13 Reasons Why You Matter

Kokomo-Howard County Public Library

Young Adult

13 Reasons Why You Matter

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Byline

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13 Reasons Why You Matter was a program aimed toward young adults and teens to talk about bullying and to help raise self-esteem in the month of May 2017. This program was inspired by the popular Netflix Original Series "13 Reasons Why," based on the book of the same name by Jay Asher.

Teens and their parents were invited to the event. Teens talked with experts from Mental Health America, wrote reasons "Why You Matter" on large paper cassettes, and brought home personalized cassette keychains, while parents met with a school representation to talk about bullying.

Advanced Planning

The goal of the program was to help raise teens' self-esteem and to have an open and comfortable conversation about bullying, both inside and outside of school, especially in the context of social media. We planned the program about a month in advance, with the Netflix series being such a big hit. Trisha Shively, the library's head of adult and teen services; Sharese Behny, reference assistant of adult and teen services; and Mental Health America teamed up to work on this program.

We wanted this to be an open and comfortable program, but with some fun as well. We came up with the idea to make 3D-printed cassette keychains that teens could give to a friend as something to cheer them up. We also had large blank paper cassettes available that the teens could write on and take their photos with.

We originally wanted a panel of speakers — specifically, a panel of recent high school graduates — to talk to the teens about their experiences with bullying. We thought recent graduates would be likely to speak about their experiences freely and objectively without the fear of putting a “target” on themselves. We tried several ways of recruiting the panelists, such as reaching out to contacts at our local college, as well as asking staff if they knew of anyone. Most of the responses we received were that it was a great idea, but no one ever volunteered to be on the panel. At that point, we almost abandoned the idea of a panel altogether, but then Trisha Shively talked with Mental Health America, and we were able to bring in two professional speakers.

Marketing

We began to promote this event as soon as we had the pieces in place, about two weeks before the event. With the help of our teen librarian, Joe Rayl, we created a display revolving around "13 Reasons Why" to help catch the attention of teens. Our marketing director used social media to get the word out about the program, and our graphic designer created notices for each of the three branches. As we had 30 people show up to the program, I believe we were very successful.

Budgeting

Our expenses were very low. We already had the materials to make the 3D-printed cassettes, which we used our 3D printer to print before the event. We got the template from Thingiverse and customized it a bit so that it was flat on one side so patrons could write on it. All we had to purchase were Sharpies in various colors and keychains for the cassettes. We also spent $30 on cookies and water.

Day-of-event Activity

We set up the program on the lower level of the library where we would have plenty of room to spread out. We set up about 50 chairs in our meeting room and two tables for snacks and water. We set up four tables outside of the meeting rooms to serve as a stations for making the cassette keychain and the paper cassette station. We also had a projector and laptop set up to play a short film.

Three staff members attended the program. There were no unexpected challenges.

Program Execution

We held the program from 6 to 8 p.m. on a Tuesday evening. Thirty people attended, about half teens and half parents. We showed a TEDx talk on cyberbullying that featured a young teen who was working to create an app to help people realize that what they were posting was not appropriate.

After being offered snacks and a beverage, parents were asked to step into our staff lounge, and we had the director of social and student services from a local school corporation talk to them and answer questions.

Meanwhile, teens stayed in the meeting rooms, where they had an open discussion with the two members of Mental Health America. They talked about bullying, cyberbullying, social media, and if "13 Reasons Why" was anything like real life. A counselor was on site in case of any triggers. Afterwards, the teens could grab a 3D-

printed cassette that said “Why You Matter." They were encouraged to write a nice response on the back, make a keychain out of it, and give it to a friend to cheer them up. They could also write on one of the large paper cassettes a “Reason Why I Matter,” hold it up, and take a picture with it.

Almost every teen joined in with these activities — a teen stamp of approval. The two speakers from Mental Health America really liked the two activities we provided, and even took a 3D-printed cassette to give to someone. In the end, we achieved our goals of making a safe and comfortable environment for the teens, plus some fun!

In terms of outcomes, both parents and teens are now aware of some of the programs we offer at the library, and what to look forward to in the future. We currently own 8 copies of the book "Thirteen Reasons Why" with 15 holds. We also established a new community partnership with Mental Health America.

Advice

With more “sensitive” programs, it’s good to offer an activity or craft for the target audience to take part in, to make it more comfortable and fun rather than serious.

