Virtual Program Successes

- Mario Kart tournament
  - Uncertainty about platform, but thinks it may be Zoom
  - Shira’s note: probably actually run on Switch - it wouldn’t be possible to run a tournament on Zoom, since attendees would need their own remotes/Joy-cons
- Read to dogs
  - Virtual version of a popular in-person program
  - A staff member has a dog. Attendees make Zoom appointments to read to the dog
- Weekly craft videos
  - Recorded on iPhone, edited on laptop, posted to YouTube
- Book clubs
  - Some have been unsuccessful, while others have had success
  - One library transferred an existing book club to a virtual format and it’s working well
  - *Harry Potter* book club: They read four chapters per week then discuss
  - Another book club format: They read a chapter or so of a book, then share an author interview or other fun video related to the theme or topic. They follow that with an activity and/or craft.
  - Zoom platform works well for book clubs.
- Virtual museum
  - One library collaborated with a teacher to create a multimedia virtual museum of Westward Expansion. The kids viewed the museum, then picked a topic to create their own mini-museum
  - Eventually they will add kids’ virtual museums to their website, so when this project is done in the future those students can see more examples of mini-virtual museums
- "Learn to Draw Mythical Creatures"
  - Live demonstration on Zoom of how to draw dragons and other mythical creatures
  - Going step by step, they demonstrated by drawing on a big teacher pad
  - Connects to Summer Reading theme: Imagine Your Story
- Public art "tour"
  - Using Prezi, one librarian shared public art with homeschool students, and then they created their own sidewalk chalk drawings or window art. They sent pictures, which the librarian made into a PowerPoint and shared with the group so that everyone could see all the art.
- Storytime
Synchronous vs. asynchronous
- Some storytimes are prerecorded, while some are live. There are pros and cons to each.
  - If it’s live, attendees can talk amongst themselves
  - It can be awkward to perform live; it’s unlike in-person storytimes, where attendees engage more readily
  - One library does live storytimes on Facebook then archives them. This is the best of both worlds, since it means patrons can visit them at their convenience.
- One library is doing Spanish language storytime
- Consider copyright issues
  - Most publishers extending permissions for online storytime videos through July or August
  - ALA Virtual Event had a session on this
  - To be safe, research the individual publishers - most have statements about fair use permissions during this time
- Some libraries are sharing authors’ storytimes instead of creating their own
  - One attendee suggested doing a combination, incorporating author videos into their storytimes
- Consider partnering with local organizations to do storytimes
  - One library worked with a local African American Church to host Black excellence storytimes for Juneteenth
- Outdoor storytime, where attendees can watch from the safety of their cars (use a school’s large parking lot)
  - Consider weather concerns
- Author/illustrator programs
  - One library hosted a program where they invited an illustrator to do a run-through, then attendees can try to draw it themselves
  - Some authors are doing free programs
    - Jason Reynolds
    - Mo Willems
- Grab and Go craft bags

Summer Reading Program
- One library is doing a Choose Your Own Adventure-style story: at each program throughout the summer attendees get to vote on what happens next in the story
- Challenges
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Thursday, June 25, 2020

- One library is asking participants to create weekly videos
- Challenges are optional - not required to complete Summer Reading
- Consider collaborating with local businesses to offer challenges

- Platforms - Some are provided for free through the state library
  - Beanstack
    - Relatively expensive if not provided through your state
    - Can share links, has surveys built-in
  - Readsquare
  - Wandoo
  - Reader Zone
    - Less expensive than Beanstack, but also less functionality

- Challenges in Summer Reading program
  - Low participation numbers due to lack of outreach opportunities
    - One library gave out tracking sheets to kids who were picking up lunches from the local school district
  - High learning curve for staff who are used to Summer Reading programs that aren’t online

- Purchase gift cards from small local businesses as prizes

Challenges

- Communication with public
  - One library has many families who don’t have access to email and social media and is hoping to start using a text message platform
    - Unique offers a texting platform
  - Email blasts
    - Some libraries are doing emails for bigger programs only, to ensure patrons don’t get info overload
    - Some are doing a weekly email with highlights
  - One library attempted a mailing campaign, but most patrons didn’t participate
  - Marketing departments aren’t always able to work effectively to promote programs

- Staffing
  - Security concerns require staffing in many areas, with open libraries/libraries providing curbside
  - This means there aren’t always enough staff to work on programs
  - Furloughs are causing more hardship, as are staff that are taking the opportunity to retire

- Technology
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○ You’re used to the equipment you’ve used from home, so when you go back to the library how do you accommodate your library’s tech?
○ Home tech issues - wifi connectivity isn’t always consistent

● Program timing/length
  ○ You have to be flexible and be okay with ending programs earlier than anticipated
  ○ You also have to be flexible that kids will want to take extra time beyond the original planned program hour(s) to show off their work or chat

● Uncertainty in Future Program Planning
  ● This fall, will programming be virtual or in-person?
    ○ Most libraries are thinking virtual-only, while some are tentatively planning in-person programs
  ● Outreach this fall
    ○ Hard to know how to do school outreach until we know about school plans for opening
    ○ Getting into schools
      ■ One librarian suggests seeing quarantine as an opportunity to get into schools to restore services that have been lost due to defunding
      ■ Some schools don’t allow visitors in general, and some won’t allow visitors due to the pandemic
      ■ One library created screencasts on how to access ebooks and other online resources and shared them with schools
      ■ Consider outdoor school visits, if schools are open but not allowing visitors inside the building

Overcoming challenges in producing programs?

● Overcome the issue of how long a program “should be”—now understand it doesn’t matter as much, have flexibility. Sometimes the programs are shorter and that’s ok
● If you use the author’s own programs you don’t have to worry about the copyright issues, weave into your program. (i.e. have an illustrator show a drawing or do a drawing activity and then you can copy with your kids)
● Take advantage of those doing free programs (Mo Willems) or Jason Reynolds Mind Yoga on Instagram
● Book club: read a chapter then including a video clip like the author
● Rethinking how summer reading can be more effective. Now that you have to be more creative, is this actually a better way than before?