Community Threads

Saline County Library

Children

|

Tweens (10-12)

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Community Threads

Oct 25, 2016

Free

Byline
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Our Community Threads program offers gently used clothing, free of charge, to all patrons. Clothing is donated to the library in advance of the program, and on program day we welcome patrons to take as many items as they want.

We have offered this program for the past three years. It gives us an opportunity to help our community and also to bring people through our doors who wouldn't normally come to the library. This allows us to tout the other services we have to offer. And we don't spend a single cent!

Advanced Planning

For a month and a half before the giveaway day, we accept gently used clothing donations from the public. The day before the program we sort all donations into categories, similar to a yard sale. Then we welcome patrons to come in, browse and take anything they want.

I also began saving my own shopping bags about six months before the event, so we wouldn't need to purchase any.

Marketing

This year, we created fliers asking for donations and promoting the event two months beforehand. (**View sample fliers under Attachments at right.)** I also put packets of fliers on top of our book drop and asked patrons to take them out into the community and hang them at local churches or other communal areas.

We used Facebook to stir up interest, and we advertised on local online yard sale and free pages - such as Saline County Free Stuff and Saline County Online Yard Sale - to widen our reach. For the next Community Threads program, we also plan to post to our local pages of craigslist and Freecycle, to widen our marketing reach. We had a lot of great feedback, and 47 of the 50 flyer packets I made were taken out into the community.

Budgeting

There is no cost for this event, aside from the time worked by two staff members. All clothing is donated; we already had tables and clothing racks to use; and I had saved up plenty of shopping bags.

Day-of-event Activity

Set-up for this event took two days. The day before the event we put out the tables, assembled the clothing racks and moved the donations from our storage area to our meeting room. We then went through every item to check for tears or stains and to sort items by size.

The day of the event, we finished creating and placing signage. Two staff members stayed in the room all day to make sure things stayed organized and to bag items for patrons, as well as to promote our other library services.

Program Execution

The program ran from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and we had a total of 88 people come through the meeting room. This was our third time offering this event, and last year we had 212 people attend, so this year’s program was bit of a drop. We're blaming that on a football game and beautiful weather.

Patrons were incredibly grateful. Someone donated $5 to say thank you for the help. I think we definitely achieved what we set out to do, which is to help people and promote the library.

We've had leftover clothing after each event, and what we've done with it varies. This last time, we only had about 9 trashbags full of leftover clothing, so we put them in our storage room to pull out for the next event. The program before that one, we had 20+ bags and boxes of leftover clothing left, so we donated all of it to a local shop called Helping Hands that’s similar to Salvation Army. If we have any leftover winter gear for kids, like coats and scarves, we donate them to a local kid’s coat drive at one of the churches.

Advice

Recruit as much help as possible to sort donations! The day before the event we could only spare two staff members. Even with two volunteers to help, it still gets pretty overwhelming facing a mountain of clothing.

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

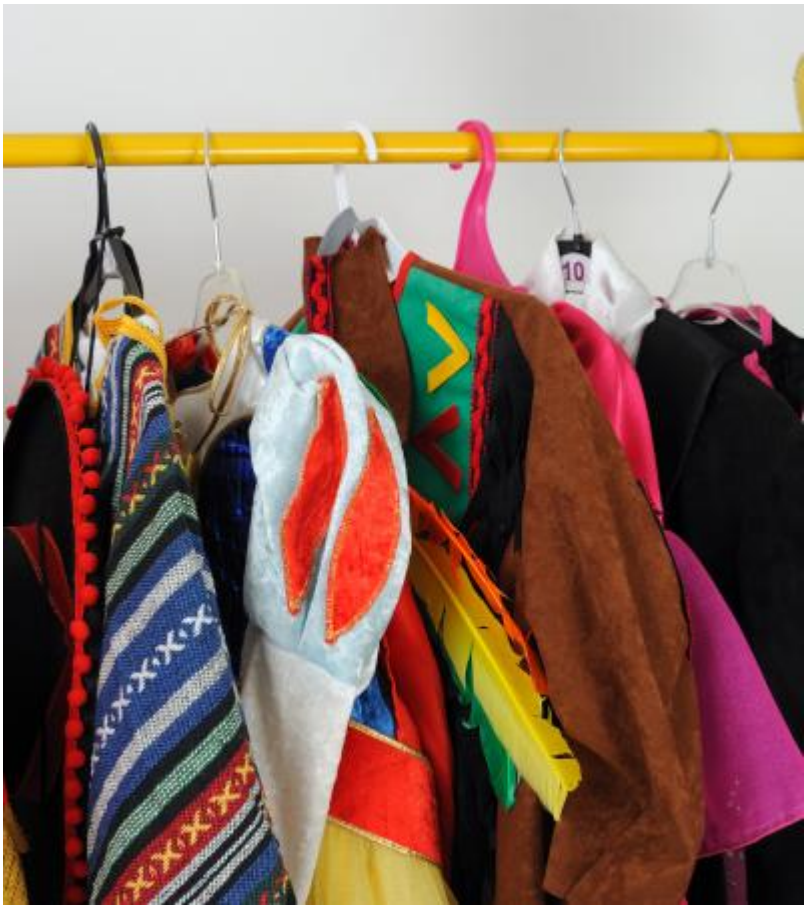
Supporting Materials

Document
comm._threads_flyer_1.pdf
Document
comm._threads_flyer_2.pdf
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Mar 24, 2015
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



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Audiences:

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Young Adult (17 - 20)
Intergenerational
Jun 8, 2015
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image



Seed Swap

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Jul 30, 2015
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $
Image



Once Upon a Formal

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)