

The tools you need to bring more people and business downtown

Downtown Promotion Reporter

Get people hustling during a slow season

Scavenger hunt events, which fill downtown's streets with teams of people having fun and getting to know some of the finer points of their community are gaining in popularity. Three recent examples provide different approaches to this popular event.

Educate and entertain. Cluefest is New Haven, CT's, annual citywide scavenger hunt. Teams race across the city in cars, on bikes and on foot, answering clues to find the Secret Cluefest Party and prizes. The event website notes the many objectives of Cluefest:

"The goal of Cluefest is to have fun while promoting New Haven as an exciting and thriving community for people in their 20s and 30s. The event builds community, encourages civic engagement, and increases the number of people who know about the rich cultural and social opportunities in New Haven. By featuring New Haven's beauty, uniqueness, diversity and quality of life, Cluefest helps attract and retain talented young people in the city."

The website also provides full details on the event, the private group that sponsors it, volunteer opportunities, and even a set of 18 clues from prior year's events to help people prepare and test their knowledge of downtown. Here is clue #18:

*If delicious food is your goal,
Pick a place that has some soul.*

*With some sweet tea to quench your thirst,
This downtown fave started here first.*

In addition to the challenging riddles, some stops have additional mental or physical challenges. Participants are also encouraged to bring a digital camera so that there is visual verification that the team has solved a clue or completed a challenge. The event website is at: <http://cluefest.com/about.html>

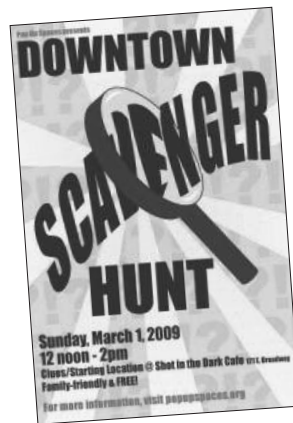
Raise funds. The Rochester (NY) Public Library sponsored its 3rd Annual Amazing Race, based loosely on the popular TV show "The Amazing Race." The race had teams of four rushing all over Rochester to find clues and perform tasks. The event ended with a celebration pick-nick and the awarding of prizes. The cost to participate is \$120 per team, which raised just over \$12,000 for the library foundation. The winning team, "Footloose and Childfree," finished the race in just over three and one-half hours.

The challenges include such things as: building a geodesic dome out of newspapers, stacking paper cups into a pyramid without actually touching the cups with your hands, finding a specific employee at a retail store.

Re-envision downtown. In a truly inventive scavenger hunt, two Tuscon, AZ, artists brought neighbors together to re-envision some of the many vacant downtown storefronts. Here's how it worked: Participants received a list of clues directing them to 10 locations. When they arrived, they found an interactive activity awaiting them. For example, at 47 North Scott Street, visitors were asked, "If you could open this restaurant tomorrow, what would be on the menu?" Responses included "cactus cookies," "eggs Florentine (a breakfast joint)," and "tasty Indian food."

The object of the scavenger hunt was to encourage participants to provide input into what the vacant spaces might some day be. The end result was a collection of photographs and written documents, which were displayed downtown.

To learn more about the event visit the Pop Up Spaces website at <http://popupspaces.org/?p=10>



www.DowntownDevelopment.com

Reprinted from *Downtown Promotion Reporter*

© 2008 Alexander Communications Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

DO NOT EDIT OR ALTER REPRINTS • REPRODUCTION NOT PERMITTED