Southington Renaissance Faire

Southington Public Library

Children

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Southington Renaissance Faire

Dec 28, 2016

$501-1000

$$$
Byline

Molly Virello, Children's Librarian; Cindy Wall, Head of Children's Services, Southington (Conn.) Public Library

The Southington Renaissance Faire was a free half-day encounter with the history, mystery and magic of the Middle Ages enjoyed by more than 500 attendees.

Children and adults watched a fighting demonstration and then had a chance to “fight the knight”; were serenaded by medieval-themed music; and crafted stained-glass windows, dragon eyes and flying dragons. Little ones attended Ye Olde Story Time; got their faces painted; and were greeted by pirates, Vikings, knights, princesses and fairies. There was a weaponry display with knights on hand to explain the use and care of the many weapons.

Advanced Planning

Renaissance Faires are very popular, but they can sometimes be cost-prohibitive or inappropriate for families. Our goal was to provide a free Renaissance experience for all ages.

Planning was made easier by our staff connections to the Renaissance Faire community. Two of our staff members attended local Renessaince Faires, and one member later volunteered to work as faire staff. There, she learned which elements made the best experience for attendees and who was available for hire.

We started planning in August 2016 and held the event on Nov. 5, 2016. Staff members chose craft projects, ordered supplies and developed a story time. To create the feel of a real Renaissance Faire, all staff dressed in costume. We hired an educational combat group, musicians and a face painter, and we contacted a local pie company to serve sweet and savory pies at the event.

Marketing

We promoted the Renaissance Faire online, on our Facebook page, in our written newsletter, in email blasts and on video screens throughout the library. We also posted a Facebook Event and purchased a Facebook ad to run the week prior to the event for $20. A custom Renaissance Faire sign hung on the library building for a week. One staff member contacted the local newspaper and television outlets and was interviewed multiple times. The faire was featured in the Record Journal and in

the Southington Observer.

Budgeting

Due to our staff member's connection to local Renaissance Faires, we were offered discounts from the performers we hired. We were able to spend only $450 for the musicians, the combat performers and the face painter. We spent less than $100 on craft supplies. The staff purchased their own costumes.

Day-of-event Activity

The event began at 11 a.m. and lasted until 3 p.m. **(View the schedule under Attachments at right.)**

Before the event began, the armor and weaponry arrived and was arranged for display. The staff dressed in costume and set up tables for the different crafts. The musicians, a band called Below the Gaff, arrived and performed a soundcheck. The face painter organized her art supplies on a table.

Our only unexpected challenge happened 15 minutes before the event was to begin: the local pie company called to cancel. They did drop off 12 single-serving pies, but that did not go far with more than 500 attendees.

Program Execution

We planned the event so something new would happen every 15 to 30 minutes. A lot of our visitors stayed for the majority of the event so they would not miss a thing. Vikings, pirates, knights, princesses and fairies were available for photo ops throughout the event.

At the start of the event, attendees were free to visit the weapons exhibit, "fight the knight" or make dragon eyes. The musicians and face painter brought out their artistic skills and more crafts followed. Ye Olde Story Time took place once in the middle of the event and again near the end. More crafts, music and fighting were

capped off by a knighting ceremony, concluding the event.

Advice

Get to know the local Renaissance Faire community. Attend faires to see what you like, what you think your patrons would be interested in and what can be adapted to suit your community.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
schedule_of_events.doc
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



Image









Image







More Programs

Nov 17, 2015
Children (9 and under)+ | $$$
Image



Cinderella Ball

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
May 12, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



Scottish Heritage Fair

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Adults (21 and up)
Oct 5, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $$$
Image



Fairy Tale Tea

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)