

YOUTH SERVICES NOTES

Week of January 26, 2015

No. 194

Southside Regional Library

R. T. Arnold Library Teen Space

[The] attached photos show the progress of our “brand new” Teen Space at the R. T. Arnold Library. We are very excited to have a special space for Young Adults in our library. Thanks to so many community members, the Friends of the R. T. Arnold Library and organizations, it is beautiful. – Gloria Taylor



More pictures on page 3

From Enid's desk...

Summer Food Program -- Ordering Materials

The Library of Virginia is working with the Virginia Department of Health to promote and enhance Virginia's public libraries participation in the [USDA Summer Food Program](#). **More libraries participating in the summer food program is a goal of the Governor and First lady of Virginia.** The Summer Food Program provides free meals to children and teens during the summer months. The program is funded by the USDA and participating libraries do **NOT** pay for the lunches; they are provided at no cost to your library or your program.



We have created an online form using Survey Monkey for librarians to complete. The form asks if your library would like bookmarks, and, if so, how many sets (100 bookmarks per set). The form also asks if your library will be partnering with an agency to serve a meal or if your library will be the agency that is serving a meal. We are looking into providing libraries that partner with a site or that serve as a site to receive a selection of books to be used in the program.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/summerfood2015>

Here is the scoop – These kids are already using your library during the summer. They are attending your library program, playing games or just hangin' out in the library. Often times they are grumpy, unfriendly, or disruptive because they are hungry. Sometimes they eat junk food because it is cheap. You know that when you are hungry you don't pay attention – now think about being hungry all summer. If you had to go back to school, would you be ready? Your library already offers a preschool storytime – the parents are there in the children's area. You then have a good idea of the number of children who will attend. It is not that much of a stretch to add a cold lunch to the program. You can add some health activity (washing hands) – you

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Youth Services Notes

is issued weekly by

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Thanks for the photos and information!

- ◇ **Gloria Taylor**, R. T. Arnold Library, Southside Regional Library
- ◇ The usual suspects – PUBYAC, ALSC, Virginia Department of Health, USDA



Dates to Remember

Virginia Conferences

October 21-23, 2015..... Virginia Library Association Annual Conference..... Richmond

National Conferences

January 30–February 3, 2015 American Library Association Midwinter Conference..... Chicago

June 25-30, 2015 American Library Association Annual Conference San Francisco

Online Courses

January 12, 2015–February 21, 2015 Bilingual Storytime and Library Outreach (Katie Scherrer) online

Training

February 6, 2015 STEM Workshop with Science Museum of Virginia..... Franklin

February 13, 2015..... STEM Workshop with Science Museum of Virginia..... King George

February 19, 2015..... Early Reading Instructional Strategies and Resources (VDOE & LVA) Charlottesville

February 20, 2015..... STEM Workshop with Science Museum of Virginia..... Fishersville

February 26, 2015..... STEM Workshop with Science Museum of Virginia..... Lebanon

February 27, 2015..... STEM Workshop with Science Museum of Virginia..... Bedford

March 6, 2015 STEM Workshop with Science Museum of Virginia..... Danville

March 18, 2015..... Early Reading Instructional Strategies and Resources (VDOE & LVA)..... Richmond

March 31, 2015..... Storytime Share-n-Tell..... Martinsville

R. T. Arnold Library Teen Space

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From [ALSC Blog](#)

How To Have A Successful Author Visit by Sarah Bean Thompson

In December, my library was very fortunate to be selected as one of the stops on [Jan Brett's tour](#) for her latest release *The Animals' Santa*. We've hosted authors before at the library, but never anything this large. We had around 800 people show up for the event and people drove from Kansas City, Arkansas and across Missouri to hear Ms. Brett speak and get books signed. We had a lot of fun and the event was fantastic and we couldn't have been happier with the way everything turned out. But I learned a few things along the way on how to ensure a successful author visit.

Create a schedule of events for staff as well as listed job duties and descriptions of what is expected. This was incredibly helpful since we had numerous staff involved in the event from various branches and departments.

