

Sherlock Night

Pflugerville Public Library

Young Adult

|

Adults

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Intergenerational

Sherlock Night

Jul 20, 2017

\$101-250

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Your name

Bette McDowell, Adult Services Librarian, Pflugerville Public Library, Pflugerville, Texas

Fans of Sherlock Holmes, particularly those that love the BBC "Sherlock" series, were invited to enjoy an author Q&A, crafts and an escape room. Texas author Alan J. Porter presented his experiences writing Sherlock Holmes stories, then patrons participated in activities. Crafts included [Perler bead](#) character magnets, adult coloring, and decorating mugs and 221B Baker Street notebooks.

Advanced Planning

Around six months in advance, I booked the guest author. An author who had visited our library before suggested he contact us to see if we'd be interested in having him visit. Around this time, I also started looking at Pinterest and other websites for craft ideas.

Two months in advance, I made my promotional materials and shopped for craft supplies.

One month in advance, I began promoting the event in-house, on our website and on social media. I also began preparing the escape room using random items in our office and supplies left over from a teen escape room challenge.

Two weeks before the event, I prepared sample crafts to demonstrate to program attendees and made table signs and craft instructions. **(See craft instructions under Attachments at right.)** I also set up a book display to promote the event.

One week before the event, I had staff run through the escape room to make sure it could be finished in the allotted time (15 minutes).

We held the event on June 29 from 6:00-7:30 pm.

Marketing

We created a book display, included the event in our adult summer reading program calendar, created small fliers, and mentioned the program in our summer reading program [promo video](#).

The program was also advertised in the local paper, on the library website and in our email newsletter. We created a Facebook event and paid to [boost the event](#) so it would show in more people's Facebook feeds.

The visiting author also promoted the event on his website.

Budgeting

Our total budget came to approximately \$225. Below is a breakdown of those expenses.

- [Sherlock coloring book](#): \$11 (purchased on Amazon)
- Composition books: \$15 (30 books at \$.50 each at Target)
- Paint: \$6 for four bottles of acrylic paint (two charcoal, two black)
- Magnets: \$8 for 50 heavy-duty magnets from Michaels)
- Perler beads: \$24 (eight colors at \$2.99 per bag from JoAnn Fabric)
- Paper dolls: \$0 (printed on cardstock; found at bluebellobakerstreet.tumblr.com)
- Mugs: \$30 (30 at \$1 each; we got ours from Ikea, but they're also available at Dollar Tree)
- Oil-based Sharpies: \$31 for set of 15 (we ordered ours on Amazon, but they can also be bought individually at your local craft store)
- Snacks: \$40
- Decorations: \$10
- Facebook advertisement: \$50

Day-of-event Activity

We used our main conference room for the activities, and set up a partition between the escape room and the area where we had the author talk and crafts. The escape room was set up a few hours before the program began, then locked. We set up for the crafts and author talk about two hours before the event began.

I did have the help of two other staff members for part of that time. I also went to the grocery store to shop for refreshments a few hours before the event.

Clean-up took a significant amount of time. Since the event ran until 15 minutes before closing, we tidied up the room where we hosted the author talk and crafts, but did not clean up the escape room until the next day.

Program Execution

Because I wanted Alan J. Porter, our visiting author, to have the full attention of the audience, I set up the room so the chairs were facing his presentation area. He kicked off the event by discussing his approach to writing Sherlock Holmes stories, as well as some of his favorite real-life English crimes and detectives.

Once the author's presentation was finished, we quickly moved the chairs to the craft tables. (Some patrons helped with this, so it didn't take long.) The author stayed for most of the event to sell books and chat with people about Sherlock Holmes' lore.

One staff member stayed in the escape room to monitor and reset the room after each group "escaped." She took groups of five people at a time, and they had 15 minutes to complete the challenge.

Each craft activity had a table set up with supplies. Any craft stations that included messy materials, like paint, were covered with a plastic tablecloth. Two staff members assisted people with crafts. One helped with the ironing of the Perler bead characters, and the other floated between the other craft stations.

With close to 40 attendees, this event was well attended for us. (Attendance for our past fandom-related adult events has ranged from 20 to 45 attendees.) This time, we opened the event up to teens, which helped attendance. The attendance was also better than standalone author talks we've hosted.

We received the most positive feedback from patrons about the escape room, so we will host a similar event in the future.

Advice

Have craft samples ready, as well as clear instructions, so that inexperienced crafters can have a visual of what to expect. The simpler crafts worked better for us. Patrons loved decorating the mugs and creating the Perler bead characters. The notebook was too complicated for most. If I did that activity again, I'd cut out the

templates in advance and just let the patrons complete the gluing and painting portions.

For the escape room, look around your office for potential clues and red herrings. Programming librarians always have random items left over from programs, and those items are perfect to incorporate into your room. Try out your escape room in advance so you can figure out any bugs and adjust as needed.

Don't worry if the escape room doesn't go off exactly as planned on the day of the event. People just want to have fun with the experience. We had several teams who skipped over certain clues, but they were all able to finish with a little assistance.

If I hosted another escape room, I'd probably make that room the focus and have minimal activities going on concurrently. However, it was nice for patrons to have something to do once they completed the escape room.

A final word of advice: get help! Have at least two staff members on hand to run the program and help with set up and clean-up.

Supporting Materials

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

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

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