

Mad Hatter Tea Party

Sheridan Co. Public Library System, Sheridan Fulmer Branch

Children

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

Mad Hatter Tea Party

Mar 9, 2016

\$251-500

\$\$

Byline

Christina Schmidt, Programming/Young Adult Services Coordinator, Sheridan County (Wyo.) Public Library System, Sheridan Fulmer Branch

November 2015 was the 150th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's "[Alice in Wonderland](#)." To commemorate this classic tale, the Sheridan County Public Library's Sheridan Fulmer Branch hosted a monthlong celebration.

As a celebration finale, we planned a Mad Hatter Tea Party. We had tea and cookies, decorated stovepipe hats and screened two film adaptations of "Alice in

Wonderland.”

Advanced Planning

This program required a fair amount of advance planning, mostly for the ordering and shipping of books, making homemade decorations and marketing.

We set up a table near the front desk and decorated it with homemade Alice-themed items. Using an existing grant, we purchased 85 copies of the book, which we set on the table for anyone to take home.

Marketing

I sent a press release to our local newspaper and radio stations, and I also advertised on our Facebook page and [purchased some Facebook ads](#) for approximately \$15. The media was very interested in the event and gave us great free coverage by promoting the event in advance.

I also created homemade bookmarks listing the date and time of the tea party and put them on the table. I also included bookmarks in all of the books that were distributed for free.

Budgeting

This program was relatively inexpensive to put on. We spent approximately \$250 purchasing the small paperback books that we gave to library patrons, but luckily this was covered by a local grant. This portion of the program could certainly be optional if money is not available.

Most of my decorations were homemade, so they required more time than money. We spent less than \$100 purchasing the [felt stovepipe hats from Oriental Trading](#)

[Company](#) (they were on sale!). For decorations for the hats, we simply raided existing craft supplies from the children's library, such as glue, glitter, ribbon and trinkets.

The final cost was the purchase of tea, cookies, cups and napkins. This was minimal, at about \$50.

Day-of-event Activity

Set-up on the day of the event required just one staff person and another helper, though I did come in early and spent probably two hours getting prepared. We moved the "Alice in Wonderland" decorations from the lobby table to the party room. We set up a whimsically decorated food table and made several carafes of hot herbal tea, labeled with their variety. We also put out lemonade for those who did not want to try the tea and a couple different types of cookies.

Program Execution

Participants helped themselves to the food as they came in, and after a few minutes we let them begin decorating their hats. We simply set up a couple of tables and put out bottles of glue and a variety of decorative items for the kids to choose from. We let them have about a half hour to decorate and eat more food before starting the movies.

We finished by screening the original Disney "Alice in Wonderland" cartoon in the main party room and we set up a second television in the children's library theater to screen the newer Johnny Depp "Alice in Wonderland" film for older participants. Public performance rights for both films were obtained via [Movie Licensing USA](#). Both the 2010 Johnny Depp version and 1951 original Disney cartoon were listed as available for public performance.

The program was very successful; we had 46 adults and children attend, which is higher than average for our programs. I think it was appealing for several reasons: we held it during the winter when there are limited outdoor activities in our area; it was appropriate and advertised for all ages; and we built up interest during the

month through the book giveaway and the decorated table near the front desk.

On the negative side, having the party and the hat decorating and a screening of the movies made for a long afternoon, so some of the younger children and their parents did not stay the entire time.

Advice

As to tweaking the program, you could certainly skip the cartoon if you wanted to target older participants, or you could just do the cartoon if you wanted to make it a children's program. You could also skip the purchase and free distribution of books, as this is expensive. However, people really enjoyed this aspect of it and all 85 books were picked up within two weeks.

Supporting Materials

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- Feedback (Coming Soon!)
- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

Slideshow Images



Image



More Programs

Sep 6, 2011

Young Adult (17 - 20)+ |

[Image](#)



[Film Programming That's Off the Wall](#)

Audiences:

Audience

Young Adult (17 - 20)

Adults (21 and up)

Intergenerational

Feb 18, 2016

+ | \$

[Image](#)



Film Screenings 101

Audiences:

Nov 18, 2015

Adults (21 and up)+ | \$

[Image](#)



[Crazy Cat People Party](#)

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)

Feb 1, 2016

Adults (21 and up)+ | \$

[Image](#)



'Downton Abbey' Viewing and Tea

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)