

Bring the Library Downtown with Koffee House Reads

What is Koffee House Reads?

Koffee House Reads began as an initiative by the Meaford Public Library to bring local writers to downtown venues in Meaford. The event features a writer's presentation with a dessert and beverages for the audience and is a great way to promote Canadian literacy in our own community.

The idea of Koffee House Reads came from the Meaford Public Library's Strategic Plan and is part of an economic initiative to partner with local businesses. Naturally, as a library, literacy, reading and books are a large part of our mandate. The Koffee House Reads events bring together economic development *and* promotion of reading and literacy. The library is able to introduce local writers to the residents of Meaford and show off our community's great downtown venues.

Benefits

Library – An outreach program to promote the library outside of its physical walls and promote Canadian writers and their books

Venues – Attract new customers

Writers – Promote their books and the writing process

Economic Development – Partnerships between the library, venues and writers lead to greater economic development

All of these benefits can be achieved on a small budget.

Finding Writers

Some writers will contact you. They are looking to promote their books and the library is a natural place to start. Writers are generally more than willing to do an event such as Koffee House Reads especially if the library gives them an opportunity to sell their books at the event. You might hear about a writer in the media. Local newspapers or radio stations will post information about local people who have published a book. Often they will provide contact information to help you get in touch with them.

Arrangements with the Venues

Contact the venues well in advance about what you would like to do and how you will involve them. Make sure they have the appropriate space to accommodate a large group of people and that everyone will be able to see and hear the writer. Offer to provide an estimate of how many people will be in attendance. That way, the venue will be able to plan what dessert and beverages to serve for a specific number of guests. For the Meaford Public Library Koffee House Reads events, each venue billed the library directly for the refreshments provided.

Many venues are willing to take part in this great initiative. In our experience, choosing a quiet time such as 2 or 3 pm often works well. Also, consider noise issues like loud refrigerators or coolers. These might need to be turned off for the duration of the event.

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One reason the venue may not be able to participate is if they do not have a large enough space to serve both the Koffee House Reads group as well as the general public. Some venues will close to the public for the duration of the event because they are guaranteed so many customers through the Koffee House Reads events. However, some may not be willing to do this as they could be shutting out loyal customers.

The Meaford Public Library started Koffee House Reads at cafes in downtown Meaford, but we have expanded to other, unique locations. We have used the terrace room and galleries of the Meaford Hall (a large theatre/opera house), the Meaford Museum, and the local arena for a writer who wrote a book about hockey.

Advertising

- Posters/flyers/bookmarks – both in the library and throughout the community
- Free ads from the local newspaper, radio stations, etc.
- Online Community Calendars
- Social media
- Local TV station especially regional talk shows
- Announcements at local clubs/organizations and other library events
- Paid ads- newspaper and radio including interviews with writers

Out of the Box Advertising

- Coffee Bags with information about Koffee House Reads on them
- “Menu” signs – chalkboard/café style
- Place menu easels at the venues with information about the Koffee House Reads series
- Lanyard – Ask me about... or Guess Who is Coming to Meaford...

Tickets

The cost of the tickets should include the cost of a dessert and beverages from the local venue. If you are running a series, try selling tickets to individual events as well as special deal for the entire series. For example: each event ticket is \$10 but a special price for all three events is \$25. This also helps the attendance of lesser known writers. In our experience it is best not to hold tickets that have not been paid for in full. Make the thicketts yourself and sell at the library. Lots of great templates are available.