

## **Teen Program Ideas from Milwaukee County Libraries**

### **Art & Writing Contest**

For the past five years the library has sponsored an art and writing contest. The contest is open to 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, with two age categories (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>). I contact local writers, artists, professors, and community members to act as judges. And I work with teachers and school media specialists to promote the contest.

There is a reception to announce the winners. All of the art submissions are displayed in the library for a month and photos are put online. All of the writing submissions are put online and the winners are collected in a commemorative book. The writing winners get a copy of the book and I also have extras available in the library. The timing of the event has changed throughout the years, right now winter seems to work the best.

### **Breaking Dawn Party**

Before the release of *Breaking Dawn* the library hosted a book release party. Activities included watching the Stephenie Meyer interview/Blue October concert, designing t-shirts (iron-on designs, fabric markers), and Twilight trivia contest with prizes. The library provided pizza, drinks, and snacks. The party was Friday, August 1, 2008 from 5-8:30. The party was open to 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade and registration was required.

### **Gaming Madness**

The Shorewood Public Library has done several open play events including National Gaming Day and three tournaments. I have done two Mario Kart Tournaments and one Super Smash Bros Brawl Tournament. I do not require registration, players simply sign-up when they arrive. I do a qualifying round to seed players for the first round and then go through elimination rounds, to end up with first, second, third, and fourth place finishers.

Prizes have included gift cards to Best Buy, Blockbuster Video, local restaurants (Culvers, Jimmy Johns, etc), and large boxes of candy. I've discovered the prizes are a secondary draw with the competition being the primary reason for participation. Most players just like to win and will show up to participate not knowing what the prizes are.

The library's Teen Advisory Board sells snacks at the events as a fundraiser. They sell chips, pretzels, candy, fruit snacks, water, juice, and soda. The money is used for library programs.

The Wii and games were purchased by the Friends of the Shorewood Library.

## **Summer Book Group**

Summer 2007 and 2008 I did Pizza and Pages, a book discussion for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders that included pizza and drinks. The first year I did really popular books like *Twilight*, *Uglies*, *Eragon*, and *Harry Potter* and had a tremendous turnout (average 12 participants). The following summer I chose less well known books like *Peak*, *Shark Girl*, *Airman*, and the *Luxe* and had a good turnout but not as high as the first summer (average 6).

The summer of 2009 I changed from pizza to movies and popcorn. I did Movie Talkers Book Group, where we watched the movie, enjoyed popcorn and drinks, and then spent 15-20 minutes comparing the book and the movie. I showed *City of Ember*, *Twilight*, *Coraline*, and *Inkheart* and had another great turnout (average 10).

## **Teen Summer Reading**

Shorewood has a teen summer reading program modeled after the youth program with modifications suggested by the Teen Advisory Board. The program has goals set for the students. At 1000 pages the students receive a congratulations pack of coupons for local businesses, restaurants and organizations. At 2000 pages they are registered in the grand prize drawing held at the end of the program in August. Students can get additional entries in the drawing by continuing to read, for each additional 1000 pages they can earn another entry. There is a maximum of six entries. The program is open to 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Students may count time reading books, magazines and internet pages (max 250 pages), and listening to audiobooks. Prizes have included hardcover and paperback books (I purchase through Book Depot an online wholesaler), gift cards to businesses/restaurants, tickets to local sports events, and miscellaneous smaller prizes.

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## **Greenfield Public Library Battle of the Bands**

Last February we held a Battle of the Bands in the library and it was so successful we hope to do it every year. Eight high school and middle school bands competed and over 150 people came to watch.

I advertised Battle of the Bands as a fundraiser for the library. We sold tickets ahead of time or at the door the night of the event. I sent fliers to local middle and high schools and had Teen Advisory Board members put up posters around town. One member of the Teen Advisory Board put up a poster at the music store where he takes guitar lessons, which drew in bands from other nearby cities.

I had any band who was interested in playing fill out an application (each band member had to have a parent fill out a permission slip and photo release form) and submit a demo CD or tape. The library rented a stage and spot lights for the event. We also asked one band to let all of the other bands use their drum set and microphones to save on set-up time between bands. The bands had to provide all other equipment. Each band played 3 songs and had 15 minutes to perform.

The competition was judged by local musicians and music teachers. I created a short form for the judges to fill out for each band. The top three bands received gift cards to a local music store. The bands were more interested in having the opportunity to perform than in winning a prize.

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## Read-A-Thon

Our teen reading read-a-thon is not a fundraiser. We have done it for several years. We do it on a Saturday. Usually it is held the last Saturday of Teen Read Week. This gives the schools a chance to promote it during Teen Read Week at school.

There is a committee of three people: myself, the Greendale Middle School Librarian (located near the public library) and a representative (parent) from St. Alphonsus School (K-8 school).

The event is only for students (any community, any school, homeschoolers) who are in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Younger students or younger siblings are not permitted.

Each of us—public library, middle school and St. Al's contribute whatever we can. (In other words, the costs are not divided equally.)

