ARRT Book Club Study Leadership Topic
Summer and Winter Reading Programs: Successes, New Ideas, and Areas of Opportunity
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Do you do a winter read program in addition to summer reading?
How has that compared in participation?
Share examples of "successes" (summer and/or winter)

- Bingo cards seem to always be successful and enjoyable for patrons.
- One library used the theme: "How's this for a Mug Shot?" The prIze was a campfire mug filled with hot chocolate. Mug cost was $2.50 per mug.
- Several libraries build winter reads sign-up into programs for public.
- Another idea is the Good Reads Challenge which set a goal to start in January. It's seen as a twelve-month prolonged investment.
- Another library is planning a year-long reading challenge for 2020. Every month a unique, separate experience will be planned.
- One library will do a 5-week program January 1-February 5. They encourage patrons to join as New Year's resolution.
- One library does sign up as part of a concert event with hot chocolate. Program takes place mid- December to early February. Participants receive a hot cocoa packet at signup. There is a separate challenge and separate drawing at end. They allow homebound and online participation as well. It's very casual--read what you want.

In terms of participation, have you seen an increase, decrease, or steady numbers?
(Winter reading in addition to summer reading comparisons, participation, etc.)
Share thoughts about having participants log number of books vs. having to match/meet requirements (such as book bingo, or other) or having a universal qualifying requirement (ex: everyone must read 5)

- Another library agreed that book Bingo worked really well for summer as well. Cards were different for adults and kids but they all had the same bingo experience. Sign-up began at the summer reading kick-off party, where each kid was given a book. The program was advertised in the schools. Everything is done through the kid's desk so they can get the whole family involved and signed up. There was an outdoor carnival for the whole family. The parking lot was closed, there were Bozo buckets, a balloon guy, and sign up.
- Another library had a food truck for the kickoff. The fire department was there and everywhere you go there is a place to sign up for the program.
- Another library has a huge volunteer army of kids that work the summer reading as soon as they are done with fifth grade. Kids sit at the prize table. There are crafts, ice cream, and fun things for kids to do. This keeps kids involved. 2000 kids sign up. Population is 15,000.
- Libraries also do sign-up at Farmer's Markets.

- Another library's statistics:

2016 Winter Reading=120 total for Adult and Teens as opposed to 450 participants for Summer Reading. The following year the prize was a soup pot.
2017 Winter Reading=348 total for Adult and Teens. Participation nearly tripled.

Discuss experience with book tracking software.
How do you "keep track" or log summer reading entries?
What has worked best for your library?

- Read Squared—staff side is super easy to use.
- Wandoo is commonly referred to "Wan don't" to staff. Has not had good success rates, statistics crashed.
- Good tracking software helps keep track of who is owed a prize, patron picks, software links to collection, and website used for collection development.
- One library uses Wandoo for 1000 books before kindergarden. It can upload pictures.
- Patrons can register or log online and link on website.
- Stand-alone site through Wandoo can do booklist or random reading. Patrons will need to reset their password.
- Libraries agreed that the next step needs be a mobile app for reading program in order for it to be useful. We need a staff member to review this software.
- Agreed, mobile "scannable" reading program software is where the future could be.

Have you had any "fails" that you can share and we can learn from?

- One library said they put in as much effort in winter reading as in summer reading and it just ended up exhausting the staff.
- The next year was much better. Winter was brought back as super casual.
- They had a prize and gift cards.
- The library found simple is better, not as elaborate, super low key, patrons read 2 books.
- Library also had a winter read kickoff party Friday night in winter for families and children.
- One member stated that for it to be truly successful it needs to be embraced by the entire library and staff needs to be involved through the planning process.

Program Notes Compiled by Mary Constance Back
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