Use a ticketing system for the signing line. We used tickets created by our Community Relations department that also doubled as bookmarks. These were passed out as families came into the library the day of the event. During the signing, we called groups of 25 into the auditorium and had the crowd organized so the signing line went smoothly-and there were no mad dashes to get in line.

Have activities while people are waiting. Expect a long line and a lot of waiting. We turned our story hour room into an activity room with crafts, trivia, and games based on Jan Brett's books to entertain children why they waited.

Limit the number of items to be signed. Ms. Brett was very gracious and signed numerous items for our patrons, but the line was just too long for her to continue the amount that she started with. We had to cut down the number of items signed by the end to keep things moving along. Next time I would have a set number to start with and advertise that so everyone knows what to expect.

If possible, check in with previous tour stops for tips and advice. We were able to talk to the previous tour stop about how many people they had, how they handled the lines, and any other tips. This helped us prepare and give us an idea of what to expect.

Think about parking! We thought we had everything planned—until we talked to the previous tour stop and realized the day of the event we didn't

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**“The end of reading is not more books
but more life.”**

~ Holbrook Jackson ~

**“The libraries have become
my candy store.”**

~ Juliana Kimball ~

**“The worst thing about new books
is that they keep us
from reading the old ones.”**

~ Joseph Joubert ~

**“Any book that helps a child to form a
habit of reading, to make reading one
of his deep and continuing needs, is
good for him.”**

~ Richard McKenna ~

How To Have A Successful Author Visit

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know what we were going to with parking! Next time I think signage for parking and even someone directing traffic would be very helpful.

Make sure you have food and water for your visiting author—and your staff. We had a break room with snacks and water for staff and made sure we had a stash of water bottles for Ms. Brett as well. We tried to give staff managing the lines short breaks to get something to eat or drink as needed. I would make sure you have someone on your schedule that can give breaks to staff along the way!

People don't understand what "personalization" means. We offered two books to be personalized and had Post-it notes for the names to be written on for Ms. Brett to see. What I realized in line is that people didn't understand the difference between just getting a book signed and getting it signed with a name to someone specific. They also didn't understand that they couldn't write out a long inscription such as "To Mrs. Nelson's class-you're a great group of readers". I think more explanation on what it means to get a book personalized from the line managers and book seller table would be helpful.

Expect a few grumps and complaints. Not everyone will be satisfied with everything—and that's OK—you can't please everyone no matter how hard you try. I would say 95% of the feedback we received about the event was how smoothly everything ran, how friendly the staff was, and how happy they were the library was offering this event. There were a few minor complaints along the way—the lines were long, they couldn't get a large stack of books signed, but these were largely out of our control. Once we explained that we had a large crowd and we needed to move everyone through the line, people were understanding. And the positive comments outweighed the negatives and we focused on that!

Celebrate a job well done. Make sure you thank the author, any tour assistants they may have, the publisher, and your staff on a job well done. Send the publisher feedback on your event and pictures if you have them—they love to know how events turned out!

Sarah Bean Thompson is a Youth Services Manager for Springfield-Greene County (MO) Library

Posted January 22, 2015 



Summer Food Programs—Ordering Materials

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include other health programs, such as inviting a dentist or dental hygienist to show how to brush teeth. If there is already an established summer food program in your area, think about promoting reading to children and teens at that site. Contact the site and see if library staff could promote upcoming library programs, bring the program to the site, offer all the children a meal, or sign people up for the summer reading program. You all know that teens and food go together – show a movie and a healthy meal, or provide a craft project and a healthy meal. Also, consider using teens to help in the program and teach some job skills. (Remember, these count as two programs – and also remember to record the statistics for Bibliostats). This is Virginia and there is no reason for any child to go hungry this summer.

