

Taking, Making . . . Advocating Take-and-Makes to Build Awareness

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While your library may have done take-and-make programming in the past, the term has gained expanded meaning during the pandemic. Now many libraries have adopted take-and-makes as a staple of pandemic programming, bringing joy and creativity to families and librarians.

At a time when many libraries have limited connections to their customers, these creative activities keep them coming back. They can also build awareness of all the wonderful ways libraries positively impact families in your community. Let's explore how you can use take-and-makes as a powerful advocacy tool.

Bagged and ready to go, these activities are the perfect package for bundling up information and collecting customer feedback. When assembling activities, include flyers for your library's summer reading challenge and programs. Does your library have an eNewsletter? Include the link for customers to subscribe to it. You can also generate QR codes with sites like QR-Code Monkey or QRStuff to direct customers to library information. Those grab customers' attention and can even provide analytics.

Use them to link to take-and-make instructional videos, browsing videos of your newest children's books, or customer feedback forms. Also, as part of your package, ask customers to post photos of their creations and tag your library on social media.

The photos and comments that your library has been collecting tell a story. Library value in the community is shared when parents tag your library in a photo of their child holding up a completed take-and-make project. Their joy is a powerful visual record of your library's impact.

One of our customers shared the compounding success of their experience by saying, "Take-and-makes were perfect for a visit to Grandma's. Grandma learned about the take-and-makes for adults, too. She can't wait to pick one up!" Post these photos and comments to your library's social media pages.

Capture all your valuable customer impact stories, and share how library services affect people in your community every day. Tell these stories to library administration, so they can use them in advocacy campaigns and when communicating with stakeholders. Creating an easy-to-use form for staff can increase collaboration and organize stories for improved access. Additionally, recording statistics according to audience age and programming categories, such as STEM, creation, or literacy, can help frame your narrative.

Use take-and-makes to reach out directly to local decision makers and build awareness about your library. First, identify who in your community has the ear of the public. Are they on your Board of Directors or Friends of the Library group, elected officials, sponsors, teachers, or community group leaders?

Put together take-and-make packets with extra incentives and your ask of registering and talking about the library's summer reading program. Can they share at meetings and post on social media? In addition to supplies, include a summer reading T-shirt, program flyers, bookmarks with a QR code for a registration video, and an infographic.

Summer reading infographics use bold graphics to share impact. Create an infographic that supports your ask with statistics from last year's summer reading success or with what is planned for this year.

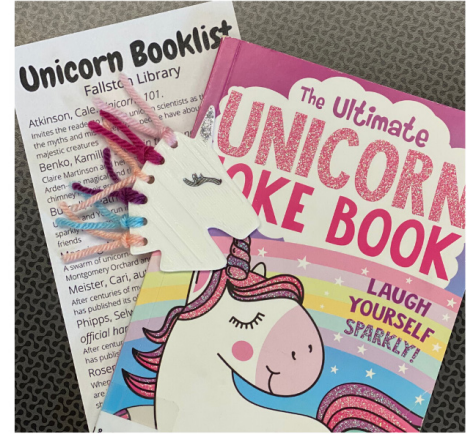
We created special packets to highlight take-and-makes, as well as summer reading. If your library is using the 2021 Collaborative Summer Learning Program (CSLP) Tails and Tales, with art by Salina Yoon, here's an idea all ages will enjoy.

Create a DIY shrink film summer reading badge. Provide a sheet filled with Yoon's artwork, shrink film, a square of sandpaper, and a bar pin. Makers can design their own badge using the artwork, trace the design onto the shrink film with permanent markers or colored pencils to form their custom badge. Follow the instructions on the shrink film to bake and



These brothers enjoyed the butterfly take-and-make project.

Unicorn Take & Make!



Unicorns are always popular!

harden. Then finish with a layer of clear hot glue or epoxy and glue the pin on the back.

Alternatively, makers may choose to punch a hole before shrinking to make a keychain pendant. As the final step in your instructions, write something like, "Show off your new badge. We love seeing your creations!" Include any handles/tags makers should use.

Now, it's your turn! Share how you build awareness at your library with #alscadvocacy. &