



**Library:** Greece Public Library

**Title of Program or Event:** Family Carnival

**Age level:** all ages

**Description of Activity:** Carnival with clowns, popcorn, juice, crafts, and wide variety of games run by teen volunteers (pinball, bowling, bean bag toss, duck pond, fishing for books, scavenger hunt). Two sessions of storytime were held with parachute games.

**Objectives / Goals:** The first goal for this event was to have teen volunteers develop, plan, and run the carnival. This would promote inclusion among youth with and without developmental disabilities, as well as, teach responsibility to everyone involved. The second goal, was to create a welcoming family environment, allowing all children, regardless of age or ability, to participate to their fullest potential.

**Suggested setting:** Storybook Garden, weather permitting. Children's library and community room if weather is rainy or cold.

**Time required:** 2 hours for actual event. 1 hour set up and 1 hour break down. 3 planning sessions were held. Volunteers made posters and created many games that were used during the carnival.

**Materials and Staff needed:** equipment for each game and craft; prizes for games (mini puzzles, pens, pencils, mini erasers, magnets, books, comics, coupons to Friendly's Restaurants); refreshments. Librarian, grant consultant, 1 adult volunteer, and 10 teen volunteers participated. (Number of volunteers will depend on the number of events/booths you have going.)

**Advanced Preparation:**

1. Advertised volunteer opportunities to summer teen volunteers and in the Building Bridges Program Brochure.
2. 1 planning session to determine jobs for each volunteer and brainstorm game ideas.
3. 2 planning sessions dedicated to "creation." Teens decorated a wheel of fortune, painted bottoms of ducks for the duck pond, covered 2-liter bottles with construction paper for bowling game, designed a "hook a book" booth using a large cardboard box donated by an appliance store, etc.
4. Sand craft and coloring art projects were provided by the "Friends of Greece Library."
5. Patrons donated books for the "hook a book" booth. Other (inexpensive) prizes were purchased or donated from various library vendors.
6. Popcorn and apple juice booth planned.
7. Library bags for participants to use to keep the prizes won.
8. Library treasure hunt to learn about the library.
9. Grant consultant picked up box for "hook a book," purchase blow up pool for duck pond, etc.
10. Clowns were hired to attend the carnival. Face painting and balloon art were included.

**Procedure:** Volunteers arrived at least 1 hour before the event. Librarian and grant consultant had everything for carnival together in an easily accessible area. Booths were spread throughout the storybook garden. Teens were assigned (and rotated) to each booth/activity. Grant consultant handed out bags to carnival goers. At this time, participants received the “library treasure hunt.” Instructions were given “when you complete your treasure hunt, bring it back to the librarian for a prize.” The prize was a free meal at Friendly’s Restaurant.

Carnival goers were encouraged to select activities they preferred.

**Modifications:** Having the carnival in the garden allowed easy access for wheelchair users because the walkways throughout were paved. Great care was given to make sure walkways were clear of obstacles and booths were spread out allowing easy access. Children were given the opportunity to play games as many times as they wanted. Everyone “won” and received a prize each time they played. Children too young or unable to complete the “library treasure hunt” were automatically given Friendly’s free meal certificates.

**Evaluation:** The carnival worked out wonderfully, attracting 70 children and 30 adults. Some children did not want to leave! Other children expressed interest in volunteering at future carnivals or library events. This event took a lot of preparation but we consider it “two programs in one”—one for teens and one for families.

Of the 70 children who attended, approximately 1/3 had disabilities. One patron heard about the event because her grandmother was one of the clowns hired. Many families of youth with developmental disabilities came because it was advertised in the Building Bridges Program Brochure and promoted “for youth with developmental disabilities.” One parent stated she would never dream of taking her two children with developmental disabilities to a carnival by herself. However, she felt because it was designed with her children in mind, she would be welcomed and her children would be accepted, regardless of their differences.

We only had one teen with developmental disabilities volunteer for this event. It is important to make sure patrons are made welcome throughout the year, so they will want to volunteer when events like this are offered. Most importantly, many of the teens already knew each other because they went to school together. This is one reason why it is important that youth with developmental disabilities are welcomed at their hometown libraries; it gives them the opportunity to volunteer with their neighbors and friends that attend the same school they attend.