

LIS 213 Final Project
"Star Wars Cantina" Teen Program
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The newest installment in the *Star Wars* film saga, *Episode VII: The Force Awakens*, will open worldwide on December 18th, 2015. My program is designed to capitalize on the massive international hype surrounding this beloved series; it is my hope that due to *Star Wars* being a multi-generational fandom often shared within families, the program will be able to attract both older, independent teens and younger teens whose parents may want to supervise them. I would specify the intended age group (aside from accompanying adults) as 10-17 years. The aim of this program is to use the return of *Star Wars*, one of the biggest trends in the history of modern popular culture, to promote the library and its services throughout the community and attract new patrons in the process. By the conclusion of this six month program, the library will hope to have seen a discernible increase in overall library attendance.

While this program will conclude upon the release of the newest *Star Wars* film, the idea is that those who take part in the program will see the potential of the library as a fun, creative space. If an individual already has no interest in checking out books, this program may not be the catalyst for a change of heart, but it may convince them to support future library programs and events. While this program might not be tenable as an all-year offering due to fluctuations in interest as well as budgetary concerns, there is still opportunity for continuation. *Disney*, after their purchase of all rights to the *Star Wars* franchise, announced that there will be a new film being released each year. If this program is successful and earns consistent attendance, it may be revived each summer to accompany these upcoming films.

This program, to start, needs a space on par with the average classroom size (about 20x30 ft). If the first meeting almost fills the room, then a larger space should be provided for, since the expectation is for attendance to increase as word spreads and the program becomes more visible to teens. If the space is available but the seating itself is not enough for 25-30 individuals, the

library may look to local schools in order to borrow basic folding chairs. This program is not tenable for a library which does not have at least one classroom-sized space available for three to four hours, once a month. If this size space cannot accommodate attendees from the outset, then the library must find a larger space that remains unobtrusive to non-participating patrons, because each meeting will involve a movie screening.

Each meeting will begin at 6pm and run until the library's close, hopefully no earlier than 9:00 - 9:30pm. The program will open with a round-table discussion of any topic related to the *Star Wars* universe, with one designated leader to keep conversations moving and relevant. The leader (a library employee) should have a list of several provocative topics to keep the discussion going, such as "were the prequels beneficial to the storyline" or "do you think Luke will be eventually known as the greatest Jedi master in history?" Depending on the participation of patrons, this open discussion may end after either 30 minutes or a bit longer. The intent is not to make this program feel too rigid or scheduled, but more like an informal meeting of fans. This is followed by an hour of what may be considered "free time," in which patrons are free to engage in a variety of available activities. An assortment of *Star Wars* books, board games, puzzles, coloring books, trivia quizzes, and other small activities will be scattered throughout the room. Light snacks and refreshments will be made available at this point, and remain until the meeting's conclusion. This will be a time for those teens that may have been too shy to participate in the round-table discussion to socialize, and hopefully engage with others based upon their shared love for this fandom. The "free time" will last for one hour, followed by a movie screening which will begin around 7:00-7:30pm. Two monthly meetings will be chosen to offer an introductory fan fiction creative writing workshop as well as a drawing workshop, hopefully staffed by a volunteer teacher, which will replace the free activity time in these

instances. After the film, if there is time left before the library's closure, a brief post-discussion will take place. As there are six available *Star Wars* films, one will be screened at each monthly meeting (July – December) leading up to *The Force Awakens*. The final meeting will take place on December 16th, one day before the new film's midnight release. The final meeting will conclude with a free raffle for two tickets to the film premiere at a local theatre, hopefully partnered with the library.

This program will be marketed mostly through simple, physical promotion. My budget allots money for the creation of 100 flyers per month, which will be posted around general teen-heavy places as well as areas relevant to sci-fi fan culture: schools, malls, public parks, video game stores, comic shops and book stores should be a focus. A partnership with the local *GameStop*, allowing flyers to be left inside the store, may be particularly effective. There should also be announcements posted on any social media platforms used by the library, such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Any advertisements posted should be easily readable as relevant to the *Star Wars* brand, utilizing the trademark *Star Wars* typeface for the program's title, "_____ Library Presents: Star Wars Cantina." Activities (especially snacks and refreshments, and the movie screening) will be listed on each flyer or in each post, as well as the recommended user age of 10 – 17 years. While this is indeed the target audience, I see no benefit in turning away attendees who fall marginally outside of this range.

The intended total budget for this 6-month program is a maximum of \$1,700. Strenuous effort should be given in finding volunteers to offer their services (the writing and drawing workshop, for example) as well as temporarily donate items. Additional seating (25 folding chairs - \$200), a blu ray projector (\$300), and the creative writing and drawing workshop (\$200 total, a \$100 fee each) will hopefully be volunteered by a local school. The *Star Wars* blu ray

collection (\$80) may be loaned by a volunteer, and the 2 IMAX tickets (\$35-\$40) will hopefully be donated through partnership with a local theater. Aside from this potential \$620 deduction, the program will require snacks and drinks for six meetings (\$120), a roll of raffle tickets (\$5), 600 paper flyers for advertising (\$60), and an assortment of puzzles and games (\$200). Lastly, the library may need to expand its collection of *Star Wars* print material, costing anywhere from \$100 - \$500 if necessary. This program can cost upwards of \$1,700, but with generous volunteers and willing community partners, it can total as low as \$600.

The benefit of this program to the user group will be allowing users to engage in their love of *Star Wars* in a positive and creative manner, while possibly learning new skills (creative writing or drawing) and socializing with fellow fans. For the community, this program uses fandom to bring community members together in a highly-social environment, promoting camaraderie among individuals who may not have interacted otherwise. In this way, the program offers benefits similar to that of a traditional “con,” or convention. For the library, the potential benefits are typical: community-wide promotion of the library and its services, a possible reforming of many users’ idea of the library environment, and hopefully a subsequent increase in overall library attendance.