

MAKERSPACE AT THE LIBRARY

Amigos Fellowship & Opportunity Award Program

Final Report

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SUMMARY

The Mamie George Branch Library is part of the Fort Bend County Libraries system. The branch is located just outside of Houston, in Stafford, Texas. It opened in November 1974, and is the smallest of the 10 branches that make up the library system. Fort Bend County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation, and our libraries serve a large and varied population. The Mamie George Branch Library submitted a request for \$3861.00, to create a makerspace at the library. The branch is located near an elementary school, middle school, and high school. The goal of the project was to create a makerspace for use by teens and adults and to provide an outlet for the creative talents of the teens who use the library. In May 2014, Amigos awarded \$3861 to the Mamie George Branch of Fort Bend County Libraries to purchase the necessary equipment to create a makerspace. We used the funds provided by both the grant and the Friends of the Mamie George Branch Library to purchase two desktop computers, two laptop computers, a DSLR camera, tripod, SD cards, photo and video editing software, a green screen, and a pen-and-touch tablet.

The creation of the makerspace was dependent on completion of a renovation of the library, which began in February 2015 and was completed by the beginning of April. Programming in the makerspace began in June 2015. We are a very small library, with 4900 square feet and a small staff, and we only have a few programs each month. We consider 3-4 people in attendance to be a decent turnout for a program. Last year we conducted a total of 13 classes that utilized the equipment purchased with grant funds in some way for a total of approximately 180 participants (see Table 1).

SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT

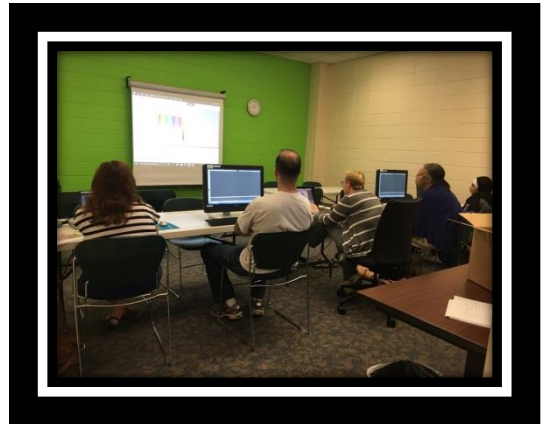
The makerspace itself is a success. Patrons enjoy the classes and are appreciative for what the grant allowed us to purchase. The local community college TV station even came out and did a story on the grant and the renovations, although the section in which the grant was talked about was cut in the final product. <http://bit.ly/291nBuD>



Our most popular individual program by far was the Make Your Own Lightsaber program. A total of 45 people came in over the course of two hours to make lightsabers out of pool noodles, duct tape, and electrical tape. They then had their pictures taken in front of the green screen with their

creations. Staff used the Photoshop software purchased with grant funds to edit into the photos a Star Wars themed backdrop, and those photos were emailed to the attendees. The kids loved them and the parents were very appreciative.

Our most popular series of classes were the classes we offered on Photoshop Elements. We presented four basic classes and two advanced. Every class was fully attended. In the basics class we covered basic retouching, cropping, spot healing, red eye removal, and the basics of the program. In the advanced class we covered layers and the content aware tools. Several small business owners came to those classes, as did a few people who were sent by their employers. So this type of program definitely served a need in our community.



One program was hosted by an outside entity. Two individuals from SCORE, which is the mentoring arm of the Small Business Association, presented a program on video marketing. We targeted every business within a two-mile radius of the library, and 11 people came to the program. Those attending the program received valuable information on how to use popular social media sites like Facebook and YouTube to promote their businesses, and they got tips on how to make a successful commercial.

In addition to programming, we also used the equipment to do some marketing within the library. We created a mascot named Periodical the Penguin to promote our Summer Reading Program. In 2015 he was sent around the world to take selfies with famous landmarks. We held a drawing every week for a bag of candy. To win, you had to be signed up for the Summer Reading Program and to correctly guess which landmark Periodical was visiting. We had 10-25 entries every week and a number of people signed up for the Reading Club, which was our goal for the contest. This year, Periodical is participating in different sporting activities to tie in with our theme of sports and being active.



Unfortunately, we were unable to accomplish one part of the proposal. We had wanted to partner with the schools in the area, especially the middle school, but we were unable to achieve any sort of collaboration, because of staff changes at the school. Although teens came in and used the hardware and software, that use was not in collaboration with the schools.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, we would call the grant and the makerspace a success. It is used by the public; it allows us to provide programming and classes that are needed in the community and the children in the community love what we and they can create with it. Thank you for giving the library and our patrons this unique opportunity.



Class	Number of Attendees
Star Wars – Make Your Own Lightsaber	45
Balloon Animals – Send your creations on a safari	32
Introduction to Scratch	13
Photoshop Elements Basics	6
Maker/Craft Fair	23
Make Your Own Cardboard Standup	10
Photoshop Elements Basics	6
Photoshop Elements Basics	6
Advanced Photoshop Elements	8
The Ins and Out-Takes of Video Marketing	11
Photoshop Elements Basics	6
Advanced Photoshop Elements	8
Adobe Premiere Elements Basics	6

Table 1 - List of classes and number of attendees