



# GETTING PEOPLE OFF THEIR



# SEATS.....AND INTO YOURS!!

## TOP 10 TIPS FOR ATTRACTING AN AUDIENCE TO PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Presented by Sylvia Rodriguez and Betsy Merrill

Programming is what gets people coming in the door! We can “earn extra points” with the community by putting on programs and sometimes with very little effort.

**Part One:** you have to find out what people are interested in; then you have to create programs that meet those interests!

1. Tune in to: community, patrons, teens, staff
2. Read the local papers to see what’s happening, expand to bigger papers as well
3. Google other library programs not just in Texas but other states for the latest trends
4. Sign up for e-mail alerts to get ideas. (i.e. DFW Cultural Calendar)
5. Work with local businesses (ex: pet store/newspaper/cultural groups)

Be resourceful...If you find an idea for a program, Google that idea until you find someone local who can do it. You may not find the exact program but close often works or can even be better. Look for societies or other organizations that provide those types of activities then contact them regarding someone doing a program.

Don’t think you have to “think” it all yourself...pay attention to what is going on in the community. Do you have a quilting club, photography club, paper cutters club, woodworking group? Many of these groups are looking for places to share their knowledge. The Greenville Art League does an annual children’s program; Master Gardeners/Ag-Extension Office does quarterly programs; Crime Prevention officer doing bike rodeo, career night; Collin County doing Hybrid GED class; AARP provides tax assistance; Area Agency on Aging provides Medicaid assistance & one on one counseling.

**Part Two:** Creating excitement AND getting them in the door! Everyone knows the usual, in-house fliers, newspaper ads, press releases, hand outs, website...but what about....

6. Know your audience AND know where to find that audience. Broad appeal vs. specific interest.  
<http://www.programminglibrarian.org/library/planning/if-you-build-it-will-they-come.html>
7. E-mail lists...create an account or use your own email to create online mailing lists for those specifically interested in certain types of programs: i.e. Genealogy/Teachers/Home-school/Friends of the Library
8. E-mail fliers to other libraries or interest groups, even if they are not in the same city.
9. Retired people/people with special interest in event to hand out fliers/deliver to groups, ie. churches, etc
10. WORD OF MOUTH!!! As supporter groups, you are the first line OFFENSE to getting people in the door. Spread the word and hand out fliers while you’re at it!

Keep at it! Be prepared if you only have a small handful of people show up. It is not the end of the world. Decide if you want to reschedule or not. The main thing is to know you tried something.

# THE ART OF FINDING PROGRAMS FOR YOUR LIBRARY (CONT.)

## Low Cost Library Programming Ideas

### **Computer Classes:**

Staff teaches these, starting with the basics: How to use a mouse, Word, Excel. Subsequent courses on Email, Basic Internet search engines and Use of Digital devices. The target audience is senior citizens. We hold these Tuesday mornings, and they last an hour. We have 4 desktop computers, and accept 8 pupils (2 per computer) and the teacher has a laptop hooked up to a screen. The classes require sign up in advance, and they last an hour. There is a set rotation of classes. WWHPL does a lab with same basic tutorials vs. structured class.

### **Tea Time:**

If staff owns china, and is willing to share, this is a fun recurring event at our library. We have a speaker on some interesting but not heavy topic: our City's community gardens program, the history of the City (the Historical Society was pleased to furnish a speaker), the history of tea (the manager of a local coffee and tea shop). Twice we have had musicians—a violinist and then a harpist, from the community, willing to play for under \$50, but I expect that high school ensemble would be happy to play as good practice before UIL competitions. We restrict this to adults, and we targeted older women, but we have had a man attend, and there is a core group of women in their 40s who also attend. We have found that Saturday afternoons work best. We have enough china for up to 30 guests. We bought a 45 cup coffee urn which we use only for the tea. A box of fancy tea (40-50 bags) costs around \$10, and is more than enough. We buy tea sandwiches, but simple cookies would be fine.

