

Intergenerational Hanukkah Celebration

PJ Library Decorates Hanukkah Cookies
@ Assisted Living Home

Northern NJ



Goals:

- To partner with the local JHAL (Jewish Home Assisted Living) to hold a PJ Library program at their site.
- To expand the criteria for what is a good location for a PJ Library event.
- To give families, who may live far from grandparents, a way to meet with senior citizens
- To get excited for Hanukkah



Planning and Background Information:

This program evolved almost serendipitously. The executive director of the local JHAL is a PJ Parent. She called to ask a question about her child's books and I took the opportunity to ask if it might be possible to hold a PJ event at the home. She was very excited and invited us up to meet with her and the director of programming and volunteer services.

We discussed our goals and then possible programs. JHAL has other groups that come visit including classes from a local elementary school; a girl scout troop; and local religious schools and youth groups but they had never had a pre-school aged group. They want families to come see the facility, which is lovely, and they wanted another chance for residents to interact with young people.

We decided to start with two projects – Hanukkah Cookie Decorating and a pre-Mother's Day program in early May.

Content:

Families were encouraged to RSVP but many more people just showed up. We were hoping for at least 10 children and we had more than 30 children, plus parents and some grandparents.

Residents were invited to join us. When we went up to the activity room they were already seated at a large table with space in between them for the children. PJ participants joined the residents at the table and were given large sugar cookies in Hanukkah shapes, icing, and sprinkles so they could decorate their cookies. They were also given sandwich bags and stickers to decorate a bag to bring their cookie home. Some residents actively helped the children sitting next to them while others were content to chat with the children. Parents were mostly content to sit on the sidelines and schmooze which was what we wanted.

After the cookie decorating everyone moved to the lobby and one of the residents read several PJ Library stories. Additional residents and home staff joined us.

Publicity:

For this initial program we only publicized it to our PJ families via the e-News and Facebook though we did encourage people to bring friends. JHAL also publicized the program through their newsletter and website.

Sunday, December 11
Hanukkah Cookie Time
2:00-3:30 p.m.
Jewish Home Assisted Living
685 Westwood Avenue, River Vale

Join us for a special intergenerational event including Hanukkah stories from The PJ Library, cookie-decorating, dreidel spinning, and lots of fun. No charge but RSVPs are requested. Contact PJ Library coordinator Linda Ripps for more information.

Outcome and Evaluation:

The staff at the home was very satisfied with this program. When children come in groups there are only chaperones. Our program brought lots of parents. Many people remembered the home before a recent, complete, renovation and were very surprised. This was excellent publicity for the home. In fact, they mentioned the PJ Library event at a meeting with other home administrators and that led to another Jewish home calling us to offer their building for an event!

This was also a very good event for the PJ Library. As we look for different social action activities this is different from an inter-generational event where grandparents are invited. Here we asked children to interact with seniors who are not related to them. Many families mentioned this fact specifically as one of the reasons why they came to the program.

JHAL is also located in a part of our catchment area where there are a few spaces – public or Jewish – to hold an event. Again many families mentioned that they came because the event was close to home.

Finally, JHAL has a programming budget so that kept our programming costs down and they have a kosher kitchen which made the program accessible to all our families.



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