



7-2008

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Julie Miller

Butler University, jlmlle5@butler.edu

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Recommended Citation

Miller, Julie. "From Sweet Sushi to Classic Cars: Outreach Ideas at the Library Program Showcase," *Alki: The Washington Library Association Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (July) 2008, p. 7.

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From Sweet Sushi to Classic Cars: Outreach Ideas at the Library Program Showcase

By Julie Miller

A new type of program debuted at the 2008 joint Washington and Oregon library associations conference: showcases. These display sessions featured innovative, unusual, or highly successful programs from Oregon and Washington libraries. Each of three showcases had a different theme, including outreach, training and instruction, and innovative and grant-funded programs. As I approached the Hilton's Discovery Gallery on Thursday morning, I knew the outreach showcase hosted by Candise Branum and Gordon Turner was a hit. Colorful displays lined the gallery, which was buzzing with librarians sharing ideas for outreach to user groups.

Creswell Public Library's display caught my eye first. Photos of shiny vintage cars decorated the poster. I picked up an invitation to the Creswell Library's Vintage Car "Show and Shine" held last September. Library Director Su Ikeda explained the background for the event, which was to promote the library's new Auto Repair Reference Center database. What better way to promote the database to shade-tree mechanics and do-it-yourselfers in the community than to lure them to the library for a classic car show?

From the simple to the sublime, the showcase demonstrated that librarians are creative thinkers who like to share their good ideas.



Libraries showcase training and instruction programs.

I hadn't considered techniques for shelving materials as outreach until I saw "The 5 S's of ESL Collection Display" from Seattle Public Library. I picked up a flyer about open access from Oregon State University's display about the Scholars Archive @ OSU. Several of the displays, especially those featuring outreach to teens, were interactive. Visitors to the "sweet sushi" display hosted by the Newburg Public Library could make their own "sushi" using mini doughnuts, fruit leather and candy. Valerie Tryon from the North Portland branch of the Multnomah County Library shared her expertise

and patterns for making beads from magazines.

Unfortunately, by the time I reviewed all sixteen outreach displays, I did not have time to try out the Wii sports programs or Guitar Hero located at the end of the gallery. I'm looking forward to finding and sharing more good ideas at next year's showcases. 📖

Julie Miller is associate dean of libraries at Eastern Washington University in Cheney.

Photo by Mary Wise.