We have previously called the event "Read-o-Rama." We now call it "Reading Rampage." The event lasts from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. There is no pre-registration. Participants may come for as little or as long as they want. They must sign in and out on a Sign-In Sheet. (That way we have a record if any parent ever wants to know if their child attended.) We encourage them to stay for the entire hour, but sometimes appointments, etc. do not permit this.

During the reading time, silence is enforced (not a problem). Participants may listen to music with earphones that no one else can hear (very few do this).

We set up the meeting room with lawn chairs and lawn end tables, big pillows and some regular chairs. There is one regular table for the sign-in sheet and one regular table for the snacks and beverages.

The time is structured like this:

11:00 sign-in and pick up your snacks from the snack table (we have mostly junk food, soda, juice, water)

11:05 – 11:50 silent reading

11:50 – 12:00 break, get snacks, use rest room, clean up your area, hourly winners drawn (we draw for as many gift cards as we have probably 3-5 each hour. The gift cards are \$5 and \$10 mostly to the candy store, ice cream store and book store—ice cream store is most popular. All hourly entries are placed into one large drawing for the grand prize at the end of the day. You must be present for the hourly drawing to win. You do not need to be present for the grand prize drawing.

12:00 – 12:45 silent reading

12:45 – 1:05 longer break because of pizza, pizza, get snacks, use rest room, hourly winners drawn (remainder of the afternoon continues like this)

In the room, I do provide some YA library books. They may use them in the room without checking out. Most kids bring their own or have checked out books. They may go into the library during break time to check out books.

In the past we have sometimes had "celebrity" readers come to silently read for an hour—school superintendent, library staff, etc. We introduce these people, but do not allow them to give lengthy speeches. We have not done this the last couple of years with political/elected positions because we found they wanted to give speeches. We have also sometimes gotten "celebrity" letters to read to the kids—the president, the governor, etc., but mostly found that the kids weren't that interested in this.

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**Crafty Christmas** – This program was designed for kids in grades 5 & up and lasted one and a half hours. I set up a table for each craft (I had about 8-10 different crafts) with supplies and a finished example of the craft. Examples of few of the crafts were: wreaths made out of pine cones and floral evergreen glued onto cds, dream catchers made from cds and snowmen jars to put treats in. I got all of these crafts from various websites on the Internet. The kids were told to choose two crafts to make and take home. I also had a table set up with paper and stamping supplies. The kids could make Christmas cards and stationary along with their crafts.

At the beginning of the program I held up and briefly explained how to do each craft, then had the kids go at it. I floated around the room during the program and helped them with any problems. It was a great program that went very well and the kids had cool crafts to take home for themselves or to give as gifts.

**Spa Day** – I did this program during spring break for 4-8th graders (only girls signed up). It was an hour and a half long program. I started off the program with a little introduction to some relaxation techniques (tai chi, yoga, meditation) and then the girls made 3 spa products to take home: scented bath salts, body glitter, and oatmeal body scrub. I had tables set up with all the ingredients to make each craft and the girls moved from table to table. I got all my ideas from various spa-at-home books. They then decorated their products and I gave each a bag to decorate to take them home in. After they finished all their crafts, I made fruit smoothies to order and finished the program by passing out booklets I had made that contained relaxation methods and recipes for spa products that they could make at home.

**Vampire Prom** – I did this program for Teen Read Week in 2008. It was for teens ages 12-18. I did it afterhours on a Friday night from 7-9 pm. We had a costume contest, played Halloween charades, the kids picked teams and raced to see who could wrap their teammate up like a mummy with toilet paper the fastest, played Kill the Vampire (like pin the tail on the donkey, only you have a vampire cutout hanging up and the kids have to pin knives onto him) and did Twilight trivia.

I made “bleeding cupcakes” (cupcakes with jelly inside), a fiery snack mix, and other Halloween/spooky treats. I played Halloween and monster songs as the kids walked in and I decorated our meeting room in a red and black theme.

I would recommend that you have extra staff there to help keep a handle on the kids. I had 20 kids come and had 2 staff members helping me, which worked out great.

**Recycled Crafts** – I did this program for kids in 4-7<sup>th</sup> grade this past summer for 6 weeks. Each week we made a different craft or crafts from recycled materials. I spent no money on this program, except to replace our duct tape supply that we used up creating reusable shopping bags from coffee bags (see picture). For most of the crafts the kids had to bring in their own recycled supplies. For example, we made vases out of old wine bottles which we taped and then painted with old house paint from my basement. Another week the kids brought in old T-shirts and made pillows out of them.

For a few of the crafts, such as bottle cap pins, materials were donated. Local coffee shops saved and donated their empty coffee bags for our reusable bag craft. Not only were these crafts cheap, creating them really got the kids thinking about what can be done with the things we normally throw out. A mother of one of the participants in the class told me that her child was now actively going around the house trying to find old things that they were going to throw out to make crafts with. This was the best compliment that I could have received.

**Amazing Race @ Your Library** – This is one of my favorite programs to do. I have done it the past two years during Summer Reading and the kids and I have a ball. I generally do the program for grades 5 & up. It is based on the television show of the same name. The kids work in teams of two. There are 8 or 9 challenges that they have to complete. I have challenges where they have to use their library skills, such as trivia questions or finding certain items in the library, and I have physical challenges, like an obstacle course that they have to complete with their legs tied together.