I do realize that with the winter weather outside, summer may seem like a long ways off, but please do the best you can in answering these questions. **If you don't know if you will be a site for the Summer Food Program, but are interested in learning more, please see the links below AND please include this information on the form so that I have your contact information.**

■ **More information about the Summer Food Program can be found here:**

<http://readvirginia.com/librarians.htm>

■ **Also, California has more information: Planning, Logistics, and Meal Service Regulations**
<http://www.cla-net.org/?615>

■ **Please note the following if you are interested in the program:**

- A sponsor is an agency who makes the meal and often delivers the meal.
- A site serves the meal – Libraries are SITES for the summer food program. They also have a clean area to serve the meal, attend training by the Sponsor, take count of participation and report to Sponsor and clean area after use.
- To find a SPONSOR, begin by contacting the Virginia Department of Health. Sponsors have to apply and be approved by the Virginia Department of Health.

Contact information

Monica Jackson
monica.jackson@vdh.virginia.gov

Phone: 804-864-7757

Mailing Address:

Virginia Department of Health
109 Governor Street, 9th Floor
Division of Community Nutrition
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Attn: SFSP 

From PUBYAC**Passive Programs / Hunts**

Hi, everyone! This is our 2nd year of having Larry the Library Elf hide with his book in the Children's Dept. He's in a different place every day, reading a different book. The kids have to find him and tell us what book he is reading and they get a sticker. Half-way through the month, we already have 242 participants! This has been a very popular program and we'd like to do more activities like this. So I'm asking the Great Brain for ideas.

I recently read of a library that hides poems during National Library Week and thought that was a really neat idea. So I'm wondering what other neat ideas are out there along these lines that we're missing out on. Anything that you had success with, that the kids loved, etc. would be welcome.

Also, we had letters to injured soldiers that the kids could color and write messages on out last month, and it was a big hit. Even our mayor heard about it and came to do a letter! So we're looking for other ideas like this, too. And passive make-it-take-it craft ideas would also be welcome.

Up until now, we haven't really done these kind of programs/activities, but they seem to be very popular and we'd like to continue with them. We'll be undergoing a renovation in the middle of next year, so our program space is disappearing for a few months, and we'd especially like to have these types of programs for the kids to participate in even though our physical space may be compromised. Any and all suggestions are welcome! I'll post a compilation after the new year.

Thanks! Posted December 16, 2014 by Kelly Girard, Asst. Head / Children's Dept., Woodridge Public Library, Woodridge, IL. Hi - I had several requests for this, so I'm finally getting around to compiling the replies that I received last month. Lots of good ideas - thanks for sharing, everyone! Posted January 26, 2015.

 Similar to your library, our library has had such success with "hide and seek" programs.

image: <http://animatedcliparts.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/heart-clip-art-AT-1.png>

In February, for Love Your Library Month, we hide 4 sets of ten hearts in the room. They are hidden very easily, on bookshelves, never between books. We've found that only library staff can hide them or else the children get too creative and you'll not see some hearts until six months later. Each set is labeled 1 - 10. Ask the child to collect numbers 1 - 10, bring them up to you when they have and have them count them to

you. If they do that they get a piece of candy (Tootsie Rolls or Dum Dums) or a sticker.

image: <http://www.elmwoodparkzoo.org/images/meettheanimals/images/amphibians/Blue-Poison-Dart-Frog.jpg>

In March during Spring Break, we hide 4 sets of 10 frogs. We find real photos and write the scientific and common names on them. When the child collects all ten we might ask them which frog they like the best... just to have a conversation. Then they get a sticker (of frogs, of course!)

image: <http://ibytemedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/turkeyindisguise.jpg>

From Veteran's Day until Thanksgiving we hide 4 sets of ten turkeys. On the back of each set, starting with #1 the Thanksgiving Day poem is glued on (we shortened it). We just cut up the poem to make it fit somewhat evenly over the ten turkeys. Children get a choice of candy or sticker if they count the turkeys # 1-10 and then they get a second choice if they read the whole poem aloud to the librarian.

