Star Wars Day:
Joliet’s Galactic Universe

August 15, 2018
Welcome and Announcements

• Today’s webinar is a presentation of ALA’s Public Programs Office, with support from ALA’s Cultural Communities Fund (www.ala.org/CCF)

• Visit www.programminglibrarian.org for more online learning sessions, program ideas and grant announcements

• Tech issues on today’s webinar? Send a private message to PPO Admin
Today’s Presenters

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Star Wars Day

From “a little Star Wars program”

to

a Galactic Event
In the Beginning...
In the Beginning...

Highlights:

- A youth services program for families.
- Themed games & crafts.
- 16 cosplayers roaming during the event.
- **Surprise!** 600 people attend!
In the Beginning...

With the success of the previous year, we knew we needed to make some changes:

- Location
- Activities
- Partnerships
A Period of Rapid Growth
A Period of Rapid Growth

- During this time period, our attendance grew by 300%!
- We went from 44 cosplayers in 2012 to more than 125 in 2015.
- This tremendous growth meant that our “little Star Wars program” was quickly becoming unsustainable without seeking cosponsors, space, volunteers and financial assistance.
A Period of Rapid Growth

Considerations for Partners & Cosponsors:

• What organizations, businesses, and groups in Joliet would be interested?

• What can the organization bring to the event and make it better?

• Who has a location close to the Library and might be interested in partnering?

• Why would they want to partner with us?
A Period of Rapid Growth

Our Cosponsors and Partners:

- Friends of the Joliet Public Library
- City of Joliet
- Joliet City Center Partnership (Economic Development)
- Heritage Corridor Convention & Visitor’s Bureau
- Joliet Area Historical Museum
- DK Publishing
- LucasFilm, Ltd.
A Period of Rapid Growth

Considerations for Space:

- How much space is needed?
- What do you want to put in that space?
- Do you have the staffing necessary to manage the space?
- What permits do you need in order to use the space?
- What infrastructure do you need?
A Period of Rapid Growth

Space:
• Used about 37,000 sq. feet in library, library lawn, and side streets
• Activities
  – Games: 3-7 needed
  – Artists: Meet with Star Wars illustrators (as many as 5)
  – Life-size Cantina replica
  – Live Music
  – Costume Contest
  – LegoLand™
  – Parade
A Period of Rapid Growth

Space Needs:

• What permits do you need in order to use the space?
  – Special Event?
  – Portable Stage?
  – Large Tents?
  – Sound Amplification?
  – Street Closures?
  – Parade?
A Period of Rapid Growth

Space Needs:

• What infrastructure do you need? Consider:
  – Bathrooms? Need Portable Restrooms? Don’t forget about wash stations and ADA compliant restrooms!
  – Security? What is your plan to keep everyone safe? Do you need off-duty police? What do they need to be doing—crowd control, watch for problems, closing down streets, etc.?
A Period of Rapid Growth

Space Needs:

• What infrastructure do you need? Consider:
  – Refuse Disposal? How are you collecting garbage? Do you need receptacles and/or a dumpster?
  – Electricity? Are you going to need electricity if you are outside? From where?
  – Inclement Weather? What’s your plan for inclement weather?
A Period of Rapid Growth

Space Needs:

• What infrastructure do you need? Consider:
  – Equipment Rentals? Do you need...
    • Tables?
    • Chairs?
    • Tents?
    • Golf cart or other small vehicle?
    • Barricades if you are blocking streets or locations that need to be inaccessible by cars or people?
A Period of Rapid Growth

Space Needs:

• Do you have the staffing necessary to manage the space?
  – Volunteers
  – Staff
  – Security
  – Emergency Medical Assistance
Workers, Volunteers, and Staff:

• Who’s going to...
  – Set up the tables, chairs, tents, stage, etc.?
  – Tear down the set up?
  – Work during the event monitoring the games and activities?
  – Oversee the move in of vendors and guests?
  – Distribute information to guests?
A Period of Rapid Growth

Workers, Volunteers, and Staff:

• Where do you find the people to work? Do you pay them or are they all volunteering?

• Are you going to feed your workers, volunteers and/or staff? What? When? How?

• If the weather is warm, are you supplying water or another beverage to workers? How?

• Do you have enough workers to provide breaks, including a meal break?
Financial Costs of Event:

As attendance grows, so do the costs of putting on the event. Expenditures include:

- Food for workers
- Rental of tables, chairs, tents, etc.
- Marketing materials
- Live entertainment
- Security personnel and EMTs
- Extra dumpsters, garbage pickup and mobile restrooms
Tweaking the Plans

2016

2017

2018
Tweaking the Plans

Additions and Improvements:

• Increased cosplayers by including other cosplay groups.

• Additional artists attended and each provided original art for one of five collectible trading cards that could be autographed by artist.

• Set an annual date for the event – 1st Saturday in June.
Tweaking the Plans

Additions and Improvements:

• Providing more photo opportunities and memorable moments.
Tweaking the Plans

Additions and Improvements:

• Added partners to the group, including the Rialto Square Theatre, Joliet Slammers and an improvisational group.

• Two of our vendors at the event have also become sponsors by providing in-kind services and products.
Tweaking the Plans

Additions and Improvements:

• Rialto Square Theatre hosted a Jedi Training Academy on their mainstage.

• We planned an official start to the event with a ribbon cutting ceremony using light sabers.
Tweaking the Plans

Additions and Improvements:

• Local business owner gave us use of a store front near the event to store tables, chairs, etc. for a more efficient set up and clean up.

• Showcased a very large, inflatable Darth Vader.
Tweaking the Plans

Additions and Improvements:

• Developed one of a kind invitations for City Council and various board members.

• Invited them to take part by serving lemonade in the Cantina.
Budgeting and the Bottom Line

Fundraising Efforts:

• By 2016, the event outgrew the two big funders—the library and the Friends of the Library—and the local convention and visitors bureau that supplied much “in-kind” assistance.

• Increasing costs and the need for other funding sources became critical to our future success.
Budgeting and the Bottom Line

Fundraising Efforts:

• We established a fundraising committee to determine the available sponsorship opportunities and locate sponsors for the event.
  – What to sponsor?
  – How much to charge for sponsorship?
  – What was sponsor’s return on investment (ROI) for sponsorship?
  – What amount did we want to set as our goal for measurement purposes?
Budgeting and the Bottom Line

Fundraising Efforts:

• We considered library vendors:
  – Lawyer
  – Printing and Copier Providers
  – Architect

• We looked at local organizations:
  – Credit Union
  – Financial Institution
  – Local Small Businesses
  – Chamber of Commerce
Budgeting and the Bottom Line

Fundraising Efforts – What happened?

• We increased 2018 sponsorships by more than 50% over 2017.

• We increased 2018 revenue by almost 25%.

• We now have businesses that are contacting us to be a sponsor.
Looking Forward

The Future...

• 2019 will be a big year because it’s our 10th Star Wars Day.

• As always, there will be plenty for Star Wars fans to do, participate in and enjoy.

• Surprises and special guests are a given!

• It is, after all, *The World’s Largest Public Library Sponsored Star Wars Event!*
For more information...

Visit our Star Wars Day website:

Visit our Star Wars Day Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/JPLStarWarsDay/

Taste of our Star Wars Event Courtesy of the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yni1JdaQ6xg&feature=youtu.be
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