

Community book festival



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According to the United States Census Bureau (2013), Queens, New York, has an estimated population of 2.2 million people living in this growing region. With a large population like this, it would be an ideal place to promote reading by conducting a book festival for the community. Not only will the book festival promote reading among all age groups, but also, it will address the economic changes in the community in an effort to keep threatened libraries of Queens open. Funding a non-profit book festival is very difficult because in order to conduct a successful event, participation from the community is essential.

For a successful event, community members must work together in the festival to promote reading and raise awareness of economic changes, and the funding for this function must come from donations, sponsors, and fundraising events. From time to time people wonder why reading is important. Since reading is the fundamental skill to function in society, it is important for various reasons. For example, reading is essential to understand instructions on a medicine bottle, to complete a job application, to read warning signs on the road, or even follow directions on a map (June, S. . d).

These are all everyday tasks that individuals conduct that require literacy. Understanding written material is one way the mind grows and expands the ability of comprehension and vocabulary. In addition, it is imperative that individuals learn, develop, and practice their reading skills, because it ultimately aids them to developing their language skills. (June, S.

n. d) Through reading, individuals discover new information and concepts. For example, books, magazines, periodicals, and the internet material are unlimited learning tools that require the ability to read. Since daily activities for adults and children are different, the importance of reading also varies. Reading is essential for carrying out many tasks as an adult.

For example, without literacy, adults cannot operate a vehicle, register to vote, or even become hired for a job. Since reading is a vital skill to have, illiteracy will hold back any adult in a number of opportunities. According to PBS Newshour (2013), Queens, New York holds the highest percentage of adult illiteracy in all New York counties at 45.6%. It is important for the book festival to emphasize reading among these adults because it can open many doors for this high percentage of illiterate adults. In addition, it is important for adults to know how to read so they can provide their children with the fundamentals at a young age.

Adult literacy is also important for child development. If parents are illiterate, they are not able to provide their children with the necessary tools to begin reading. For children, the importance of reading begins at a very early age and it is the building blocks of life (Time with your kids reading to children, 2013). The more young children are read to, the greater their interest is in mastering reading. Reading aloud exposes children to proper grammar and phrasing.

It enhances the development of their spoken language skills, their ability to express themselves verbally (Freedman-De Vito, 2004). ??? Reading to young children would teach them to develop listening skills as well as

develop their imagination in a creative way (Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005).

One great exercise to do when reading to children is to stop in the middle of the story and ask them what is going to happen next. Get them involved in the story for them to think about possible endings to the story. Encourage them to illustrate, draw, and make up another story with the same characters.

This kind of exercise would get their creative thinking flowing for children (Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005). The book festival will give children a great opportunity to become involved in reading and help them with the skills they need to succeed in the future. The book festival is essential to the community because of recent economic changes in the Queens area. The Queens Library serves 2.3 million people from 62 locations plus seven Adult Learning Centers and two Family Literacy Centers. It circulates among the highest numbers of books and other library materials in the country (Queens Library, 2013).

??? With government officials adjusting ways to better the economy, Queens Library is directly affected. Since budget cuts are a way to reduce debt in the economy, a proposal by the City Council was to cut back on the employment and hours of operation for the Queens Library. Colangelo (2010) addressed that there may be a shutdown of 14 libraries, and 34 libraries would only be open 2-3 days a week in an effort to save 17 million dollars as directed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. This affects the community as a whole because it will also cut back on the resources and programs that are available to the public that promote reading. From this book festival, as we promote reading, we can also encourage the community to fight for the libraries to stay open

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so children, as well as adults, can have a place to access books and material necessary to succeed in their education.

Libraries and learning centers offer many different resources for students to further their education and gain success in their academics. With approval of the budget cuts, students will have less access to books they need in order to help them find useful information for assignments they have to complete. Libraries offer a wide range of informational textbooks and encyclopedias that individuals can use to research topics and retrieve material. Without having access to this material from books, it limits individuals to browse the internet to find information. However, many people do not have everyday access to the internet.

Libraries are a good resource to use for people that fall into this category because they can gain access to the internet from the library's computers in order to conduct research. If implementation of the budget cuts occurs, this will leave the community with practically no assisting resources if they do not have these tools readily available for them in their own homes. Not only do libraries help students with their studies, but they also conduct beneficial workshops for the community. Libraries and learning centers have a wide range of programs and events geared toward assisting the community and furthering education. For example, Queens Library offers adult and youth literacy programs, special needs assistance programs, and veteran workshops at designated branches. ??? Some 707, 000 people attended more than 37, 500 free programs in FY 12 (Queens Library, 2013).