Over the river, and through the wood,
To grandmother's house we go;
* The horse knows the way *
* To carry the sleigh*
Through the white and drifted snow.

* Over the river, and through the wood-*
* Oh, how the wind does blow!*

It stings the toes
And bites the nose
As over the ground we go.

* Over the river, and through the wood,*
And straight through the barn-yard gate.
* We seem to go *
* Extremely slow,-*
* It is so hard to wait!*

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Winter Reading 2015



Passive Programs / Hunts

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Over the river and through the wood—
Now grandmother's cap I spy!

* Hurrah for the fun! *

* Is the pudding done?*

* Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!*

I should add that for each of these items it's a standard print out, backed with colorful copy- or construction paper and then laminated. We use these year after year. Every now and then, we have to print out extras because certain numbers are missing.

Each week of December we offer a paper ornament craft. We like an activity that includes various materials like glue sticks, crayons, cotton balls, pipe cleaners and using a hole puncher! Our library lobby has a Christmas tree that starts out bare and then as the month progresses, kids get to hang up their ornament on it. They also like to take their craft home. I attached a picture of this. There are doves, candlesticks and stockings. We're a team of 4 in the children's room and we plan in advance, each taking one craft per week. We then try to have volunteers do a lot of the cutting and prep.

Since our library is located downtown with a small shopping area, we do a downtown hide and seek during our summer reading program. A mascot (that will be raffled off at the end) is taken to different stores each week. At a weekly library program we read the clue as to where the mascot is hiding. We typically choose our city hall, police station, fire station, city pool, the library, book store, and pizza place. Like your library elf program, the mascot has something different at each location. When a kid comes in they fill out the ticket saying, "I found Pete the Parrot at _____. He was holding _____ (this country's) flag." (That was for "One World Many Stories" theme.) Then the ticket asks for their name, phone and parent's email. At the end of the summer we draw one winner of the mascot and then several winners of smaller prizes.

 This is similar to the letters for wounded soldiers that you do, but I've been doing this for several years at my library and I originally got the idea from Silvia Kraft-Walker at the Glenview Public Library in Glenview, IL.

During the month of January we invite patrons to decorate valentines (we provide the supplies) that we send to our state veterans retirement homes and veterans hospitals for the nationwide Valentines for Veterans program. We also promote the program with the local boy scout and girl scout troops, schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc. We usually collect about 3,000 valentines at the end of the month and I post a final

tally with some photos of my favorites on the library's webpage and Facebook page.

 We are a small library and only have one program room, so I do "drop in" programs (same idea as passive). I am going to have an ongoing "Boredom Busters for School Break Drop-In," anytime we are open during their vacation (16 days!) I use craft kits for "rainy day" activities. Usually, they call for cutting and pasting, but no additional mess. I will be using some of these and have created more for this break. I put this all in a large container. I like to keep sticker scenes, there are many on Oriental Trader, for the younger kids.



This break, and weekly during the summer reading club I have a scavenger hunt and trivia question. I joke that it is "sneakily educational." The scavenger hunt involves identify different sections and materials within the library, such as, "what animal is hanging above the biography books?" The trivia questions involve using good old-fashioned reference books. I give out an extra incentive, a prize, for completing this during the summer reading club. I put out a request for, and will be posting the results shortly, for STEAM activity kits. I am calling it "science projects" in front of the kids. Again, they are no mess activities. I would love to hear about more everybody! I always keep out board games, puzzles, toys, and coloring sheets for anyone who drops by. I hope this helps!

 I am very interested in more passive program ideas! Kelly I love your Larry the Library Elf! Two summers ago we had a fantasy theme and we hid pictures of fairies and elves and gnomes throughout the library. Kids had to find them and count how many there were. At the end of the summer we went through and anyone that guessed right was put in a draw.

 I have great success with I spy. I have computer clip art pictures all around the library (fall theme, this summer super heroes, characters of wimpy kid, ...themes change) I make two copies one for the poster board and one to stick around the library. I also have a check list for the items they find. Once or twice a year we vote (always near election day) for favorite: book or dog, or cat, etc. I have one set of ballots for kids and

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Passive Programs / Hunts

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one for adults (two different colors). Ballots have several names as well as “one not listed” with a blank. I find it helps to know what people are interested in.

