

Middle Earth Walking Challenge

[Peter White Public Library](#)

Children

|

Tweens (10-12)

|

Teens

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Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Middle Earth Walking Challenge

Dec 7, 2017

[\\$101-250](#)

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Byline

Carolyn McManis, Library Programming Coordinator, Peter White Public Library, Marquette, Mich.

The Middle Earth Walking Challenge was a fitness program that we tied to literature. Since the summer reading theme was Build a Better World, I chose J.R.R. Tolkien's series "The Lord of the Rings," giving participants the fantasy challenge of saving Middle Earth by walking from the Shire to Mt. Doom, with the goal of destroying the One Ring.

Participants kept track of the miles they walked from June until August. The winner received a copy of "The Lord of the Rings," and runners-up received a copy of "The Hobbit."

Advanced Planning

This program grew out of a conversation with my library director. A patron had suggested we have a walking club, which neither of us felt fit our library's mission. However, our director said she had seen a fitness challenge based on "The Lord of the Rings," so given the Build a Better World reading theme, I thought it might be fun to develop this program.

The goals were threefold:

1. Give people motivation to start walking
2. Encourage people to remember/read "The Lord of the Rings" series
3. Have a fun activity related to the summer reading theme that all ages could enjoy and participate in

The planning was simple. I made up a poster for the event, which we published in our newsletter and sent out to various media outlets along with a press release, and I created a log for people to keep track of their mileage. **(View poster and walking log under Attachments at right.)**

Marketing

Several months before the program began, we included it in our library's newsletter. A couple weeks into May, I sent a press release to the local newspaper, TV stations and other media outlets. Just after Memorial Day, walking logs were made available to the public.

We kept the walking logs at our circulation desk, reference desk and children's desks, and the children's room promoted the event during their summer reading kickoff program. In addition, our web designer posted on Facebook to alert patrons of the program.

During the month of June, I was interviewed by two local TV stations. ([Watch the interview](#) or [read the article](#).) With the variety of media we used, we were able to reach people of all ages.

Budgeting

We spent money on printing (\$.05/color copy) and prizes. The prizes were nine copies of "The Hobbit" and one boxed set of "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, which came to approximately \$114. We decided that the top 20 walkers would receive prizes.

Day-of-event Activity

As this was an independent event, no set-up was needed. I did inform the entire staff of the program so they could answer questions and hand out and collect logs.

Program Execution

There was a lot of excitement at the beginning of the program. People really got caught up in the fantasy element; one person commented on Facebook “We’re going to see the elves!”

We also got a lot of TV exposure early in the program. We handed out 175 walking logs, but only 9 people returned them. The winner walked 963 miles, a little over half-way to Mordor. Collectively, we walked 4,642 miles, thus saving Middle Earth.

In terms of generating excitement about a library event and promoting fitness, I think our goal was achieved. In terms of getting people to maintain that excitement throughout the summer, I don’t think our goal was met.

No evaluation tools were used for this project. The fact that only 9 people completed their forms indicated that the challenge was too hard. However, the buzz generated at the beginning of the summer and the positive feedback from the people who completed the task was great.

Advice

If I were to do this type of event again, I would make it less labor-intensive for participants. I think keeping track of miles every day over the course of the summer was just too much work. If the challenge lasted just one month, more people may have completed it.

Supporting Materials

Document

[walking_log.pdf](#)

Document

[walking_event_poster.pdf](#)

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

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

More Programs

Jun 22, 2016

Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | \$

[Image](#)



Summer Challenge for Teen Programming Staff

Audiences:

Audience

Young Adult (17 - 20)

Sep 1, 2015

Children (9 and under)+ | \$\$

[Image](#)



LEGO Building Challenge

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)

Nov 19, 2015

Adults (21 and up)+ | \$

[Image](#)



Cookbook Challenge

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)