Rain Barrel Art and Auction

Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library

Children

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Young Adult

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Adults

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Intergenerational

Rain Barrel Art and Auction

Sep 7, 2016

$51-100

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Byline

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For the past three years, the Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library (EVPL) has participated in a community rain barrel project called Dasani – Every Drop Counts. This event is sponsored by The City of Evansville Storm Water Management District, a division of the City Engineer's Office, in partnership with Coca-Cola Refreshments, which provides empty syrup drums.

The syrup drums are converted into rain barrels as part of an annual auction. Local organizations, schools, nonprofits and community members are then invited to decorate barrels. All proceeds from the auction go toward supporting local nonprofits. The project raises awareness of water conservation and the environmental pollution caused by rainwater runoff.

The rain barrel art and auction program was first featured on The Library as Incubator Project on March 7, 2016. The article includes a toolkit featuring resources about rain barrel art.

Marketing

Marketing for Dasani – Every Drop Counts is organized by the City Engineer's Office in partnership with hosting institutions and other community organizations. The Storm Water Management Office sends out press releases and newspaper articles advertising for the event. This promotion garners support and participation from local organizations. **(A full list of participating organizations can be found under Attachments at right.)** The office also posts photographs of completed rain barrels on their website in advance of the auction.

The library uses Twitter and Facebook to raise awareness of the auction. The library's barrels have also been displayed on-site with information about the rain barrel program.

Additionally, partnering organizations such as the Mesker Park Zoo and Haynie's Corner Arts District help promote the event and painted barrels online. The more participating organizations you have, the greater potential audience they may reach through social media and other marketing methods.

The spring 2016 Funk in the City Art Festival included live painting of barrels as a way to promote the auction. The festival is held in the spring and fall and features

nearly 50 arts and craft vendors.

Budgeting

This community initiative would not be possible without the support of Coca-Cola, who generously donates their empty syrup barrels for this fundraiser. Libraries or communities interested in developing a similar program should seek support from business partners. Rain barrels can be purchased from a variety of vendors. The Cary Company offers a wide selection of 55-gallon drums, including a white, tight-head, plastic drum. This drum closely resembles the barrels donated by Coca-Cola and cost $62.61 per unit.

Additional materials include paint brushes, primer, paint and protective finish/semi-gloss, all of which can be pur at hardware stores. A gallon of the primer and semi-gloss will cost between $15 and $20 per can. Sample primer includes Valspar and Zinsser and a sample semi-gloss includes Ultra Cover Premium Latex Paint.

One of the most important decisions comes when choosing paint. Exterior flat paint can sustain weather conditions, and stores often sell eight-ounce sample sizes. The sample sizes can be purchased between $3.48 and $4.98. Participants should know their palette before shopping, so as to determine budget in advance.

A solid clear coat finish is imperative to protecting the finished product from damage. Semi-gloss that can be applied with a brush is ideal as spray gloss leaves a rough, uneven finish. Such protection may also be needed over the life of the barrel, so organizations may wish to advise participants to retreat their purchased barrels every year or two.

Other materials such as brushes, stencils, masking tape and other supplies are included in a program kit featured on the Library as Incubator website. Most of these materials can be purchased for less than $10.

Lastly, the City Engineer’s Office has provided the faucet and overflow components that control the flow of water. Home Depot sells a DIY rain barrel diverter and parts kit for $32.99. This may be an option, if needed.

In total, the library spends about $100 each year on paint, primer, and other supplies. Altogether, we've raised close to $1,100 from the sale of the barrels over

the three years we've participated.

Program Execution

Dasani – Every Drop Counts was first launched in 2011 as a way to raise awareness of environmental issues within the community. The library has participated in the event in several ways. These projects are described in detail below.

At-Risk Teenagers

Since 2013, the Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library has partnered with the Youth Care Center in Evansville, Ind., to decorate the barrels. The Youth Care Center (YCC) is a juvenile correction facility for young men and women between the ages of 12 and 17. During the course of the rain barrel project, teenagers learned about rain conservation, water scarcity, water consumption and the commodification of natural resources.

These programs are designed to strengthen the media literacy skills of at-risk teenagers. In "The Future of Library Services For and With Teens," the Young Adult Library Services Association states that media literacy is one of the core skills required of literacy education today. The organization argues that today's teens need to understand media messages across a variety of formats including advertisements, websites, film and other types of visual culture. To be information literate in the 21st century, one must have an understanding of media messages in addition to traditional texts.

With this in mind, teenagers at the YCC learned to deconstruct water advertisements from companies like Dasani, Fiji and Evian. They analyzed water advertisements and identified ways companies market their bottled water. These tactics included themes related to beauty and health, nature and "the fountain of youth."

Additionally, the students painted, stenciled and decorated the barrels. Other activities included a water taste test, whereby teens compared the taste of various bottled waters to tap water. Books, like Stephen Leahy's "Your Water Footprint: The Shocking Facts about How Much Water We Use to Make Everyday Products," were used to instruct teenagers on the environmental impacts of water consumption.

Lastly, students discussed the George Miller's film "Mad Max: Fury Road" as it relates to water wars and global warming. Staff screened news videos about water wars taking place throughout the world and compared them to Miller's film. Many of these videos are accessible via YouTube and highlight the realities of Miller's wasteland.

Staff Participation

In addition to the Youth Care Center, the creative staff at the EVPL has participated in this event by painting various barrels of their own. Some rain barrels have been inspired by picture books, while others have been decorated with butterflies and other natural elements. **(View photos of some of the decorated barrels under Videos and Images at right.)**

For example, one staff member painted a barrel inspired by Dr. Seuss's "The Lorax." This famous children's book centers on the destruction of the environment and the Lorax who speaks on behalf of the trees.

Staff participation each year has a great spirit of camaraderie as barrels are painted in several locations throughout our eight locations. Upon completion, the barrels are displayed at our Oaklyn and Central Library branches. Both buildings contain elements of sustainable design. The Central Library's roof has a solar panel system, while the Oaklyn branch is built into the side of a hill and has a green roof with wildflowers.

Children's Program

Another program was tailored towards early childhood literacy and children's understanding of the environment. Children were asked to paint geometric shapes over an entire barrel. The shapes were marked off by masking tape resulting in a geometric pattern. When the shapes dried, children then painted colorful fish over the rain barrel. The project taught kids about rain water and allowed them to explore their aesthetic sensibilities. A great book to inspire this type of activity for kids is April Pulley Sayre's "Raindrops Roll".

Community Auction

Party for the Planet, Mesker Park Zoo and Botanical Garden (2013-2015): The first two years the library participated, the rain barrel auction was held at

Mesker Park Zoo and Botanical Garden. The auction was part of a larger event called Party for the Planet. This nationwide event is the largest combined Earth Day celebration in North America. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums celebrates it each year as a way to encourage care and conservation of our planet.

Haynie's Corner, First Fridays (2016): The 2016 public auction was held at Haynie's Corner as part of the First Fridays art series. Haynie's Corner is a neighborhood in Evansville that is located within the arts district. It houses a historic theatre in addition to various locally owned businesses and restaurants. First Fridays is a community event that celebrates the arts throughout summer and includes art exhibits and street vendors in the arts district. Community artists who reside in Haynie's Corner were encouraged to decorate barrels as part of the auction this year.

Advice

As demonstrated above, the rain barrel art and auction program can be implemented with a variety of age groups. Environmental literacy is important to all types of people, regardless of geographic location or age.

The best advice would be to seek out organizations in your community who may have an interest in this type of event. For example, is there a food or beverage company, such as Coca-Cola, who could supply the plastic drums? Is there a zoo or botanical garden that could host the auction? Is there an arts district or arts fair that could inspire such bidding? In addition, what kinds of youth organizations or community groups would enjoy painting the rain barrels? All of these are important questions that could lead a community toward collaborative engagement, while raising awareness of water conservation.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
participanting_groups.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images







Image









Image









Image



More Programs

May 17, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



Ink Floating for Teens

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Jun 2, 2016
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



Library Theater for Fun and Profit

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Aug 3, 2016
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image



Adult Crafternoons

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)