

Unicorn Party

Metropolitan Library System

Adults

|

Children

|

Teens

|

Young Adult

Unicorn Party

Mar 14, 2018

\$251-500

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Byline

Katherine Hickey, Children's Librarian, Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Okla.

The Unicorn Party was planned in response to the growing fandom associated with unicorns, particularly among children, tweens and teens. The program lasted 90

minutes and comprised several unicorn-based activities, unicorn snacks, a unicorn book display and a "live unicorn" (i.e. decorated pony).

Advanced Planning

This program took about two months to plan. Because the event was targeted toward all age groups, we wanted to ensure there were enough activities to keep both adults and children engaged. All of the children's activities included developmental benefits, such as fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Overall, the program allowed the collection to come to life and for patrons to see the library as a place relevant to their interests.

Before the event:

1. Book a "unicorn" through a local party company.
2. Develop unicorn activities for various age groups.
3. Come up with creative "unicorn snacks."
4. Purchase supplies and food.

Marketing

This program did not require much marketing. We hung a poster (see under Attachments at the right) in the lobby three weeks beforehand, included it in our monthly calendar, and had handouts available at the reference and circulation desks.

Budgeting

This program cost about \$400. We spent \$200 to rent the pony, \$100 went toward food, and \$100 covered craft supplies.

Day-of-event Activity

This event required two staff members and five volunteers. One staff member oversaw the pony — which was outside on the lawn — and the other oversaw the activities inside. One volunteer helped with food, and two others with the activities. Two volunteers did facepainting.

I would recommend having even more hands on deck to help with clean-up.

Program Execution

The program started at 2 p.m. The pony and its handler were outside on the lawn, and children could come up to take a picture with the "unicorn" and ride it for two minutes. Meanwhile, the following activities took place outside:

- Photobooth
- Unicorn face-painting
- Unicorn button-making (View template under Attachments at right)
- [Rainbow rock painting](#)
- Unicorn coloring sheets
- A unicorn display with materials available for checkout
- [Unicorn paper plate craft](#)

We also created unicorn sensory tables with dyed multi-color shaving cream as "unicorn breath" and multi-color slime as "[unicorn poop](#)." The sensory tables were intended to provide a colorful, tactile experience for children too young to do the crafts or coloring. Instead, they squished and spread the slime, etc. on the table! This is an activity that has worked well at my library. We use it for our sensory play times and sometimes have it out during our playtimes. In the future, I might add baby wipes to our supply list, as everyone's hands got quite dirty.

The program brought in nearly 300 people, which is some of the highest attendance for any program held at the library. Many individuals driving by the library saw the "unicorn" on the lawn and dropped by to see what event was going on. In this regard alone, it was a success as it drew new patrons to the library.

The diversity of the participants is particularly noteworthy: we anticipated many young children would come, but there were also many adults who came without

children.

Additionally, it created a strong impression on the youngest participants. Nearly a year later, children will still come into the library and say, "this is where I saw a unicorn!" This level of impact and engagement has made a memorable impression on participants, which will hopefully contribute to patron retention.

The program also served as a plug for other programs hosted at the library. The sensory activities were particularly successful, which made for a perfect segue to promote our sensory playtimes that occur once a month.

Advice

Have as many staff as possible on hand the day of the event, start planning months ahead, and diversify the activities offered to cater to adults and children.

Supporting Materials

Document

[unicorn_party_poster.pdf](#)

Document

[unicorn_buttons.doc](#)

Document

[unicorn_party_activities.doc](#)

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

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

Slideshow Images

Image



Image



Image



More Programs

Mar 19, 2015

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

[Image](#)



Life-Sized Candy Land

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)

Nov 3, 2017

Teens (13-16)+ | \$

[Image](#)



Harry Potter Escape Room

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)

Young Adult (17 - 20)

Adults (21 and up)

Nov 16, 2017

Teens (13-16)+ | \$\$

[Image](#)



DIY Steampunk Costume Pieces

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)