Summer Reading: Scratch Tickets
Jessica Bacon, Teen Librarian at Marlborough Public Library

Goals:
- Make Summer Reading easy!
- Increase participation.
- Focus on fun.
- Eliminate the barrier of registering to participate.
- Encourage teens to return to the library all summer.
- Made teens aware of all the library has to offer, most especially reaching those who only come in for their school’s Summer Reading books.

Benefits of Scratch Tickets
- No registration needed—statistics were gathered on the back of losing tickets or the prize sign-in sheet. (I do have a registration form, which gives them 3 extra tickets into the Grand Prize Raffle.)
- It is simple to implement. Staff ask if teens are going into grades 6-12 and automatically hand them a ticket.
- Teens instantly participated.
- Staff were excited to have a winner.
- Prizes were collected right away, eliminating hassle of hunting down winners later.

Challenges
- It is time consuming to make so many tickets! But volunteers can easily do it.
- Circulation staff participation are important since they are the ones handing out the tickets.
- This program only rewarded those who came to the library often.
- Prizes may be a challenge for some libraries, depending on what your budget is. If this is the case, you can adapt this program where instead of having each item have a certain prize, they can pick a scratch ticket for whatever prize they are hoping to win.

How to Make Scratch Tickets:
1. Make a design!
2. Put packaging tape over your message box
3. Paint on top of the tape with acrylic paint and a drop of dish soap.
How It Works:

- 7 categories, 7 major prizes. Fiction and Nonfiction each had 2 midlevel prizes and free books.

- All categories had lots of small winners, just candy and Summer Reading trinkets.

- ALL losing tickets qualified for the GRAND PRIZE RAFFLE, not listed on the Prize Board above.

- One ticket per day, handed out by Circulation Staff. If they checked out multiple categories, they picked what ticket they wanted.

- If they lost, they wrote their contact info on the back and the losing ticket would go into the grand prize raffle.

- If they won, they had to sign a sheet before claiming their prize. (Helped with keeping stats on winners)

NOTE: We only put one major prize in the raffle per week, right on top of the pile so it’d be claimed quickly.

What We Learned:

- There were some teens who were disappointed that they couldn’t log their hours, but as one said, “I loved that [logging hours] when I was younger because I would constantly read in hopes of doing well in the program, but with my job and the crazy amount of summer work we have to do for APs, I didn’t get to read as much as I would have liked.”

- To accommodate those who are big readers but cannot come to the library often, next year, we are creating a category for book reviews. One ticket per review.

- Despite the fact that we give out prizes for non-books, books by far were the top checkouts. In 2014, 82.6% were book/audiobook checkouts. Of course, we didn’t release the major prize in these categories until towards the end of Summer Reading to encourage reading.

- In 2014, 41% won at least once. All major and midlevel prizes were won by a different person.

- Next year, we’re making GENERIC tickets (no SR theme) so we can reuse the leftovers the following year!

Jessica Bacon
Teen Librarian, Marlborough Public Library
Blogger, 5 Minute Librarian
jbacon@cwmars.org