**Fighting Stress with Hand Turkeys: Arts & Crafts Programs on a Graduate Campus**

Tom Quinn, Hirsh Health Sciences Library

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**Library Fun Lab Milestones**

- **2014**
  - Feb: Fun Lab officially formed out of the Facebook committee
  - Apr: First therapy dog visit – a hit! PR Committee brainstorms other destressing events
  - Oct 10th: First “Friday Fun Lab” Board games & puzzles are set out. “People liked the idea of it”
  - Nov: Officially start holding one Friday Fun Lab craft per month.
  - Feb: Valentines – our first big hit!
  - Mar: Officially launch “Board Game Tuesdays”; idea quickly abandoned due to lack of interest

- **2015**
  - Apr: “Lucky Stones” and PiTea Party to relieve exam stress. Tea is popular and becomes semi-annual.
  - Oct: First craft to start at 12pm with no end time
  - Nov: Crafts now offered Thurs & Fri at 1:30pm. Becomes official craft schedule. Now called “Library Fun Lab”

- **2016**
  - Feb: Crafts moved to desk, major increase in participation
  - Mar: Paper bag puppets (dud) and Study Buddies (wild success!)
  - Apr: Motivational stones. Evolution of lucky stones. Regular craft schedule increases popularity
  - Sep: Coffee Cozies

- **2017**
  - Oct: Add Study Buddies during mid-terms for two craft opportunities in month
  - Feb: Add Mardi Gras Masks for two craft opportunities in month

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**Lessons Learned**

- Keep trying – something will stick!
- Be flexible and adapt your plan as you go
- The easiest crafts are the most popular
- Examples are great advertising
- People love “cute”
- You can never have too many googly eyes

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**Notes on the impact of crafts:**

Circulation rates turned out to be a poor measurement of student engagement as many other external factors affect them. However, library staff report an increase in quick reference questions, consultation requests, and casual encounters with the student population. Students have become more comfortable approaching our staff now that they have the opportunity to interact with them in non-academic encounters.

**Current Craft Line Up**

- Coffee Cozies
- Pumpkin Painting
- Study Buddies x2
- Turkeys
- Gingerbread Houses
- Valentines
- Mardi Gras Masks
- Motivational Stones
- Button Making

**Other Events Each Semester**

- Therapy Dogs
- Tea Parties
- Free coffee during finals

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*Tom Quinn* is the Evening & Weekend Library Coordinator for the Hirsh Health Sciences Library at Tufts University in Boston, MA. He has worked in Access Services in academic libraries for over ten years, and has been at Hirsh Library since 2013. Tom manages a staff of 14 health sciences graduate students year-round, and regularly recruits their assistance in library activities promotion.