The Journeys of my Life / Viajes de mi Vida

Loudoun County Public Library

Children

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Young Adult

The Journeys of my Life / Viajes de mi Vida

Apr 22, 2016

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Byline

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The Journeys of my Life / Viajes de mi Vida project was a joint initiative between Loudoun County Public Library and Loudoun County Public Schools. It was developed as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)/ALA grant Latino

Americans: 500 Years of History, awarded to Loudoun County Public Library (the only awardee of the grant in the state of Virginia). The project also fulfilled the purpose of Loudoun County Public Schools' One to the World initiative, which encourages students to address a problem, create a product and connect with the world.

Seventy students at Park View High School (PVHS), working with award-winning Latino artist John Parra, met for two full days to produce original stories and illustrations to be made into bilingual picture books. PVHS is located in Sterling, Va., an area of Loudoun County where 52 percent of the population are recent immigrants with little or no English language skills.

The Park View students developed stories describing their personal journeys, important Latino role models and historical events that support Latino history and culture. These books were presented by the students to the Honorable Francisco Altschul, ambassador of El Salvador to the United States, who would later deliver them to the Biblioteca Luz Children's Library in El Salvador. The student authors and illustrators read their books during story times at the public library branches and the preschool at PVHS, and copies of the books are available to borrow at both locations. The spring 2016 edition of "Motivos" magazine, a young adult bilingual publication, will feature the Journeys of my Life / Viajes de mi Vida project.

Advanced Planning

The goal of the project was to blend the themes of the Latino Americans grant into a visual and culturally empowering project with the students at PVHS. Journeys of My Life / Viajes de mi Vida also supported the school system's One to the World initiative, which encourages students to explore and learn from the world around them. The public library has a long history of working with PVHS and its library staff. All parties involved saw the project as an excellent partnership and welcomed the opportunity to organize and present the workshops and book development.

The planning began two months prior to the two-day bookmaking workshops. We booked John Parra to visit for two days, and the PVHS librarians worked with faculty to find interested students and to research book publishing options. Parent permission forms (to miss two days of classes) were created, sent home and collected before the workshop's start. Book publishers were all charging too much,

so we chose an online photo album-making website, which fit our needs perfectly.

Marketing

Students at PVHS were invited by the school librarians and faculty to be artists and writers. Seventy students took part in the two-day workshops, with art, English and ELL teachers and librarians (school and public) present. Nearly every student asked to participate was enthusiastic about being asked and about working on the project, while school faculty was happy to provide support.

Budgeting

Costs associated with Journeys of my Life / Viajes de mi Vida were for the artist-in-residence, John Parra, and the book-making. The Loudoun Library Foundation, Inc. contributed to the project, as were funds from the LA500 grant. (Our grant was $3,000 total.) Suggestions for cost-cutting include using an online publisher like Picaboo instead of a traditional book printer. The images come out very crisp and the paper is sturdy.

Day-of-event Activity

The program was planned with the PVHS English and Art Departments and public and school librarians. Artist/illustrator John Parra presented to the students a detailed overview of the two days of work, supply requirements, expectations and outcomes. The themes of Parra’s books reinforced the Latino American: 500 Years of History message. Students had spent time before the bookmaking days viewing bilingual children’s books, as well as reading resource materials on Latino Americans and other publications that enhanced the project.

Two Loudoun County Public Library staff members were assigned to the project, and they, along with school librarians from PVHS, worked with students on preparing the books for publication both during the two-day workshops as well as in the months following, ensuring the text was translated properly into English and Spanish, and

that the images were finalized by the illustrators. We faced a challenge with school closings for holidays and weather, for which the schools lost nine days in January and four in February. Because of that lost time, students and teachers felt pressed to focus on curriculum more so than extracurricular activities like this one.

Program Execution

Journeys of my Life / Viajes de mi Vida achieved the goal set to bring students together to celebrate the richness of the Latino American experience, to portray these objectives through books and to share their accomplishments globally. Over 70 teens worked on the books, and countless children will experience the books once they are on the shelves in Loudoun County Public Library and the Biblioteca Luz Children's Library in El Salvador. **(View story excerpts under Attachments at right.)**

Further illustrating the success of this book project, the partners have been invited to present at the Loudoun County Board of Education, Loudoun County Public Library Board of Trustees, and to have the story of the project published in "Motivos" magazine. More than 100 people met for two full days to discover, plan and create successfully.

Advice

Journeys of my Life / Viajes de mi Vida had teens working together to make books that reflected their heritage and ethnic contributions. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the project resulted in the highest degree of accomplishment. **(View photos of the participants under Photo Slideshow at right.)**

My advice is to be patient with teens, but to also have a strict outline of expectations (including deadlines and action items) set in place prior to the program's start. That way the participating teens are clear about what is expected of them and when.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
story_excerpt_1.pdf
Document
story_excerpt_2.pdf
Document
story_excerpt_3.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images





Image









More Programs

Oct 2, 2012
Children (9 and under)+ |

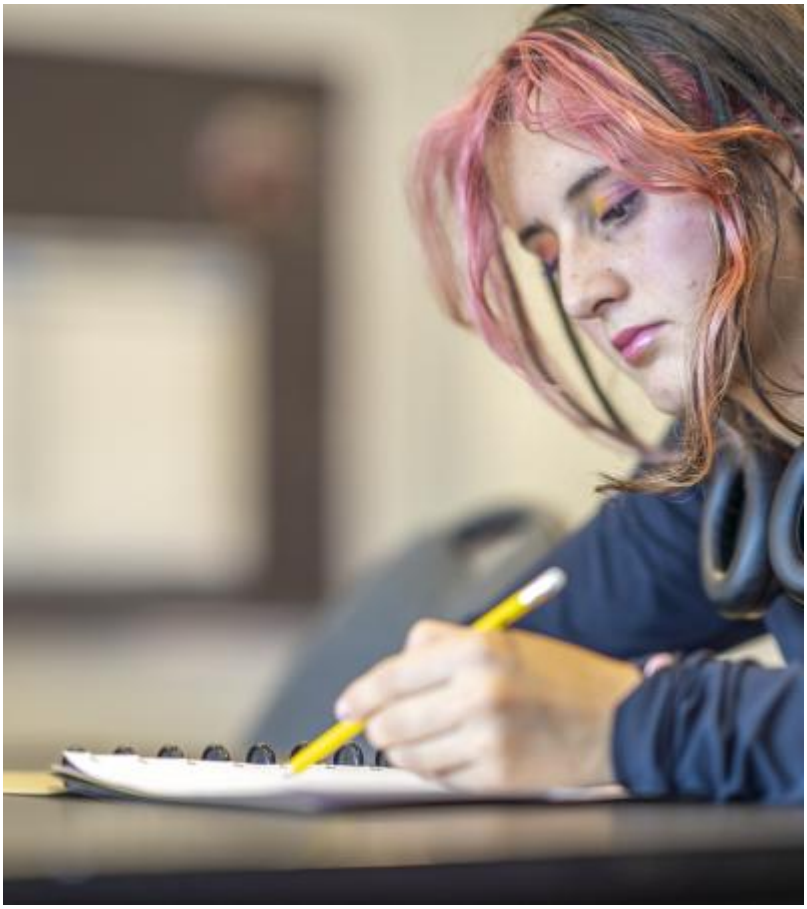
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Bring Generations Together through Storytelling

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Intergenerational
Mar 19, 2015
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $$
Image



Teen Art Show

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Mar 23, 2016
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$$
Image



A Celebration of Latino Lives in Florida

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)