

Appendix 5

Evaluation of Big Wild Read Events

The Summer Reading Challenge 2007 was The Big Wild Read, which was linked to BBC Breathing Places. During the summer, there were 452 Big Wild Read events for children and families in libraries with the Wildlife Trust and RSPB, as well as 2072 events with other outside agencies (some of these were wildlife/environmental groups).

Evaluation of Events Questionnaires

A questionnaire was sent out to libraries running events with Wildlife Trust or RSPB. 3 different library authorities were able to distribute the questionnaires within the time frame and returned 71 forms. (Hull, York, and North Yorkshire). This represents a small percentage of the number of events held over the summer and the number of people attending, and can only be viewed as a sample from one region of the UK (Yorkshire). The events consisted of talks about wildlife (owls, bats, insects), some craft activities, and a reading element such as a related story or poem.

Profile

We received 71 questionnaires from 5 different libraries, but not all respondents answered both sides of the questionnaire, so we don't have their personal details.

Most (66/71) of the respondents were attending with children who were taking part in The Big Wild Read. The remaining 5 were attending with children who were not taking part in the challenge.

Of those children taking part, 2 out of 3 had taken part before.

Nearly all respondents White British (only 1 out of 66 who answered had different ethnicity). This information was collected as a standard requirement for BBC events' evaluation. The majority of respondents were women (58/67), mostly in the 25-34 or the 35-44 age groups (58/67).

Outcomes from participation in the Big Wild Read

Out of the 63 people who answered Q 3 the vast majority (60) said their children enjoyed going to the library, Choosing books for themselves and reading more books, were the the other most popular statements, which maps closely against findings in research carried out with children and parents. A significant number also identified that their children are taking to friends about their books (15/63) and that they have found out more about authors, illustrators, people and plces (21/63).

The link with the environmental theme appears to have been positive for families:

48/63 said their children had learnt something new about wildlife or the environment.

27/63 said the Big Wild Read had made them think about doing something to help wildlife and the environment, and 22/63 said they had gone on to do something to help wildlife and the environment such as putting out food & water for wildlife, recycling, saving water, saving energy etc.

Comments on The Big Wild Read

Some of the comments specifically referred to the environmental theme in their comments about the Big Wild Read in general, e.g.

"I think it is brilliant at encouraging children to learn about the environment and also encouraged their reading skills"

"My child loved planting the seeds."

"Great idea, my daughter loves telling people about the books she has read! Really good to be linked to wildlife & environmental issues, something we feel very strongly about & this helped to put it at a child's level."

Other comments referred to how much the SRC had encouraged their children with their reading

"A good way to encourage children to read outside of school"

"My son in particular doesn't have much interest in books but the 'wild read' incentives has made him more eager to read".

They reinforced the enjoyment of library visits and social interaction during the summer.

"I think it is excellent for both children and adults to participate in activities together. Some fantastic ideas!"

"It's fantastic, great way for children to look at books & also mix and socialise with other children"

How they found out about the events:

Most people (52/71) responded that they found out about the event through the library, though a significant number (12/71) were just visiting the library.

The main reason given for coming to the event was that their children were taking part in the Big Wild Read (54/67), though a significant number answered that their family is interested in nature (23/67), that they always do the events (24/67) or that it was something new to do in the summer holidays (32/67).

Outcomes from the events:

A high proportion of participants (31/67) gave the events a 10/10 rating and most of the other participants gave them 8 or over, which shows the events had worked well in libraries. There were very few negative comments, and just one person who gave a rating below 7, who said the children could have done with more help. There were lots of comments about how much effort the staff and volunteers had gone to, to be welcoming and make the events enjoyable for families.

"Relaxed, enjoyable, friendly staff, interesting, kept children involved"

"A worthwhile activity for all the family to learn from for the future"

"My child especially enjoyed seeing the bats and learnt so much. The staff were all very enthusiastic".

"The events seem to be very popular. They encourage children to interact with others. Encourage them to become interested in different topics and activities"

"Staff/volunteers on hand were knowledgeable and helpful"

Doing something positive as a family as a result of taking part in the wildlife linked events:

Out of a sample of 67 respondents...

29 said they would visit local parks more often

28 said they would find out more about wildlife in their area

said they would do something for nature e.g. put out food & water for wildlife

23 said they would visit a wildlife centre

In addition...

11 said they would read more about the environment/ nature

9 said they wouldn't do anything different to usual

said they would find out more about the organisation running the event

Just under 4 out of 10 participants had heard of BBC Breathing Places.