

**Got Fandom?: How Mini-Cons Can Transform Libraries and Communities Webinar**  
**Wednesday, February 25, 2015**

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Pinterest Idea Board: [http://www.pinterest.com/megs\\_a/cvl-fanfest-mini-convention-ideas/](http://www.pinterest.com/megs_a/cvl-fanfest-mini-convention-ideas/)  
Chattahoochee Valley Libraries

**The Perks of Hosting a Mini-Con**

- Changes the perception of the library as a quiet, book repository into one of a community hang-out space.
- Draws a large crowd, including non-readers or non-library users.
- Promotes library materials, multiple literacies (textual, technological, digital, and visual), creativity, community engagement, and sense of belonging.

**2013: From Humble Beginnings....**

- Initially geared toward teens active in our Manga Club.
- Run as a one-off, regular program toward the middle of summer reading program.
- Drew a large crowd of all ages. Families especially inquired about our next FanFest.
- 250 participants throughout the day with feedback mainly asking for more of “everything”.

**BUDGET: \$800** (all from the main branch’s Teen summer programming budget)

**Crafts (LARGEST EXPENSE):**

- 1) Wear Your Fandom**--Mortal Instruments rune temp-tattoos, comic book action word hair accessories, cat ear headbands, superhero cuffs, anime expression barrettes,
  - 2) Eat Your Fandom**--Gingerbread Who?, candy sushi, Peep-achus,
  - 3) Survive Your Fandom**--Paracord bracelets, pack-your-bug-out-bag, popsicle catapults
- and
- 4) Represent Your Fandom**--Perler beads, Cubeecrafts

**Panels/Presentations:**

- Marissa Meyer virtual author talk--**\$50**, Galactic Quest Comics “How to Draw Comics”--**\$100-250 range**
- USS Da Vinci “Star Trek and Supernatural” and League of Columbus “Costuming on the Cheap”--**FREE/VOLUNTEER LED**
- Fandom Trivia and K-Pop Dance Off Marathon—**FREE/STAFF LED**

**Games:** Quidditch Pong, Inflatable Sword Dueling, RPG & Cards, Wii games (Dancing, Archery, Mario Cart)

**Vendors:** knitted fandom hats and cat ear barrettes, fan artist, League of Columbus Superheros, Lego jewelry, and local mini-comic and fan artist

**Finale:** Cosplay Costume Contest and survey drawing

**2014: ...Come Great Things**

- Kickoff event for Teens and Children’s summer reading program.
- Activities were geared toward teens, children, and their families.
- More media coverage and advertising for this year’s event including, full-color inserts and an interview in the local paper, radio spots, flyers, posters, and more.

- More money spent on bigger named Skype visits. *Supernatural* actress Alaina Huffman was hired through Heroes for Hire ([www.heroesforhire.info](http://www.heroesforhire.info)).
- 1,000 total participants throughout the day. Positive feedback, mostly more food and celebrities.

**BUDGET: \$2000** (\$1000 from Teen summer programming funds and \$1000 from Children's summer programming funds)

**Crafts (LARGEST EXPENSE):**

- 1) Wear Your Fandom**--unicorn horns, Hello Kitty bows, paper bead bracelets, Rainbow Loom faction bracelets, nail art, pipe cleaner tiaras, duct tape slap bracelets,
- 2) Eat Your Fandom**--Peep Trooper Pops, Marshmallow Adipose, Diary of a Wimpy Kid sno balls, Despicable Me Twinkies, and
- 3) Represent Your Fandom**--Cubeecrafts, Harry Potter wands, Mo Willems paper bag puppets, The Grouchy Ladybug plate, Shrinky Dink keychains

**Panels/Presentations (2<sup>ND</sup> LARGEST EXPENSE):**

- *Supernatural* actress Alaina Huffman Skype visit--**\$300**, Gene Luen Yang Skype author visit--**\$400**, Video game creation class with Doc Atoms--**\$150**
- USS Da Vinci, Alabama Paranormal Research Team, "Create Your Own Comics", TaeKwonDo demonstration—**FREE/VOLUNTEER LED**
- Wrestling and Miller Robson, K-Pop Dance Off Marathon, LEGO Mania, Mo Willems Puppet Show, FanFic writing and copyright issue, Banzai Challenge—**FREE/STAFF LED**

