

SRP Tips from Your NM Library Colleagues

Do bingos having children read materials from various areas in library. Parents liked this also.

Make sure you know how capable and responsible your teens are before releasing them from weekly check-in.

Be flexible in programs as cancellations do occur. Be able to improvise and do crafts that can be used with various ages.

Keep it simple as you can.

We held a "Game Day" every Wednesday from 10-12, which was very popular. We had a prize store set up on that day so kids could select their reading incentive prizes, and that was the only time during the week prize selection was available. (For those who said they couldn't come on Wednesday, I offered to arrange a special time, but only one or two people asked.) Game Day itself was so much fun for the staff and volunteers as well as for the people who attended. Staff liked playing games with the kids and the fact that it was a relaxed format. We set up board games (like "Don't Break the Ice," checkers, Twister, Monopoly, etc.), carnival games like bean bag toss, as well as puzzles, blocks, simple art supplies and such. Kids and parents could just sit down and enjoy whatever they thought was interesting. Teen volunteers circulated the room and made sure every kid had someone to play with. We tried to add something different every week so there would be something new. During the last week we offered Wii games! We were worried some kids would try to hog the Wii, but we had a teen running each game to make sure nobody ran off with the game controllers and that everybody would have a turn.

Start now. Especially with the fundraising but also with the craft planning. I already have 5 crafts in mind for 2012!

We begin early registration at the Dia celebration on April 30 at it really helps to motivate all the schools. We also have a pie chart of statistics that I share with the Superintendents and Principals from all the San Juan County schools that shows how many students registered and how many books they read from their school.

This year we made phone calls to all the local people asking if they wanted to offer a program. We had great feedback and they came out with clay, scrapbooking, cooking, water safety, and many other programs!!

Those foil gift bags that can be purchased at the Dollar Tree, for a buck of course, make fantastic paper for letterings when backed in black. Talk about eye-catching. We witnessed patrons turning their heads for longer and second looks. Lots of good comments on them.

Our most successful programs by far were the craft & story activities and the performers. The Twilight Theme Party was also a lot of fun for all of our Twi-hard fans and readers.

This year I made an oversized poster calendar of all of the summer's events and smaller take home calendars for our patrons. I think promotion is one of the biggest aspects of carrying out a successful summer program. For our special events like the Wii Tournament and Open Mic Night we posted the posters around town at popular spots (i.e. Starbucks, Hastings, Walgreens). We managed to attract a few new visitors with this.

Since our staff has decreased I asked parents to help out and not a one told me no. The three other years I have been here parents mostly drop off the children and then pick them up, but this year I asked 2 parents to help and they told other parents and I had plenty of help. They would ask me "What can we do to help you?" I was so thrilled.

I think it's a good idea to encourage themes that are appropriate to specific areas. For example, acequias are important to the area specific to Abiquiu and surrounding small villages with individuals who do large farming in the area.

Our "Patterns in Nature" art programs held at the tribal museum and led by a local art teacher were a hit.

We have found it works well to give books as prizes, one halfway through, another at the end. We are still striving to make the rules easier to both understand and follow by both staff and patrons.

Plan ahead! Lots of preparation ahead of time makes things go a lot smoother.

We did a stuffed animal Hawaiian Fashion show which the small children were very excited about. They dressed up their own favorite stuffed animal in a summer or Hawaiian costume. They also dressed in costume or beachwear. We did a script and each one modeled their stuffed animal and beachwear.