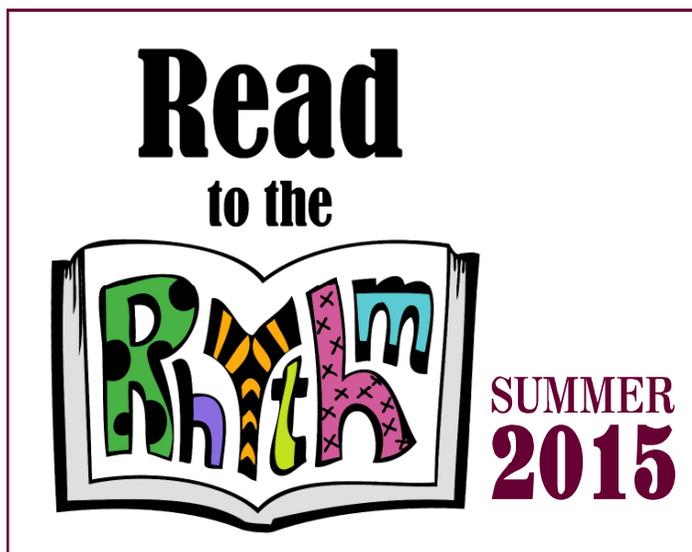
 We’ve had a lot of interest in our interactive displays which were very close to our help desk so we could watch. Some have been more durable than others. The kids really got a kick out of using lost and found cars we had left over and washi tape to wheel them around roads “Fuel Your Mind”. We also had a life sized gingerbread house with Velcro candy decorations and the kids could change them and take a photo op in front. Another good one was we copied the NYC wish wall in Times Square; only everyone wrote their new years resolutions on Post-its. Here is our Pinterest. We’re hoping to make a fruit stand later in the year.

<http://www.pinterest.com/duxfreelibrary/library-displays/>

 My library does lots of stealth programs. I’m a big fan of that type of programming in general & believe strongly that they will be an important aspect of the library of the future. Here are some ideas:

Participatory Murals

We have a seasonal mural on the wall along the entrance to the children’s area & supplies at the Children’s Desk where children can create a piece for the mural, label it with *first name only, & then get a piece of tape from the librarian to hang their piece. Right now we have a snow scene (“There’s Snow Better Time to Read”) & the children are adding snowflakes. In the fall, we had “Fall into Reading” & the children added autumn leaves to the scene.



Activity Pages

We actually started to provide these during a severe staffing shortage, when regular programming needed to be seriously curtailed. We’re up & running with a full staff & programming schedule now, but have continued providing activity sheets, as we’ve found the customers enjoy them & that checking to see “what there is this week” has become an enjoyable part of the library routine for many families. We change the activity pages weekly, but always have at least two (& often more) available--at least one for older kids & one that pre-readers can handle. If vandalism is a problem, stick to activity pages that can be completed in pencil (mazes, dot to dots, word searches, Sudoku, hidden pictures, etc.).

Read 20

This is sort of a mini-summer reading program that lasts for one month sometime during the school year. Kids get a page with icons to color for each day of the program; every day that they read (or are read to) for at least 20 minutes outside of school hours, they color an icon. If they color in the entire sheet, they can bring it back to the library and exchange it for a prize. (We don’t have prize money in the budget--our prizes are always whatever we can get donated.)

Estimation Jars

Always very popular. Kids don’t always have to win what is in the jar. They can estimate the number of buttons or craft sticks or whatever you have on hand & win whatever nice donation you’ve recently received. (Just be clear on what the prize will be.) My favorite all time estimation jar was one spring when we filled the jar with sidewalk chalk--in that case, the child with the closest estimation did win all the chalk. Keep the jar on a service desk where staff can keep an eye on it.

