started looking for presenters in June, six months before the event. About the same time, we also started looking for funding and presented the idea to the Friends of the Library. The presenters and funding were locked down by October, and then we started accepting applications from authors and booksellers to take part in the vendor fair.

In seeking out authors, we were still rather new at inviting "high-profile" speakers. First I contacted agents of several authors we thought we might be interested in, but we found the price tag on most of them was way out of our budget. So we began brainstorming to find authors/presenters within our price range.

We knew we wanted to have the "Soon to be Famous Illinois Author," who is chosen by the Illinois State Library each year and heavily endorsed by our library system (Reaching Across Illinois Library System, or RAILS). We also decided to have a writers workshop during the day due to the popularity of such events in our library, and we knew that an Iowa Writers' Workshop graduate would draw a decent crowd. So I contacted the Workshop and they connected me with a recent graduate.

Finding our keynote speaker, Thomas Armstrong (author of "Autobiography of a Freedom Rider: My Life as a Foot Soldier for Civil Rights"), was totally serendipitous. He called us because he was looking for venues in which to speak, and he happened to be a perfect fit for us.

For all of our presenters, we offered vendor space at the Literary Vendor Fair free of charge, along with lunch, dinner and one night's stay at the hotel.

To find vendors for the Literary Vendor Fair, I sent emails to contacts I already had, sent press releases to local papers, put up posters, used social media and connected with local organizations to help spread the word. We ended up with 13 vendors that varied quite a bit, from the paranormal, to literary, to yoga/spiritualism to booksellers with new and/or vintage books. Vendors were charged $45 for their table space, and vendor space was open to whomever wished to apply.

Marketing

For this event we had to reach out to tourists as well as community members, so we partnered with VisitGalena.org, a new destination marketing organization for the City of Galena, which advised us and helped get the word out. We also sent information to newspapers and publications throughout the tristate area (Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa), put up posters all over town, communicated with writers' workshops and communities, encouraged vendors to share on social media, created newsletters and submitted to radio stations.

We were successful in our marketing. When visitors signed in we asked them how they heard about us, and the answers varied greatly among all the sources we used.

Budgeting

Our Friends group sponsored the event with $2,000. We were extremely lucky to receive this. Most of the money was spent on the presenters and marketing.

For someone just starting out with an event like this, I would suggest finding presenters that are more on the inexpensive side by searching out who may be available locally.

Day-of-event Activity

We were lucky to be able to partner with a local hotel, so the hotel staff handled a lot of the set-up. Three staff members were on duty throughout the day. **(View the event brochure under Attachments at right.)**

Program Execution

We opened the event at 11 a.m. with a Literary Vendor Fair, which consisted of local authors and booksellers. Our Friends group also set up a table where they collected memberships, sold used books and exhibited their accomplishments. The library also set up a table with swag and displays of services and programs. Our board members

helped us staff the tables.

The event was a success, with 126 total people attending LitFest events throughout the day.

Advice

My biggest advice is to start small. We always have lofty ideas in mind, but have to cut back and make realistic goals.

The great thing about a LitFest is that it can be changed and adapted to the audience/venue needs year after year. So if a portion of it just doesn't go over very well, it can be morphed into something else the next year. We love that, with LitFest, we get a chance to work face-to-face with authors and local businesses. Have fun with it and get the community involved.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
litfest_brochure_2016.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

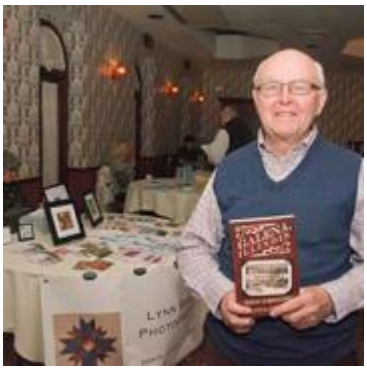
- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images

Image







More Programs

Jun 19, 2009
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ |
Image



Authors @ your library

Audiences:

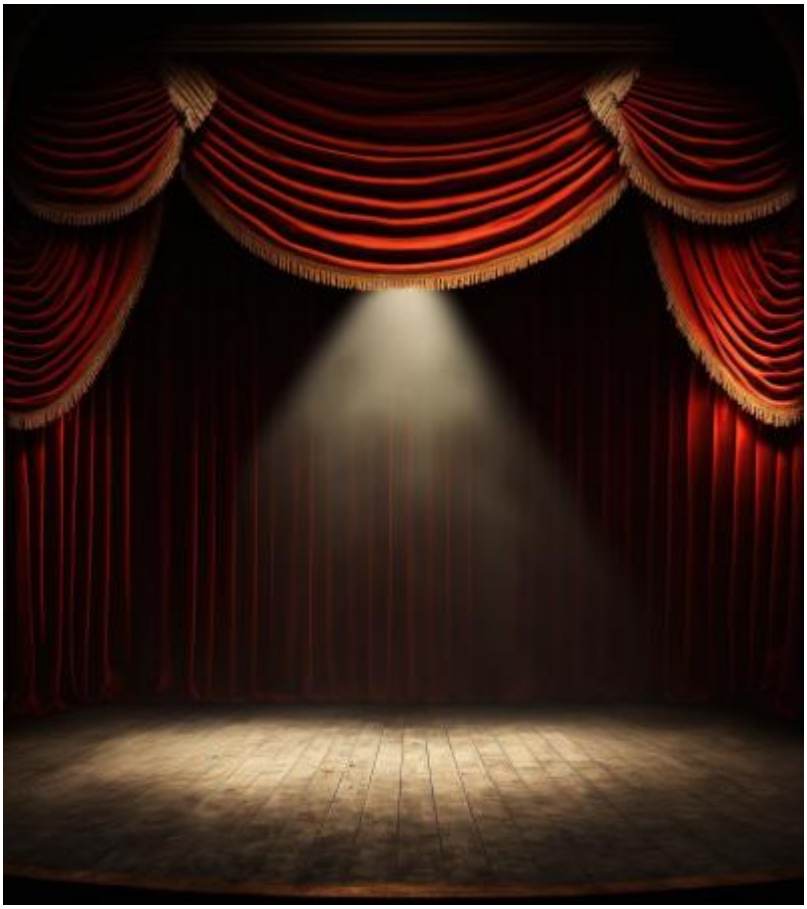
Audience
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Jan 11, 2012
Children (9 and under)+ |
Image



Author Events Made Easy

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Mar 24, 2015
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $$$
Image



Page to Stage

Audiences:

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