'Thank You, Thank You Very Much' Senior Citizens' Day Party

Dothan Houston County Library System

Intergenerational

'Thank You, Thank You Very Much' Senior Citizens' Day Party

Oct 10, 2016

$1-50

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Byline

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The "Thank You, Thank You Very Much" Senior Citizens’ Day Party was an Elvis-themed event in honor of older adults to show our appreciation and to highlight the services the library offers seniors. The program, held on a Sunday afternoon, included Elvis-themed Bingo, games and food.

Advanced Planning

Our goals for this program were to reach out to seniors, provide a fun event in their honor and demonstrate the programming and other materials the library offers for older adults. Planning began about a month in advance and involved creating fliers, custom Elvis Bingo boards and decorations.

The Bingo cards were created and printed on cardstock using DLTK's custom Bingo cards. I copied and pasted the card to Microsoft Publisher and then just copy/pasted a picture of Elvis into the "Free" square. The site allows you to customize the title, so I changed it from "Bingo" to "Elvis." The site also has the call numbers. For markers, I just gathered buttons and small scraps of papers. **(See an Elvis Bingo card under Attachments at right.)**

Prior to the event, I also reached out to Covenant Care Hospice. They agreed to help by donating prizes for the games and volunteered to run the program with me. The day before the program, a library volunteer and I baked Elvis-themed goodies. These included some of Elvis' favorite foods like pound cake, peanut butter banana cookies and fried pickles.

Marketing

To promote the party, a PSA was sent to our local media outlets about three weeks in advance. I also emailed an invitation to all senior centers and retirement homes in the county encouraging them to come to the program. Finally, the week of the event, I sent out a second email reminder and posted about the party on our Facebook page.

Budgeting

To go with the theme of the program, I purchased a few Elvis trinkets to give away in grand prize drawings. The prizes included a deck of cards and five shotglasses from Amazon. In total, we spent about $25 on prizes and refreshments.

Day-of-event Activity

On the day of the party, we set up the room and decorated. We had tables that provided resources for learning more about Elvis and another for resources about what the library offers seniors. The Elvis table was decorated with pictures of him throughout his life, his birthplace and Graceland. The refreshment table had images of some of Elvis' albums, which were printed on cardstock.

Additionally, several tables were set up for Elvis Bingo. We also had chairs organized in a circle to play a game, Don't Touch My Blue Suede Shoes, and a laptop to play an Elvis album in the background.

Program Execution

The program started out slowly at first, possibly due to the start time (2 p.m.). However, about 30 minutes into the program, more seniors started showing up. We began the party with several rounds of Elvis Bingo, with prizes provided by our partner, Covenant Care. These prizes included a variety of small trinkets, like candles, lotions, puzzle books, tumblers and promotional items. After a few rounds, we paused to enjoy some refreshments and play a game of Don't Touch My Blue Suede Shoes.

To play Don't Touch My Blue Suede Shoes, the guests sat in a circle of chairs and one person was given a blue suede shoe (which was mine). Once the music started, the players had to pass the shoe around the circle until the music stopped. Whoever was left holding the shoe was then out for the rest of the game. This process was repeated until the last person was standing … well, sitting in this case.

We then played several more rounds of Elvis Bingo and one more round of Don't Touch My Blue Suede Shoes before ending with prize drawings.

Fifteen seniors came and went throughout the two hours of the program. Several of the patrons said they had a lot of fun and enjoyed coming out to the library to visit. We achieved our goal of getting seniors out to the library to see that we offer fun and engaging activities to come together as a community.

Advice

If the program has to be held on a Sunday afternoon, I would recommend starting it at about 3 p.m. instead of 2 p.m. Additionally, if you do an Elvis theme, I would advise making sure the advertisements and fliers are clear if there will be an impersonator. We had a few patrons who expressed disappointment that we didn't have an impersonator like they had assumed we would. Making it clear that there will or won't be an impersonator in your marketing will help to avoid these assumptions. Our fliers indicated there would be Elvis music, which I'm assuming is why some believed we would have an impersonator.

Also, definitely be prepared to play several games of Bingo. The seniors who attended couldn't get enough of playing the game!

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

Supporting Materials

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