Got Fandom?: How Mini-Cons Can Transform Libraries and Communities

Presented by Megan Aarant and Natalie Couch, Chattahoochee Valley Libraries
So...what's Fandom?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines FANDOM as

- 1: all the fans (as of a sport)
- 2: the state or attitude of being a fan

with the first known use of FANDOM being in 1903!
Pop Quiz!

- Whovians
- Twihards
- Potterheads
- Trekkies
- Beliebers
- Sherlockians
- Nerdfighters
- Tributes
- Bronies
- Universe
- Directioners
- Hunters
- Rings
- Ringers
- Truebies
- Whedonites
- Gaimanites
The Perks of Hosting a Mini-Con

- Changes perceptions of libraries
- Big event pulling in a wide audience, including non-library users
- Promotes:
  - Library materials
  - Multiple literacies
  - Creativity
  - Community engagement
  - Sense of belonging
- FUN!

Photo Credit: Ledger-Enquirer
2013: From Humble Beginnings...

- Small budget
- Geared toward active Manga Club members
- Teen focused event but attracted all ages
- Newly published YA author Skyped for $50!
- Galactic Quest Comics "How to Draw Comics" presentation
- Cosplay Costume Contest
- Crafts, games, vendors, panels, and more!
- 250 participants
2014: ...Come Great Things

- Larger budget
- Kicked off SRP for teens & children
- Programs/crafts/activities for children, teens, & families
- More
  - Community involvement
  - Media coverage
  - Advertising
- Added
  - Official "logo"
  - Food vendors
  - Bigger name Skype visits (author and actor)
  - Maker/digital media component
- 1,000 participants
2015: To Infinity & Beyond

- Incorporate activities & fandoms with adult appeal
- Repeat popular programs throughout the day
- Outdoor, physical, & sports activities
- FanArt/FanFic submissions in library teen lit magazine
- Out-of-state vendor & performers
- Fewer crafts at scheduled times
- Fandom "meet-ups"
All Sizes & Shapes

- Nerdacon @ Columbus State University
  Columbus, GA
- Wrath of Cons @ Austin Public Library
  Austin, TX
- Camden Comic-Con @ Rutgers University-Camden
  Camden, NJ
- Librari-Con @ Cumberland County Public Library
  Fayetteville, NC
- Comic New York Symposium @ Columbia University
  New York, NY
Best Practices

- Get ALL vendors & content providers to sign contracts
- Create a back-up plan
- Have food (lots!) or schedule around mealtimes
- Print schedules
- Partner with local schools & organizations to advertise
- Get community involvement/input
- Reach out to community organizations & local personalities
- Ask for feedback
Questions?

Your experience or suggestions?
Contact us!

Megan: maarant@cvrls.net

Natalie: ncouch@cvrls.net

Pinterest Idea Board: