

Giant Harry Potter Cardboard Maze

[Denver Public Library](#)

Children

Giant Harry Potter Cardboard Maze

Sep 9, 2016

\$1,001-2,500

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Your name

Amy Forrester, Children's Librarian, Denver (Colo.) Public Library

Our giant Harry Potter-themed cardboard maze was 75 feet long, 25 feet wide and 6 feet tall, big enough for an adult to walk through. It was the centerpiece for a families-only after-hours party with games, wand-making and [Honeydukes](#) snacks.

The maze was also left up for a week for all customers to explore. The maze encouraged caregiver-child interaction and created a memorable library experience for customers of all ages.

Advanced Planning

My goal was to create something that children and their caregivers could explore together, so I wanted the maze to be big enough for adults to walk through. Several mini-mock-ups were created to assist in planning, which helped as I researched building materials and costs. **(View the maze layout and construction instructions under Attachments at right.)**

Safety was a major concern, so our planning process involved meetings with our facilities and security departments. Paperwork was key, and I created detailed instructions for prepping materials and putting the maze together. Our print and design department created and printed passports for kids to get stamped as they went through the maze. The Children's Library staff is a-maze-ing, and their dedication to teamwork and collaboration was paramount to this project.

Marketing

We promoted our event on the DPL online events calendar, in our print calendar and in social media posts. We also submitted the event to several community calendars. We had over 300 people attend our after-hours party! If we could have gotten some local press coverage I think the numbers would have been even bigger.

Budgeting

I had \$2,000 to spend on this project. Most of it went to purchasing cardboard, although there were some smaller costs for refreshments, activity materials and such. If you wanted to cut costs you could make a smaller maze to reduce on cardboard costs.

Day-of-event Activity

It took us approximately 10 hours with five people working steadily to put the maze together with the prepped materials. This includes the five hours we used to construct 45 maze units the day before the event; these were stored in our

storytime room. The day of the event we had another five hours to assemble the other units and zip-tie them all together.

We had six staff members and eight volunteers at the after-hours party. We had a person to greet customers as they lined up to go through the maze; two people to explain the passport and time out customers in two-minute increments; four staff inside the maze to stamp passports and help in case of emergency (one for each Hogwarts' house); and the remainder to serve snacks, help kids decorate a wand, and play Pin the Sock on Dobby.

Customers could also view the maze from the second- of third-floor balconies. Spacing out maze-goers was super important to avoid traffic jams. It was great to have other activities, as some customers waited in line up to 20 minutes.

Program Execution

Yes, this maze took a ton of planning and staff labor, but it was worth it. From a numbers point of view, it was gratifying to have 300-plus people come to the after-hours party. But it was even more satisfying to see the smiles, hear the laughter and watch our customers find joy in exploring the maze. The maze was also an entry point for staff-customer interaction and encouraged customers to visit our second and third floors to look down on the maze. In short, it was an unforgettable library experience!

We received wonderful feedback, especially during the week people could wander through the maze. I definitely achieved my goal of creating a memorable program that encouraged caregiver-child interactions. Even the most impatient adult melted into a happy child after just a few steps into the maze.

Advice

Make one! They're a ton of work, they require a boatload of planning and organization, but a giant maze is an unforgettable experience for staff and customers alike.

Read more about the Harry Potter Maze in the [ALSC Blog](#), and in the Attachments section at right.

Supporting Materials

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- Feedback (Coming Soon!)
- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

Slideshow Images



Image



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