The teams are colored-coded and each team is given a “passport” with all of the challenges written on it. The teams report to one central person who has all the challenge instruction sheets. Once a team has completed a challenge, the “Amazing Race Helper”, a staff member who is monitoring a challenge, marks it off on their passport and the team runs back to show the person handing out the challenge instruction sheets to receive their next challenge. The challenges are staggered so that not more than two teams are competing in the same challenge at once and creating a bottleneck.

This program does require a lot of staff. Each physical challenge has to have a staff member manning it. The mental challenges need less staff, as one staff member can check the teams’ answers and send them on with their next challenge.

The first team to complete all the challenges correctly and cross the finish line wins. I give prizes to the top three winning teams.

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## **Teen Read Week**

### ***Where in West Allis is Pocket Edward* Blog Contest Rules**

#### Contest Description:

Each weekday during Teen Read Week (Monday-Friday, October 19-23), a photo of Pocket Edward in a different West Allis location will be posted on the WAPL Teen Blog at <http://waplteens.blogspot.com/>. Teens will have the opportunity to guess where in West Allis Pocket Edward is located in that day's photo by emailing their guess to [waplteens@mcfls.org](mailto:waplteens@mcfls.org).

#### Eligibility:

1. Milwaukee county teens ages 12-18 or in grades 6-12 with a valid MCFLS library card.

#### To Enter:

1. Email each entry to [waplteens@mcfls.org](mailto:waplteens@mcfls.org).
2. Each day's Pocket Edward picture location guess should be emailed as a single, separate entry. Single entries with multiple days' picture location guesses will be disqualified.
3. Each entry should include the following information:
  - a. Name (first and last)
  - b. Preferred contact method (phone or email)
  - c. Day the Pocket Edward picture was posted
  - d. Location of Pocket Edward
4. Entries do not have to be submitted on the day the picture was posted. For example, teens may submit an entry for Tuesday's picture on Thursday.
5. One entry per teen per picture, for a total of 5 possible entries per teen.
6. ALL entries must be submitted to [waplteens@mcfls.org](mailto:waplteens@mcfls.org) by 11:59 PM Friday, October 23, 2009. No exceptions.
7. Only entries with the correct location of Pocket Edward will be eligible to win.

#### To Win:

From all correct entries submitted, 4 winners will be drawn at random for \$10 movie gift cards. Winners will be contacted by email or phone and announced (first name only) on the WAPL Teen Blog Monday, October 26, 2009.

Pocket Edward's secret locations will also be revealed on the blog on Monday, October 26, 2009.

## Twilight Prom

The West Allis Public Library threw a Twilight Prom on Thursday, November 20th to celebrate the release of the Twilight movie. Teens could start picking up their tickets on November 1st, and the prom sold out (tickets were free, but required for entry) a few days before the event. With the event limited to 65 teens, and only two teens who had registered did not show up, and we had five teens waiting that day, so we ended up with 68 teens at the prom.

With an advertised costume contest, about half of the teens came dressed in prom wear, with the rest wearing their Twilight tees. We started out the evening with snacks (soda, candy & chips), the Twilight movie soundtrack, and a slide show of movie stills. As the teens were coming in, they could vote on who they thought was the best-dressed Edward or Bella and get their picture taken with their friends in front of the movie poster.

Around 7:30, we watched the movie trailer on the big projection screen - we had some issues getting the sound loud enough, and you could have heard a pin drop in the room! We then played Twilight Trivia for about 30 minutes - the teens worked in groups of 8-10 to answer the trivia questions, and then had to write down the correct answer and run to a set of chairs in the front of the room with different point values attached. The teams that got the answers right were awarded the number of points on their chair, and the ones that got the answers wrong lost that number of points. It was pretty crazy, but everybody had fun!

At the end of the night, we raffled off a bunch of Twilight movie prizes - a movie calendar for 2009, the *Illustrated Companion*, movie posters, and T-shirts. We also tallied the costume contest votes, and the winners of the best Bella and Edward both won \$10 Marcus movie theater gift cards. The teens then promonaded around the library (per staff request!), with the costume contest winners at the head, then headed out to the midnight showings!

## Wii Gaming

The last Saturday of each month, the West Allis Public Library hosts a two-hour Wii gaming event for teens. Tournaments are capped at 24 gamers and must be pre-registered for, and Open Plays are open to whoever shows up. Currently, we only have Super Smash Bros. Brawl and Mario Kart.

The Open Plays consist of an hour of Mario Kart, followed by an hour of SSB Brawl. The gamers sign up in player order and rotate through, with the winner of each race/brawl staying in for the next race/brawl and the three other gamers swapping out. There are usually small prizes of candy bars or boxes for the gamer with the most wins at each game.

We have run two tournaments so far, one for SSB Brawl and one for Mario Kart. The rounds were bracketed, with a warm-up round determining player order. The prizes for each were a \$25 Game Stop gift card for the champion, with a \$15 and \$10 gift card for the 1st and 2nd runners-up, respectively.

All our prizes and programming are funded by the Friends of the West Allis Public Library.

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