Find Yoda / pumpkins, etc.

Hide a bunch of pictures around the children’s area--if a child finds one, s/he brings it up to the desk for a small prize (like a bookmark or hand stamp). We’ve done Yoda on May 4th (“May the 4th be with you”), pumpkins in October, etc. Generally, the rule is one prize for a child & I rehide some of the pictures that have been turned in, if need be.

Passport to Reading

Kids get a small passport which is stamped for each activity they complete. Reading books is part of the program, but not all the activities are “read a book.” There are also activities that encourage kids to interact with the staff, use maps, look up information on the children’s database, etc. (There are 2 different levels of activities for older & younger kids.) Collecting all of the passport stamps earns one a ticket to a special event.

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Passive Programs / Hunts

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Name the Whale

I just mention this because you are renovating. After our last major renovation, a local artist painted a mural on the wall in the children's room. (We have an "under the sea" theme.) We then had a contest to "name the whale." The winning name was stenciled into the mural & the winner received admission tickets donated by a local aquarium.

Activity Centers

We have activity centers with materials & activities that are changed on a weekly basis. These are very popular & definitely bring people into the library. However, they can take on a life of their own, in terms of planning & reparation. I'd suggest starting with the activity pages mentioned above--they are simplest to maintain & can help you gauge how much stealth programming you're able to handle. Just as an example, here's what we have out now:

Make & Take Craft: We currently have a "happy new year" craft available along with a Very Hungry Caterpillar hat. (A local community theater group performs an adaptation of a children's book each year around the December holidays. This year they are doing the VHC.)

Fine Motor Center: We started this after reading that fine motor skills are in a bit of a decline with the increased use of tablets, smart toys, and so forth. (Kids do learn from technology, but they don't necessarily improve their motor skills). Out currently: "Tracing Seasonal Numbers" (1 page focuses on 2015; the other page on the numeral & word "seven"; Peg building--peg boards & pegs are out, with the sign instructing kids to see if they can "build a tower almost as high as the one that the ball drops from on New Year's Eve.")

Investigate: (A catch all term for everything that doesn't fall into the above categories. In addition to activity pages for Kwanzaa & New Year's, we have a felt board for arranging Kwanzaa symbols; a craft type activity where every step teaches a different fact about Kwanzaa, & a magnetic writing board for spelling out New Year's wishes (there's a printed list of suggestions that kids can copy if they wish).

 We just did a scavenger hunt that was not an original thought of mine, but an idea I saw and tweaked just a bit. The kids get a sheet with clues and need to find the location in our department. Once there they need to write a title of a book in that section (any title is fine). They will also find a laminated picture of a book character and need to write down the name of the character. We tried to think of characters that most would know but of course, there were times when they didn't. We would then tell them the author of the book 

and they would find that and the name of the character.

This was hugely successful! We had lots of participants, many who did it with a friend or a parent. They ALL learned a lot about the different sections and how to find books, including the parents! They enjoyed the process and then we had a large trunk that held a bunch of donated books as prizes. They were paperbacks in great shape and they loved getting a free book! The trunk served as a great draw for more kids to get into the Scavenger Hunt. I love this type of program as it includes anyone at any time they can come in.

 Hunts are really popular here too! We had a library-wide hunt this summer where we hid the planets of the solar system throughout the building. Once they discovered all the planets they'd bring their completed hand-out to the Youth Desk for a sticker. We've used Velcro dots to attach small laminated figures to furniture and walls which kids find and return to a centrally located poster; they love these hunts because once they find all the figures, they'll go back and re-hide them for the next player. Currently, we have a holiday themed hunt with 6 stations. At each station a winter holiday is described so participants not only have to find the riddles, they have to solve them (testing their knowledge of winter celebrations) before bringing a completed sheet to the desk for a stamp. I love the sound of your Library Elf program--what fun!

