Report on Libraries Outreach Activity: Kids' Story Time @ Odegaard

Amanda Hornby, Emilie Vrbancic, Linda Whang | Undergraduate Student Success Team, Odegaard Library

Kids' Story Time @ Odegaard | Saturday, October 1st | 1:00 PM–3:00 PM
This Dawg Daze event was marketed to undergraduate student parents, encouraging them to bring their kids to campus for a fun and informal event with story times, crafts, snacks and time to find great picture books they could check out from the UW Libraries' 50,000+ children's book collection.

Goals and Outcomes

1. Create a welcoming, family-friendly library event for undergraduate student parents.
2. Promote the Libraries' children's book collection to undergraduate student parents.
3. Reach undergraduate student parents to inform them of relevant Libraries services and resources.

Partners

First Year Programs

Resources

Funding: Funds spent on refreshments and craft supplies. Funding was provided by First Year Programs.
Planning Committee: Kathleen Collins, Sarah Schroeder, Linda Whang, Amanda Hornby
Event Staff: 3 Odegaard staff members, 2 Odegaard Research and Learning Services GAs

Activity Overview

The overall goal of the Kids' Story Time was to promote the library as a welcoming place for student parents and highlight the UW Libraries' extensive children's literature collection. Assessment of the event included headcount, observations, and staff reflection. The Kids' Story Time was attended by 6 kids and 10 adults: 3 UW student parents with 2 kids attended, 7 adult staff from Odegaard Library, First Year Programs and the Student Parent Resource Center, and the staff's 4 kids.

The story time book selections were themed around "back to school" and Halloween -- the story time books were very well-received by all the kids in attendance. Two of the parent attendees were international students (one a graduate student); the parent translated the story time books from English to her daughter in her native language. Odegaard GA Sarah Schroeder read several books that, according to our observations, captivated the kids. The kids answered Sarah's questions about the story: Sarah: "How would you feel if you had to wear that costume?" Kid 1: "Embarrased!" Sarah: "Who do you think is under there?" Kid 2: "His mom!"

Craft tables were set up with paper and drawing materials, easy crafts and a button-maker for the adults and older kids. A small selection of children's books was "curated" for the Story Time on a book truck, enabling parents and kids to look through and choose books to check out in the library and take home. The event was held in Odegaard 220, which had plenty of space to spread out the various crafts, book collections and story time circles.

photo credits: Amanda Hornby

The event lasted for two hours, with three different story times, but for the small size of attendees a two hour event was too long. The planning team had originally hoped to send a post-event survey to UW parent attendees, but given the low attendance (only 3 UW student parents), we abandoned the survey idea. One UW parent attendee did send us an email message later that day, praising the event: "Thank you! Honestly, this was nice because it was so chill."

Conclusions

Ultimately, we did not meet our key event goal of reaching undergraduate student parents to inform them of relevant Libraries services and resources. Given the low attendance and lack of undergraduate student attendees, the planning team's biggest questions about why the event was unsuccessful centered around appropriate timing, improved marketing and partnering with the Student Parent Resource Center. Ultimately, the staff time and effort outweighed the potential positive impact of the event.

Recommendations & Resources Requested

We do not recommend putting on this event for undergraduate students next year. If there is interest in doing the event again, we recommend:

- Partnering with the Student Parent Resource Center to determine the best timing and audience for the event, such as graduate student parents.
- Improve the marketing and promotion for the event.
- Use the basic program model (storytimes, crafts, snacks, variety of child and parent activities), but over a shorter time period (1 hour).
- Include children's books in languages other than English when pulling books for the event from the Libraries' collection.