ATLAS: At The Library After School

MacDonald Public Library

Children

ATLAS: At The Library After School

May 27, 2016

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Byline

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Third- through sixth-graders meet at the library on the second Wednesday of every month for ATLAS (At the Library After School). The topic of the event changes monthly. Some popular themes have included book release parties, STEM programs (such as BrushBots and ArtBots), Minute to Win It games and our Chocolate Olympics. I've been doing this program monthly during the school year since I started this position in 2010.

Advanced Planning

My first step is choosing a theme for the month. I try to do this about two months in advance. My primary goal is to get the kids into the library and having fun. My secondary goal is to help them learn a little about whatever the chosen topic is.

One of the most common places I look for theme ideas has been other children's librarians' blogs. Many of these blogs are linked to on my blog, Ms. Kelly at the Library. I also sometimes use popular book and media tie-ins as a theme (such as Minecraft, Mario Brothers and Diary of a Wimpy Kid). Random holidays are also a great source of popular themes. For instance, we will soon be celebrating Zombie Awareness Month with a zombie-themed party.

Once I have my theme I come up with as many accompanying activities as possible. These activities may be ones I've seen on other blogs or web searches, or they may be themed twists on common games I know the kids like. The typical format for many themes involves a little discussion of the theme at the beginning, followed by two or three active games (such as tag or relay races), a craft and snack. For other themes, such as Minute to Win It, I have to come up with several station ideas. When it comes to STEM programs such as BrushBots or ArtBots, the planning mainly involves getting the materials beforehand and testing to see how they will work.

I decide on specific activities and the order of the program about a week ahead of time. I also prepare craft supplies at that point, if necessary. The day before the program the only thing I need to do is make reminder calls to all the kids who have registered to attend.

Marketing

I advertise primarily with in-house fliers and our library website. I also post events on our library's Facebook page, in the school newsletters of a few of our closest schools, and in our local paper. Being a small library I have many regulars who come each month.

Budgeting

The only costs associated with the majority of my ATLAS programs are snacks and random craft supplies. Usually this comes to $10 to $20. To cut costs further, snacks could be eliminated and replaced with another game or activity.

Day-of-event Activity

I am the only children's librarian at my library, so I set up for all events myself. This usually involves arranging the tables in our meeting room and gathering all necessary supplies for the games and crafts. I also get together a table of books based on the theme, for the kids to check out after the program. It usually takes about half an hour.

Program Execution

My ATLAS programs usually last about an hour, and we have 8 to 12 kids attend. The kids arrive, and we proceed through the discussion, games and craft as a group. They always seem to have fun and learn a little bit about whatever topic we are covering. I've received positive feedback from kids and parents alike throughout the years.

Advice

Look to your kids for theme ideas. If they are interested in a topic try doing something based on that interest. It is a great way to start out and entice new kids to attend your programs.

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

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images







Image



More Programs

Mar 16, 2016

Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | □□

Image

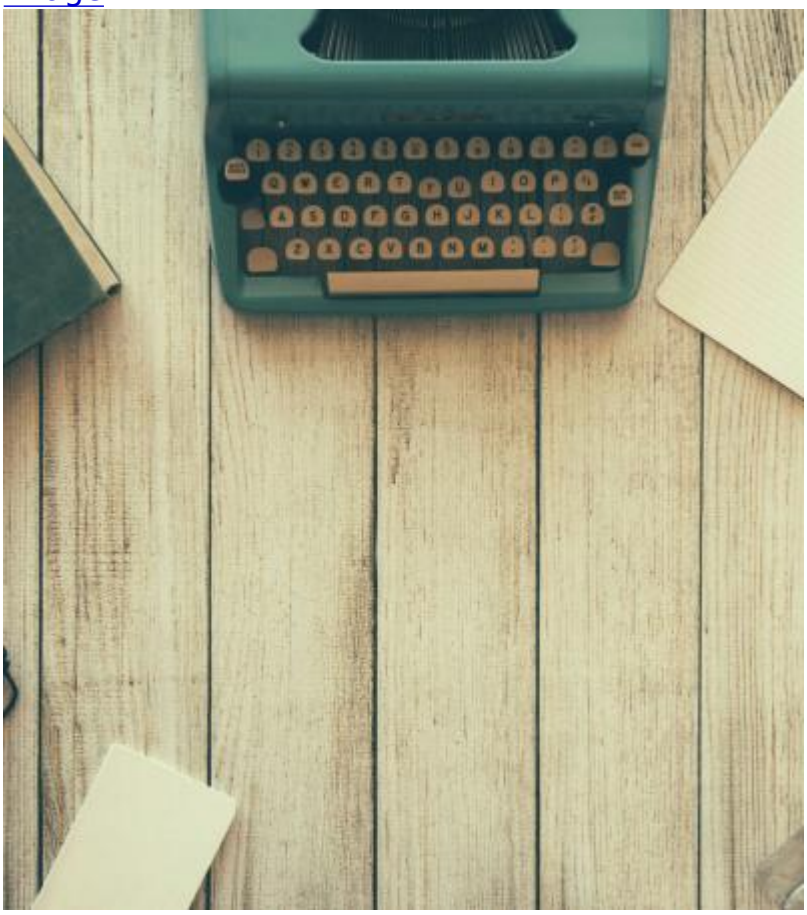


High School Chess Team Sparks Library Program

Audiences:

Audience

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
May 23, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



WRITE Stuff Writing Club

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Oct 7, 2015
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



Young Entrepreneur Club

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)