

Circulating Cake Pan Collection @ South River Public Library

Presented by Jen Fitzgerald

First things first

- Have an idea. The cake pan one was inspired by an article I read about another library that already did this. Yours may be inspired by needs you see in your community.
- Put out feelers. We talked with some key stakeholders (library director, Friends, etc.) to see if we thought this idea would float.

Getting off the ground

- We did further research on how other libraries who were already doing this did so. We wrote a policy based off of this and on our own concerns (e.g., what if pans came back dirty?), which was then presented to our Board of Trustees for approval.
- Once the idea was approved, we began asking for donations from community members as well as purchasing various cake pans. We had an approved account with Amazon, so the bulk of our purchasing was done through them; however, we did get a great number of usable donations – some were brand new and others lightly used.
- We also had to work with our consortium (LMxAC) to make sure there was a way to catalog these. They ended up adding a new category for us (“realia” on our end; “special collection” in the OPAC) where we could add these as a special item. They are cataloged much the way a magazine is, with “Cake Pan Collection” being the ‘title’ and each type of pan being a ‘volume.’

Cake Pan Collection
by South River Public Library (South River, N.J.)
Publication 2016-2019
Language English
Format:

Available:
No copies available at Old Bridge Central Branch, 25 copies available at other libraries
hide additional copies...

South River Public Library	CAKE PAN CHOO-CHOO TRAIN	Object or tool	(7 x 10.5 x 4.5 inches)	Special Collection
South River Public Library	CAKE PAN DANCING DAISY	Object or tool	(12 x 12 x 2 inches)	Special Collection
South River Public Library	CAKE PAN DARTH VADER	Object or tool	(11 x 11.5 x 2 inches)	Special Collection
South River	CAKE PAN DOLLY	Object	(7 x 6 inches)	Special Collection

- In addition, we had to determine how to present the cake pans. Obviously, we couldn't put a barcode on an item that needs to be washed! Also, not every pan came in a box and those that did were in cardboard so flimsy, we were sure it would fall apart over time. We decided to buy large, sturdy canvas display bags with a clear front pocket from Demco. For each item, we printed out

a sheet to put in said pocket. Each sheet contained a picture of the pan, a brief description of it (e.g. size), and some examples of cakes that could be made using it. The barcode for each item was then attached on to the sheet and could be easily scanned. In addition, a copy of the cake pan lending policy was included on each sheet as a reminder. (We also made a second copy of each of these sheets – sans barcode – and placed them in a binder that patrons could easily browse, rather than having to take down each pan from the shelf.)

Ta-da! Plus Promotion, promotion, promotion

- Once we cataloged a significant portion of our new and donated cake pans, we made them available to the public. We started by putting some out on our “new” section to highlight them, although we later dedicated a shelving area to them.
- As we all know, the library field is not the *Field of Dreams* – “if you build it” doesn’t necessarily mean they will come. Instead, lots of promotion is needed for everything. We followed a lot of the regular routes for announcing this new lending collection – flyers, social media posts, etc. But since this is a special collection, we also found special ways to promote it. For a book club meeting, I made mini cakes using one of our donated pans. We held a cake competition program over the summer. We asked patrons who borrowed pans to send us pictures of their finished product so that we could continuously update our social media accounts with these. (Of course, always check with your own library’s policies regarding food in the library and social media management.)
- The end result was happy patrons, increased circulation stats, and even a case of ‘imitation is the best form of flattery’ when another library in our consortium added their own lending cake pan collection.



South River Public Library February 9, 2017
at 11:02 AM

It's finally here! Our newest items for patrons to borrow are specialty cake pans so you have the perfect cake whatever your celebration. Come check out this ever-expanding collection whenever you're looking to make a tasty treat. 🍰🎂
#fms_treat #fmsspad #littlemomentsapp
#cakepans #librariesofinstagram

Key take-aways

- Support of your supervisor or library director is crucial.
- Reach out to the community for ideas, donations, and help with promoting your new collection.
- Be patient – getting a brand-new collection off the ground may take time.
- Budget your time so you can deal with the influx of new items to catalog.
- If you have any questions feel free to contact me: jfitzgerald@oldbridgelibrary.org (I’m not longer at SRPL but am happy to answer any questions or connect you with current SRPL staff members if needed.)