NEIBA News
May 2, 2018

NEIBA Shop Local Grants
A reminder that NEIBA Shop Local Grants are still available. Our grant program was established to help members develop effective local independent business alliances within their communities and give them the tools to shift consumer culture toward supporting locally-owned, independent businesses.

Everything you need to know about the NEIBA Shop Local Grants is HERE.

The deadline for the next applications is June 1st. If you have any questions email Beth@neba.org.

NECBA Windows & Mirrors

Notes From the NEIBA Advisory Council
Scenes from a successful Independent Bookstore Day across New England

Norah Galvin getting the cupcakes ready at The Bookstore Plus

A wedding at Wellesley Books

Harry Potter Trivia at The Silver Unicorn

On Independent Bookstore Day, Phoenix Books in Essex, Vermont, hosted an Elephant & Piggie storytime, with special guests Elephant and Piggie themselves! Over 150 people came out to hear stories, make crafts, enjoy snacks, and meet the famous friends. I asked Colleen Shipman, our general manager and children's book buyer, how she approaches event planning for children.

What's your secret to hosting a successful children's event?

I've been a bookseller for over 25 years and one of my favorite things to do is coordinate children's events, anything from a cozy storytime to a large-scale community event. I think planning, sometimes over planning, is the key to every successful event. I like to make sure customers—children and their caregivers—are entertained for the entirety of the event and that often involves a craft. I want them to have something tangible to take home. Making hats is always fun, and they make for great photos for social media!

What do you do when things don't go according to plan?

I like to plan for all sorts of scenarios that might come up, like having a larger or smaller crowd than you thought. Having crafts available for younger siblings at a Wimpy Kid event, having food labels at hand if a parent has a question about allergens—if you can anticipate these kinds of needs beforehand, your event is that much more likely to go well. Flexibility is so important when working with children and families and having great support staff who can go with the flow is key.

Tell me about an event where you had to improvise.

We were hosting a Cat in the Hat costume event where the costume did not show up in time. I was able to work with a bookseller to come up with a Cat in the Hat inspired costume, and our substitute Cat was able to entertain all 75 plus children with an admittedly unconventional faux British accent. The children were delighted!

Do you have any tips for character costume events?
Great answers at
The Vermont Book Shop

hello hello books staff member Cameron sketches, with her eyes closed, portraits of customers Mark and Ruby in the Introvert Photo Booth

The couple who visited every one of the metrobostonbookstoreday.com bookstores in front of The Blue Bunny Bookstore

Make sure your costume arrives on time and has all of its pieces!

It's really important to maintain the magic for children. That means you have to make sure that kids never see the costume partially on or in its crate. Booksellers should speak about the character as if it's real— you have to respect the integrity of the character. On a practical note, make sure that the person wearing the costume has taken care of his or her, um, bodily functions, before dressing up. We had a very memorable event where Ladybug Girl had to use the potty halfway through, much the amusement of the preschoolers in attendance!

~Beth Wagner, Phoenix Books, Essex, Burlington, Rutland, Chester VT