Unprogramming for Youth

Massachusetts Library System
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Hello! I’m Amy.

- Youth & Family Program Coordinator, Skokie (IL) Public Library
- The Show Me Librarian
- Shout-out to Marge Loch-Wouters at La Crosse (WI) Public Library
On Our Agenda

• Getting to the root of programming & its pitfalls
• The unprogramming philosophy
• What unprograms look like
• Getting in the unprogramming mindset
• Questions
Why do we program?

- Literacy
- Collections
- Community
- Traffic
- Interest-Building
- Engagement
- Entertainment
What are the pitfalls?

- Disinterest
- Participation
- Fatigue
- Staff
- Boredom
- Money
- Time
You don’t have to stick with a frustrating programming model.

You can instead choose a refreshing option.
What can unprogramming offer?

Engagement
Perspective
Balance
Books
The Central Question of Unprogramming

• How does what I’m doing connect kids to…
  
  • a book or books;
  
  • an author or illustrator;
  
  • the library & our services;
  
  • an interest that can connect back to the library?
The Unprogramming Formula

- 1 Book/Author/Topic
- 1 Introductory Activity
- 3-4 Stations of Stuff
- Plenty of Time to Explore & Interact
Olympians

- Book: *Percy Jackson*
- Intro: Create coat of arms
- Stations:
  - Feed the Cerberus
  - Slay the Gorgons
  - Deity Concentration
Medieval Knights

• Author: Gerald Morris

• Intro: tell Sir Gawain & the Green Knight

• Stations:
  • Build a Catapult
  • Create a Hand Shield
  • Fencing Demo
Spy Club

- Books: *Liar & Spy*, *Sophia’s War*
- Intro: Creating disguises
- Stations:
  - Sharpshooting
  - Invisible Ink
  - Cryptography
  - Laser Field
Superheroes

• Topic: Superhero books

• Intro: Create superhero costumes/names, Kryptonite removal

• Stations:
  • Spatula Toss
  • Flip-O-Rama
  • Flight Photos
  • Bad Guy Bowling
Lost in Space

- Topic: 520s
- Intro: Video travel & crash landing
- Stations:
  - Harvesting the alien landscape
  - Building shelter
  - Staving off space madness
Family Forts

- Book: Anything fun for the family!
- Intro: Share a story & build a “campfire”
- Walking S’mores
- Build Forts & Read
- Glow-in-the-dark Hide & Go Seek
Get in the Unprogramming Mindset

- Mine your existing programs
- Gather ideas continuously
- Talk to your kids!
- Get comfy with informality
Questions?
Let’s chat!

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