 Here's a compilation of some ideas: <http://www.pinterest.com/lisamshaia/passive-programming-ideas/>

 We do a hunt every month. We just do it with pictures that are laminated and then hung up around

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"As a general rule, librarians are a kick in the pants socially, often full of good humor, progressive, and naturally, well read. They tend to be generalists who know so much about so many things that they are full quite the opposite of the boring old poops they have been made to be. Most of them are full of life, some even full of the devil."

~ Bill Hall ~

Editorial page editor
Lewiston (Idaho) Tribune
September 9, 2001

Passive Programs / Hunts

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the library. For example, now we have pictures of Christmas things around the library. We make a sheet of all the pictures (we title them) and the kids cross off what they find. They can ask for hints but we make them look for most of them first. Some will find one and want hints for the remaining 14. *lol* When they get their list done, they can choose a prize from the treasure chest. The prizes can be stickers, tattoos, anything we have left over from other activities.

🐦 Kelly, we have an “art wall” in our Teen Zone, which happened totally by accident when we moved back into our renovated building. We put out art supplies for opening week, thinking it might be fun for a few teens to do a drawing or two. Within the week, they had plastered the wall above the drawing area with their creations, all on their own (we had put out masking tape for other reasons). So for the nearly two years we’ve been here, the art supplies have stayed out, and the drawings continue to appear. I get 3-4 new pieces of art each week, and 2-3 times that much paper vanishes, so I presume they take a lot home.

There is some “waste”, and the little kids do a moderate amount of drawing, too (I take their pictures down pretty quickly to keep the teens happy), but all in all it is a pretty low-maintenance activity. I’ve only had defacement of a few drawings happen on two occasions, and once had someone “glitter” a bunch of pictures (no, I didn’t provide it; I think they brought it themselves).

🐦 During our winter break we’re planning a candy cane hunt in the library. Laminated paper candy canes with holiday words on them will be “hidden” throughout the library. Customers will find the candy canes and write the holiday word on a game sheet we’ll provide. Participants will receive a mini candy cane and a candy cane bookmark for playing the game. We haven’t done this before so we’re hoping it will be well received.

Another activity I did just this morning with a group of second grade students was a picture/small clues scavenger hunt/tour. It could certainly be done by individuals visiting as well. Basically I had a sheet with short clues accompanied by a small picture of something in the kids’ area. The pictures didn’t show the entire item. Kids then checked things off as they found them and they asked staff for help as needed... of course, that was intentional to have them seek out staff for assistance. They had a blast and I gave them all bookmarks for participating.

🐦 Some time ago, during National Poetry Month, we did ‘Found Poems’. We had ripped out pages of magazines and cut out word and phrases and people could use them to create free verse poems (mostly ads or headlines, as those had the biggest fonts) which we posted around the library. I know we had pictures of our favorites, but I could only find one.

It’s a lot of prep work, and you have clean up the work area every day, as it can get messy, but if you have student volunteers, they can rip out the pages, and you get some wonderful results.

🐦 Our library does a guessing game program every month. We have a small glass case right across from our reference desk in Children’s, so every month we put a lot of something on a shelf and the kids have to guess how many are in the case. We have little guessing game slips at the desk and a pretty box the guesses go in. Each child gets one guess, per day. At the end of the month we announce the winner who gets a prize (typically a book or small Lego set). We do not collect contact information (or we’d have to shred every little slip of paper). Instead we put a flyer announcing the winner at the desk, and typically within the next few weeks they see their name and claim their prize!

For the last six months we have been doing Legos because they generate a LOT of guesses (and I own a ridiculous amount for an adult!). Other favorites include candy in a jar and displays of staff collections (here it’s been Hello Kitty items and seashells). Currently one of our crafty staff members made cute DIY teacher gift examples filled with goldfish crackers and you guess the goldfish. The winner will get a little Lego Snowman kit. Next month will feature Harry Potter Legos to showcase our upcoming HP Party. It’s very easy and for about \$10-\$15 a month you can fill the case and buy a prize! We get hundreds of entries every month and the kids love it. 📖