### **Games:**

Sponsor a drop-in Family Board Games activity. We started with staff-owned board games. A local comic book/game store has sponsored one event and they came with 3 new, fun family games and staff to demonstrate and play them with the patrons. This can include video games, or they can be a separate event. If staff does not have a gaming system, or staff does not want to use its own system, ask patrons if they want to loan their system. We hook the games up to a big screen. WWHPL does structured Teens and Tween gaming clubs, with additional Wii Love Adult game nights.

### **Movies:**

If you have a movie license, use it creatively. When the 6<sup>th</sup> Harry Potter movie was released, we had a countdown of the 5 earlier movies, playing a movie at 6:30 pm on each of the 5 Wednesday evenings preceding the release. We bought a big bag of popcorn per show. There were lots of families that came for it. First run DVDs can be shown the day they are released. WWHPL does monthly Curtain Call plus free popcorn and drinks.

### **Bluebonnet Night & Bluebonnet Jeopardy:**

- In March or April, we introduce the new Bluebonnet books. The school librarians have worked with students who book talk the titles. Some even wear costumes. We provide the meeting room. Every year it gets bigger. The kids and parents love it.
- Since all the elementary schools in our City encourage the students to read the Bluebonnet books, we sponsored Bluebonnet Jeopardy, a fun way to quiz teams, with no pressure for a grade.

# THE ART OF FINDING PROGRAMS FOR YOUR LIBRARY (CONT.)

## **After Hours Programs for Teens:**

The kids love coming in after hours. Tie into current happenings. We are planning a Lightning Thief party on February 5, from 7-9 pm—the movie opens on February 12. Since it is the Olympics year, we are going to have Olympics games—Mt Olympus, get it?

## **Crafts:**

Offer the library program room as a gathering place for crafters. Patrons bring whatever they are working on—scrapbooking, knitting, needlepoint—and there is a built in camaraderie. WWHPL now has a Sew~N~Sew sewing group, Knit-Wits Knitting Club, and Cri-Cut club.

## **Winter Adult and Teen Reading Clubs**

Read 3 books; fill out a log. We use donated books, in excellent condition, as prizes. The adult form has 10 lines. There are 8 suggested genres (mystery, sci-fi, biography, romance, etc) and 2 choose your own. Read from 3 different genres. The teens can read any 3 books. We do a drawing at the end from the completed forms, and award a gift card from local merchants—movie passes for teens; Kroger gift card, etc adults. WWHPL does Adult SRP for 6 months: Read a Million Pages challenge (collectively!).

## **Free Demonstrations by Local Businesses:**

- The manager of the local Hallmark shop did a workshop on wrapping gifts. We had a waiting list. She taught bows, paper and how to stuff a gift bag. We supplied cheap ribbon, and told the participants to bring a roll of paper. We had empty boxes from our book shipments, so we passed one out to each person to wrap following her suggestions. The manager supplied gift bags and we had tissue paper. One package was enough—each person needed only 3 sheets.
- A local yoga teacher might do a free workshop, allowing her to hand out class info for her studio.
- Local florist -- a flower arranging class
- Bilingual story time-- a teacher from the Spanish Schoolhouse daycare center comes over once a month for about a half hour
- In the past we have had Kinder Care or Gymboree teachers who gave a free class once a month
- We had a coffee roaster talk about different types of beans and had several flavors to test.

## **Traveling Exhibits:**

Humanities Texas offers traveling exhibitions for libraries. Working in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Humanities Texas provides mini grants to nonprofit organizations and institutions for programs that bring humanities scholars and scholarship to general public audiences, which covers the cost. The mini-grants are very easy to apply for, and you get a response from the grants department within 10 working days. Here is the link to the application for a mini-grant:

<http://www.humanitiestexas.org/grants/forms/>

## **Read to Dogs:**

Heart of Texas Therapy Dogs:

Specially trained dogs come with their owners and individual kids read for 10 minutes. Low pressure way to practice reading. <http://www.hotthdogs.org/ReadingPrograms.htm>

Sylvia Rodriguez @ Walworth Harrison Public Library [srodriguez@ci.greenville.tx.us](mailto:srodriguez@ci.greenville.tx.us) 903-457-2992

