HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR PROGRAM by Virginia Stanley

Plan as far in advance as possible!

Decide on a specific author or book to host

- Browse publisher catalogs on Edelweiss and request e-galleys http://edelweiss.abovethetreeline.com/HomePage.aspx
- Request e-galleys here too: Net Galley: http://www.netgalley.com/
- Visit EarlyWord www.earlyword.com for hot title and author information
- Visit & subscribe to http://randomhouselibrary.com/ for hot title and author information
- Visit & subscribe to www.macmillanlibrary.com for hot title and author information
- Visit & subscribe to www.librarylovefest.com for hot title and author information
- Tune in to *Library Journal* & *Booklist* sponsored Webinars for hot title and author information
- Check out GoodReads.com for reader favorites
- Pay attention to what your patrons are reading.
    - What **book**, **author** or **topic** is circulating the most?
        - Stephenie Meyer and Janet Evanovich will most likely not make it to your library and it has nothing to do with you so don't feel bad.
        - Are books about Vampires, Zombies, Angels, Werewolves circulating? Pick a few paranormal authors from our catalogs – invite teens and their parents to join you. Are Memoirs or narrative nonfiction more your speed? Find your local memoirists, biographers, historians, scientists and invite them to chat about the writing process.
        - Commit yourself to the midlist and to the debut author! Consider local talent, first novelists, mid-list, genre, backlist, self-help, how-to authors! Be the one to discover the next hot author and own it.
        - What are your book clubs reading? This is a built-in audience and possibly a good launching-off point.

Contact your friendly fun-loving library marketing rep

- Put the request in writing and give all known details: name of the sponsoring organization, location of event, date, time, anticipated audience size/age/make-up of audience, name of contact person...

- State exact nature of event and the author's participation: book and author lunch/breakfast/dinner, lecture, school class(es), conference address/panel... with other authors, alone... length of the presentation, question and answer period... state the theme of the event; the author's particular topic...

    a. Create programs that *involve* your patrons: programs focused on creative writing, short story writing, first-time novelists, local authors are often well-attended by patrons who are aspiring writers. Don't just have a run of the mill reading and signing / make it a **fundraiser** for the library or an **afternoon tea** (where the price of the book is included in the ticket).

- Be up-front and specific about expenses you can cover (or not). This includes speaker's fees, transportation, hotel, meal costs... Try to take advantage of publisher's tours where at least some of these costs are covered.

- You MUST make arrangements for books to be sold. Many libraries arrange to have their Friends group or a local bookstore sell books at the event. Or find out how to get the books from the publisher or your preferred wholesaler. Books should be on-hand well in advance of the event.

- Once the author has said "yes," confirm all arrangements/ agreements with a follow through letter. Putting details in writing eliminates later confusion.

Promote, Promote, Promote!

Make the trip as worthwhile as possible from the author's/ publisher's point of view by creating a solid plan of action to spread the word about your event, consisting of some or all of the following:

- Get all the staff informed and involved.
    - Mention the event on your web site, in your events calendar, and in your e-newsletter. Promote event with signage in your library as well as at your branches!
- Educate your audience in advance with flyers, booklists, etc., at local bookstores and branch libraries.
- Try to set up other appearances at the local bookstore, local radio, TV.

- Create a press release with short descriptions of the event to send to your local newspapers.
- Follow up to make sure your messages were received AND read.
- Hang banners in the street welcoming the author to your city!
- Send out email blasts to patrons.

Take photos and notes at the event. Afterward follow-up with a thank you and report to the author/publisher: (You may need to approach the same publisher in the future.) If something went wrong state suggestions/plans for improvement.

Best Stories?

What makes a good event?

What makes a good speaker?

Speaker's Bureau?

Resources

1. *The Author Event Primer: How to Plan, Execute and Enjoy Author Events* by Chapple Langemack
2. Get in touch with a library that has already hosted successful author events and find out what they did and how they did it!

Publisher Contacts — Library Marketing, Adult

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