Ice cream, cookies, and lemonade provided by a local grocery store.

Pizza provided by a local pizza parlor.

Red, white, and blue balloons provided by a local dry cleaner.

Entertainment including clowns, a puppet show, face painters, and storytellers, all paid for by a local investment firm.

An appearance by the local football team’s mascot.

Fire engine tours given by the local fire department.

Guided tours of the new library, along with a special handout about new services.

Raffle of new books for attendees.

Results

Hundreds of families attended, and the new library, along with the Friends, gained an increased profile through the event and the media coverage it attracted. Two local businesses that were contacted to provide support for the event went on to partner with the Friends in a major fund-raiser and an author program. A new Friends bookstore was included in the library, and the event generated forty-five volunteers to work in it!

2–10 Twentieth Anniversary Celebration: Author Event

The Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (MD) used their twentieth anniversary to thank their community and provide a terrific author program for those who attended. Regional authors of note were asked to contribute their time for this worthy cause and corporate sponsors were brought on board to keep ticket costs low.
How It Works

- Good prior planning is essential. A committee of hard working volunteers must be assembled for the project at least six months in advance of the event.
- Members of the planning committee must be assigned tasks including:
  - *Corporate Sponsorship*—this should be done first thing; the level of sponsorship you are able to obtain will dictate the type of event and the location you can afford (dinner v. dessert reception, for example). Corporate sponsorship will help you determine what your ticket price will be to fully cover costs or to bring in additional revenue for your Friends group if this event is to double as a fund-raising event. Decide ahead of time how you will recognize your corporate sponsors (free or discounted tables, banner behind podium, name in the program, etc.).
  - *Author Recruitment*—use the Friends network to find authors in your area and those who might know them personally. A one-on-one invitation to contribute their time to this event is always the most successful. Also find someone of note in your community who will be willing to emcee the event.
  - *Publicity*—to get all the public awareness mileage possible out of this event, be sure that you use every venue available to publicize the event. You might want to announce that a special author dinner celebration is being planned for the spring, for example, well ahead of when you’ve actually confirmed authors. Once you do have corporate sponsors and authors committed, you should double your publicity efforts to highlight the authors and their work and to recognize corporate sponsors. Include information on how to obtain tickets in advance.
  - *Arrangements*—meal, location, decoration. Once you have a good idea of your budget (based on sponsorship
and ticket prices) find a special locale. For the Friends of the Library in Montgomery County, this special place was the library itself. If you are holding the event somewhere else, be sure to secure it at least two months prior to the event date. If the venue you’re using is the library or some other place that does not have in-house catering, you’ll have to line up a caterer as soon as the venue and date are chosen. If you can afford it, you can have your caterer decorate the room per your specifications. It will be much cheaper, however, if you recruit about ten volunteers to come up with a design, obtain decorations, and be ready to decorate the venue the morning of the event. If you do it yourselves, the volunteers working on decorations should begin a month prior to the event.

• Finance—keeping the books for the event, selling tickets. This person needs to work with the group to design a budget, and to keep an accounting of all the money coming in and going out—even if your Friends’ treasurer actually writes the checks. This person should work with the publicity committee to sell tickets in advance.
• **Program Design**—once the authors and all corporate support has been secured, a program should be put together that includes information about the library and the Friends, something about each author, and recognition of your corporate sponsors. To avoid last minute stress, the copy for the program should be at the printer one month in advance—this will allow some cushion time in case the program needs to be changed and to deal with any mistakes in the copy.

• **Followup**—if you are using a venue (such as the library) that does not come with cleanup, you’ll have to recruit volunteers for this job following the conclusion of the program. In addition, arrange for someone to send formal thank-you notes to the authors, the corporate sponsors, and the event volunteers.

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### 2–11 Celebrating the “Big 5-0”

In order to raise the profile of the library in the community, the River Vale (NJ) Friends used their library’s fiftieth anniversary as a “hook” for a year-long celebration through programs and events.

**How It Worked**

**Visual Arts and Creative Writing Contest on the Theme: “My River Vale”**

Adults and children were invited to submit photos, drawings, and other graphics along with short stories, poems, and other written work illustrating the theme. Prizes were awarded in five categories based on age group and presented to the winners at an “Open House” celebration. All entries were displayed for a month in the library’s meeting room.

**Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration Open House**

The entire town was invited to join the Friends to hear a short history of the library. Refreshments were served and awards from the arts and writing contest were presented. Theme baskets were sold, garnering over $1,700 for the library.
Children’s Activity at Octoberfest
A fun, free interactive program of pumpkin painting for the children was sponsored by the Friends at the town’s annual Octoberfest celebration.

Town-wide Read
Every adult and high-school-age student in town was invited to read the best-selling book *Pay It Forward*, by C. Ryan Hyde. The Friends purchased five hundred copies of the novel and distributed them free to any community members who wished to read it and join a discussion. The author attended and led one of the community book discussions. Donations accepted at the door totaled nearly $500.

Author Luncheon
A private luncheon was held to honor the author, C. Ryan Hyde, and members of the Town Council and major contributors to the fiftieth anniversary celebration were invited, generating significant cachet for the library and the Friends. The luncheon also generated excellent publicity from the local newspaper.

Behind the Scenes
While the goal of this public awareness project was not to raise funds, per se, the Friends did raise more than $11,000 through numerous fund-raising activities. These activities expanded awareness of the celebration in the community and helped offset the costs of the programs. The fund-raising activities included:

- A special plea in the Friends’ annual membership drive for $50 donations to be earmarked for the programs—nearly $4,000 was raised this way.

- A direct mail solicitation to local businesses and organizations to sponsor theme baskets and/or contest prizes netted $4,800 in cash and merchandise. The raffle of these baskets generated an additional $2,000.

- Donations at the door of to the Town-wide Read generated approximately $500.
The Friends of the Pikes Peak Public Library (CO) distributed several thousand coupons for distribution during the year 2003 to celebrate the library district’s one hundredth anniversary. The coupons raised awareness of the Friends and the Friends Bookstores.

### How It Works

- Coupons were printed in blue ink on white paper to capture the attention of library patrons, Friends, and other book lovers.
- The front of the coupon contained the discount information (20% off) while the back was an ad for the Friends of the Library Bookstores.
- Included on the back of the coupon is a reminder that the Friends accept donations from the public.
- Coupons were distributed during open houses at the library branches, given to patrons who entered a “Passport Trekking” contest, and made available during special events in which the Friends participated during the year.
- Coupons were valid for 20% off books, tapes, CDs, and other used merchandise at the bookstores located in the two largest branches.
- Coupons were valid for one year.