# THE ART OF FINDING PROGRAMS FOR YOUR LIBRARY (CONT.)

## Book Clubs:

Brown bag lunch book groups can meet monthly at the library. WWHPL has Books Sandwiched In held monthly at Noon. Also has Teen and Tween book clubs where kids read from series of books vs. all reading one book. We also have an Eclectic Reader's book club where members read the same book each month. About once a quarter, the members meet at a local restaurant to discuss the book. Each December, the members meet at one of the member's houses for a Cookie and Bookie exchange where members do a traditional cookie exchange and also a book exchange. Each member brings a gently used book or two and the library also supplies some from the donated books received. Members go around the table and select books until they are gone. Members also bring finger foods and/or desserts. This could easily be done at the library but our members enjoy certain "beverages"!

## Speakers:

**(Some speakers may charge/others that are local/area may charge a nominal fee or come at no cost at all! We have paid from 0-\$350! Find sponsors to pay speaker fees or FOL groups, etc)**

- Community colleges/universities often have speaker's bureaus
- WWHPL has a Distinguished Speaker series where we bring in a variety of topics and presenters:
  - genealogy societies and historical societies;
  - museums especially special interest museums (ie. Railroad museum, AA museum, Holocaust museum)
  - special interest groups such as local chambers of commerce;
  - local authors and area authors
  - Black History Month/June-teenth, Holocaust survivors, Buffalo Soldier
  - Local Agri-Life Extension office: Master Gardeners – Art of Gardening; Senior Series on Aging; Junior Master Gardeners

**Pet Costume Contest:** with local Pet Store as sponsor, donated \$100 gift certificate. Invited the Mayor to be a guest judge.

**Hunt County Photography Contest:** held with local newspaper, 16 finalists are featured in paper over 8 weeks (adult & junior div), the finalists are displayed for a month with people coming in and voting for 2 weeks for the "People's Choice Award". Ribbons are awarded with small prizes and displayed with photos for the remainder of month. Prizes were donated by local businesses and awarded to the top three in the two age divisions. Top two winners were featured in the local Hunt County magazine.

**Teen Career Series:** Each month a different profession was featured giving students more in-depth info ranging from educational requirements to work hours and true life stories by people who work in the field. Worked with HS/MS teachers to give extra credit to those students who attend.

**Teen College Series:** Over four months, held workshops on selecting a college; filling out paperwork; financial aid; and alternatives to college.

**Black Music Month:** Provided by local resident who is active in community. Covered history of Black music over the years in the US. She even taught some dance moves!

# THE ART OF FINDING PROGRAMS FOR YOUR LIBRARY (CONT.)

A few links to places to find programs:

## Adult & Other Programming Ideas

- Sell it with Sizzle

<http://www.sellitwithsizzle.com/visionthing.htm>

- Dallas Fort Worth International Calendar

<http://www.dfwinternational.org/calendar/>

- Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce

[http://www.fortworth.com/FW/calendar/event/index\\_new.jsp](http://www.fortworth.com/FW/calendar/event/index_new.jsp)

- Mid-Hudson Library System

<http://midhudson.org/program/main.php>

- Idaho Library System

<http://libraries.idaho.gov/node/1086>

- Library Goddess

<http://librarygoddesses-programideas.blogspot.com/>

- Programming Librarian

<http://www.programminglibrarian.org/blog/2009/october-2009/globalization-trends-in-library-programming.html>

- Other libraries in Texas

Google “public libraries in Texas” or similar phrases

- Other Library systems in Texas (and/or other states)

Regions for the North Texas Area = NTRLs & NETLS

<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/publibs/members.html>

## Genealogy Programming Ideas

- Dallas Genealogical Society

<http://www.dallasgenealogy.org/>

- Texas State Gen Society

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txsgs/>

- Texas Genealogical Societies (Another link)

<http://www.censusfinder.com/texas-genealogy-society.htm>

- Lone Star Chapter of Professional Genealogists

<http://lonestarapg.com/>

- Cyndi's list

<http://www.cyndislist.com/tx.htm#Societies>

*"The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it."*

*~ Chinese Proverb*