Twiddlemuffs for Charity

Morton Grove Public Library

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Twiddlemuffs for Charity

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$1-50

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Byline

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The Crafting for Charity group has existed at the Morton Grove Public Library since 2014. They meet once a month to work on their current project, choosing each project based on needs in the community.

Most recently the group undertook a project to create 75 Twiddlemuffs — knitted or crocheted hand muffs with various items (buttons, beads, etc.) attached — which serve the dual purpose of keeping hands warm while giving the fidgeting hands of many Alzheimer's patients something to play with.

Advanced Planning

Having found a pattern and article about Twiddlemuffs on Ravelry.com, a social media site for knitting and crocheting (the site requires a log-in but registration is free), Adult Services Librarian Colleen Ringel began making one to show to the Crafting for Charity group and to two local senior residential communities. (**See pattern under Attachments at right**). At this point, Twiddlemuffs were gaining in popularity in England as a way to help Alzheimer's patients with fidgeting hands, one of the symptoms of the disease.

The trend had not yet caught on in the United States, though, and no one at the senior residential communities knew about them. Both the nursing homes and the Crafting for Charity group loved the idea, so the crafting group began making them with the goal of creating 75 total Twiddlemuffs – 25 for one residential community and 50 for another.

The crafting group was enthusiastic about the project and embraced the challenge of meeting this large goal.

At one point our yarn supply was extremely low. Since the group relies on donated yarn to make their projects, we placed an ad in our library's bimonthly newsletter, Books and Beyond, soliciting yarn donations.

Marketing

Crafting for Charity has a core group of 12 to 14 people, but we are always happy for new people to participate. We always run an article in the library's bimonthly newsletter inviting others to join and describing the group's current project.

Our local newspaper also wrote an article about the project.

Budgeting

The library does not normally spend money to support this group, outside of staff time. The yarn for the projects are typically donated by either group members or the local community.

However, as this specific project required items/materials beyond just yarn, the library paid $30 for buttons, beads and flowers that were sewn onto the muffs.

Day-of-event Activity

Set-up is easy: the Crafting for Charity group just needed tables and chairs in a room set aside for them. Yarn and other supplies (buttons, ribbons and knitted flowers provided by the group's volunteers) were pulled out of storage by staff.

The group also has a volunteer leader who helps by answering knitting questions and prepping materials.

Program Execution

Program attendees love gathering at the library to work on the charity project, as well as engaging in knitting and talking.

The women who worked on the Twiddlemuffs all enjoyed the project because it was more challenging than a normal project and allowed them to use their imagination. They also enjoyed knowing where their completed projects went and that they would be appreciated. Generally, organizations will send a thank-you note to the library, which is always shared with the group.

The group's enthusiasm for the project definitely showed; they wound up making 90 Twiddlemuffs overall, exceeding their initial goal of 75! (**See photos under Photo Slideshow at right.**)

Advice

If I could give my past self some advice for this program, I would say, “Get creative with the attendees for the items that are attached to the Twiddlemuffs.” I would have liked to spend part of a meeting on how to make creative additions to the Twiddlemuffs. However, providing them with patterns for certain items, like knitted curls and flowers, worked well. Providing items also sparked ideas and creativity in the attendees.

I would also recommend doing a completely different smaller project at the same time. A lot of the knitters became bored or frustrated with the Twiddlemuffs as there were so many to make. Plus, they required additional steps beyond the knitting. Examples of additional, small items could be knitted hats and scarves for a local charity organization or cat toys for the local animal shelter.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
twiddlemuffs_pattern.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



Image





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Adults (21 and up)
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Knitting Workshops for Kids

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