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

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images

Image

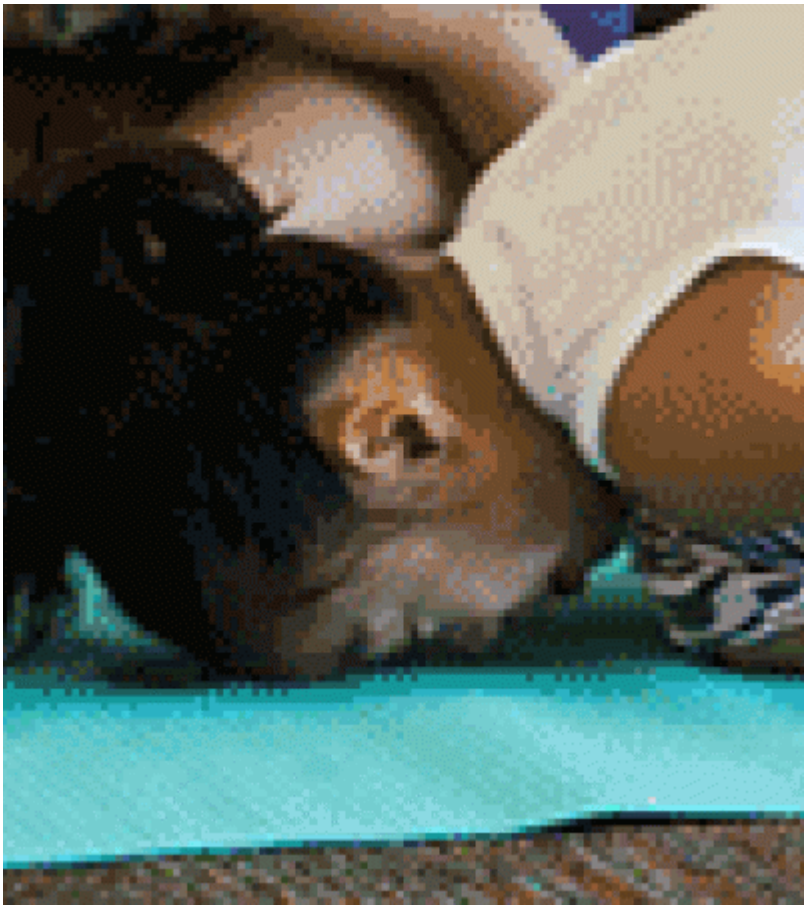






More Programs

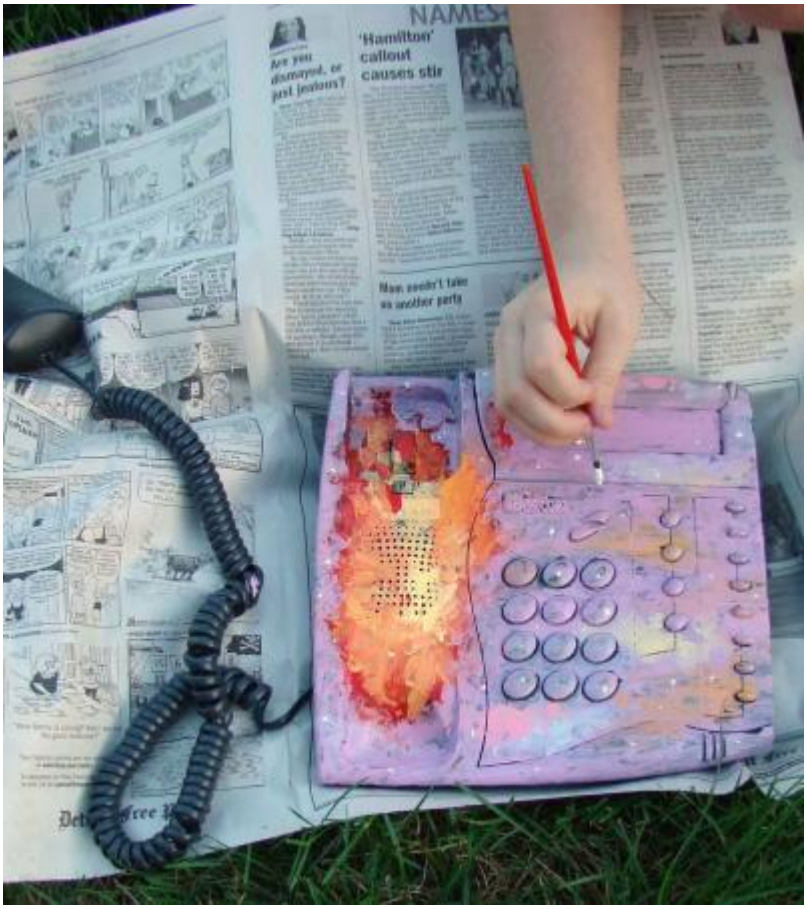
Nov 4, 2015
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



Prevent Bullying through Exercise

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Nov 14, 2016
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $
Image



Phone Painting Project

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Dec 8, 2016
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $$$
Image



Let's Talk About

Audiences:

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