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News - Waycross College

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News – Waycross College

LITERATI LOCKDOWN

The library staff at Waycross College loves the opportunity to interact with students. Any excuse and we are ready for an activity. A staff member shared an article about an overnight event held by the New York Public Library and how successful it was in promoting the library. That idea took seed, and we decided we could do something similar to get students interested in our library. After talking with a few of our regular patrons and getting some positive responses, we became serious about sponsoring an overnight event. After considerable planning and coordination, we finally received campus approval to hold the first Library Literati Lockdown on October 27, 2011. The October timeframe lent itself to spooky themes, costumes and plenty of atmosphere.

The primary focus of this event was to get students into the library and for them to collaborate in groups, to use their imaginations, to develop a story theme from beginning to end, and to present that story before other participants.

The Literati took place after the library closed at 9 p.m. on a Thursday night when there were no classes scheduled the following day. Safety was a primary concern, so we informed everyone that we would enforce “lockdown” mode. Once signed in, the participant had to stay until checkout the next morning at 7. Arrangements were made with campus security personnel to maintain a vigilant presence throughout the night and to secure the building after students had departed from evening classes. Our Rules of Engagement stipulated that friends, guests, and family members could not stop by or visit. Cell phone usage was discouraged.

Library staff decorated the library with cobwebs, bugs (plastic variety), and smokeless candles. Shortly after arriving and being welcomed, the students formed into groups. They had full use of computers to write their short stories. They were so involved with creating their group stories that when we asked if they wanted a break near midnight they begged for more time. Well after midnight, everyone moved from the library into the adjacent coffee bar area of the building where refreshments were served. The library and faculty chaperones were great! They provided snacks that turned out to be a feast, and a few students brought food to share. No one went hungry.

During the midnight social gathering, we played eerie, atmospheric music along with a name-that-scary tune-trivia contest. The groups then presented their stories to everyone. It was amazing how each group came up with different plots and presented in different ways.

The winning groups received recognition and prizes for Best Story and Best Presentation. Other trivia games and a costume contest rounded out the evening. Later, some folks slept for a few hours while others chatted or played games.

Several students dropped by the library the next week to tell us how much they enjoyed the Lockdown. However, the best part was reading the comments from the student library survey conducted later that semester mentioning the Literati Lockdown and asking for more of them!