**Drop-in/Passive Programs:** MaKeyMaKey photobooth, trivia sheets (children & teens), RPG & cards, and video games

**Vendors (merchandise):** Many return vendors from year one plus, a teen selling comics; stuffed animal purses and custom calligraphy art; Alabama Paranormal Research Team book sales

**(food):** Cotton candy, CiCi's Pizza, and De La Pop popcorn

**Finale:** Cosplay Costume Contest, Book Blitz Giveaway, survey drawing, and trivia contest prizes

**Where Do We Go From Here? 2015 & Beyond**

- Adding an adult category in the costume contest, and prizes for adult trivia next year. Adults were very vocal about wanting to have activities geared toward their age group in the future.
- Outdoor activities and shows. Physical activities and sports. Feedback mentioned wanting more of these types of activities. We would like to do a small car show, BMX bike or skateboarding demos, actual Quidditch, and incorporate sports fandoms in the future.
- Our library has a teen art and literature magazine and we would like to have a special FanFest section in it next year dedicated to FanFic and FanArt.
- Several out-of-state performers and vendors expressed interest in participating and this will be the first year we host people who are not local to our city/county.
- Crafts stations were overwhelmed with participants and many of them took more supplies than needed. This year we plan to schedule crafts at specific times and pre-portion supplies so that participants can take them home if they choose.
- We will be scheduling fandom "meet-ups". These casual gatherings will focus on specific fandoms or genres and may include an activity for that group.

### All Sizes and Shapes

- Nerdacon @ Columbus State University, Columbus, GA
  - Student run, \$5 admission, all fandom convention held on campus (not at the library).
- Wrath of Cons @ Austin Public Library, Austin, TX
  - Multi-day multi-con. Took place over the course of a month with each con representing a specific genre (manga/anime, comics, etc.)
- Camden Comic-Con @ Rutgers University-Camden, Camden, NJ
  - Free, one day, open to the public. Focused mostly on comics and pop culture and appears to be spearheaded by the art community at Rutgers. Held in the athletics and fitness center.
- Librari-Con @ Cumberland County Public Library, Fayetteville, NC
  - Spread over the whole library (even in the stacks), open to all, advertised on the state tourism board website, multi-fandom.
- Comic New York Symposium @ Columbia University, New York, NY
  - More of a series of academic presentations of comic and comic culture.

### Best Practices:

- **Get ALL vendors to sign contracts, *before* you ask them to participate.** Our vendors do not have to pay to reserve a space, a contract will make them feel more obligated to show up/give notice if they are not able to attend. Make sure the contract asks them if they accept cash, check, or cards so you can let attendees know ahead of time.
- **Create a back-up plan for all activities.** We had an unexpected safety situation that forced us last minute to bring our outdoor activities inside and a few items had to be cut because of space. Next year, we'll plan better.
- **Have lots of food or schedule activities around mealtimes.** After our first FanFest, people began to leave after lunch and not return. We had food vendors at our second event to keep people in the building and it worked. They have requested MORE food vendors for next year.
- **Printed schedules** help keep everybody on track and if you can get them out before the event (online would be great), guests can plan their day before they arrive.
- **Partner with local schools and organizations to advertise.** Lack of advertising was a big complaint year one. Year two, we blanketed local businesses with flyers for the event, advertised at all of the schools, and got our local news stations in on the action. This drew in larger crowds.
- **Get community involvement/input.** Since tastes change quickly we wanted to make sure we had activities that were in line with the latest trends and most popular fandoms.
- **Reach out to community organizations and local personalities.** They can help create content or be involved in a session. We asked a local news anchor (who happens to be a former pro wrestler) if he would emcee our wrestling trivia session and do a Q&A. Not only did he agree, but he plugged the event on air numerous times, and even brought in

his old ring gear and championship belts for people to see. He is already on board to be involved with FanFest next year.

- **Repeat popular programs throughout the day.** We learned that one children's puppet show was not enough. And even though we had two video game creation classes, one session was barely full and then people had to be turned away at the second session.
- **Ask for feedback.** We created short 4-question surveys asking what participants liked, would change, other comments, and how they heard about the event. Customers who filled out a survey and returned it to staff during the event were entered for a chance to win a door prize during the finale. We got great feedback from these forms.