??? With these budget cuts coming into play, some of these programs will no longer be available to the public. This statistic emphasizes how much the community relies on Queens Library each year. Furthermore, libraries also offer workshops that promote personal development. In addition to the programs, Queens Library periodically holds mock interview events and resume writing for individuals looking for jobs in the community.

With approval of the budget cuts, the community greatly suffers from the downsizing of all of these resources offered by the libraries and learning centers. The community will begin to see these services disappear as the economy changes due to the decisions by government officials. Therefore, the whole community has to work together to promote reading and keep these resources available to the public. With this being done, as a result, the City Council will realize how much the community will be negatively affected by terminating these services to the public. Funding a nonprofit book festival can be a very challenging task.

However, with help from the community and local businesses in the area, funding for this event can come from several different ways. One of the most beneficial ways for funding this event will come from donations from the community members. Though this book festival is a free event, upon entrance to the festival, we will ask attending members for donations to help fund and aid the event. In addition, we will contact local bookstores and organizations for donations prior to the festival in order to help make the book festival possible. For example, Barnes and Noble and Borders Bookstore are two of the largest community bookstores in the Queens area that may contribute to make the festival successful.

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Spencer (2010) stated that with donations, non-profit organizations are able to help fulfill others' goals as well as help the less fortunate who are usually the targets for the foundations. This idea holds true for our book festival because of the economic changes in the community and the potential threats to the libraries in the area we can help keep these resources open to the less fortunate individuals in the community. Another way to facilitate funding for this event is to gain sponsors from local businesses and other organizations in the area. This is beneficial because it gathers more individuals to attend the event. For example, if Barnes and Noble sponsored the event, more individuals would attend because a well known corporation will be there to help facilitate the function. Not only will this benefit the book festival, but also it will gain more exposure to the sponsoring organization with a successful event.

Associating with nonprofit organizations is a great public relations boost. By giving back to the community, you demonstrate you are a company with heart, not a faceless corporation (Stanfords, 2010). Aside from the sponsors, having more community members attend the festival is essential because it will help promote reading amongst a larger population. In addition, with more attendees there will be more chances of gaining donations from individuals. Furthermore, with more proceeds that are circulated through the festival, the chances of keeping the local public libraries open will be higher. Prior to the book festival, we will have a community car wash in order to raise awareness of the event.

Since many people will not know of the book festival, promoting the event before it happens is essential. With help from volunteers, a community car

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wash will take place the weekend prior to the event. Though we do not anticipate receiving the majority of our funding from the fundraising events, it is still crucial to conduct them so the community becomes more involved. While fundraising events may no longer be the most important component of your organization's fundraising strategy, it's still a good idea to host an event for your supporters and take the opportunity to interact with your community (Wooden, 2011). With more involvement of the community, there is a higher chance of having a more successful book festival because it will show the City Council how important these resources are to the community. Finally, the most active way to fund this book festival is from fundraising measures during the event itself.

This is the area that the community and volunteers help the most. During the book festival, there will be food, games, and raffles to help raise money to keep the Queens' libraries open. Individuals will bring their own dishes, snacks, or baked goods to the book festival and sale them at reasonable prices. For a small fee, attendees can also participate in fun games provided by volunteers to win small prizes to take home such as bookmarks or book covers. Lastly, there will be a raffle at the end of the book festival.

Each raffle ticket will cost one dollar, and some of the prizes that are included are best-selling books and comics for the children. In the end, we will present the earnings from these fundraising activities to the City Council in hopes to keep the Queens Library systems open. Overall, funding for this event can be very difficult. However, with help from community members and volunteers this book festival will be a success. Proper funding is

essential from donations, sponsors, and fundraising events to help aid and facilitate the event.

In the end, a successful book festival will promote reading among the population, and raise awareness of the potential threats to the available resources in the community. With everyone working together, we hope that we can keep these libraries open by raising enough money to show that the elimination of the resources will negatively affect the city. In the end, if these libraries stay open we will begin to conduct successful book festivals every year to make sure these valued resources remain available to the public.

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