GMT20230613-154930\_Recording

Tue, Jun 13, 2023 12:01PM • 7:49

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

people, program, stories, cookbook, share, queens, connections, connect, recipe, library, recipes, contributed, queen, neighborhood, scan, memory, link, personal, heard, archived

00:02

Hi, thank you so much for joining this lightning talk. I'm Meral Agish, the Community Coordinator of the Queens Memory Project and today I'll be talking about our program series The Queens Memory Cookbook, building community through personal archiving and story sharing. So, last winter, winter 2022, we launched the first version of this program as a fully remote program on Zoom, held weekly across 12 weeks in partnership with Life Story Club and our library's Older Adult Services Program. So I'm with the Queens Public Library and our focus at Queens Memory is the history of Queens, and connections to Queens past and present. Our goal with this cookbook program was to gather family recipes, personal recipes, personal stories connected to cooking, baking, eating, whatever it may be that people wanted to share, and have a friendly entry point to personal archiving and gathering in this kind of story sharing environment. At the end of the 12 week program, we recorded stories with the participants like Laura Ann Walker here, who contributed her Friday Evening Oatmeal Cookies Recipe, and it's one that she inherited and has connected to memories of breakfast from her childhood. And here you see a photo of her, you see the scanned recipe card where she has written down the recipe, it's her original recipe, actually, I should say, and a brief excerpt from the story that she shared. If you scan that QR code, you can hear Laura Anne speaking the story that she's sharing that was then transcribed and added to the cookbook. And if you click on that link, you can see the full printed cookbook, the digital version of it, we were able to print out copies and share them for free with all the participants and contributors share multiple copies in some cases, because people wanted to share with their family members, their friends. The book is also in circulation at the library, and held at our archives as well. So people may not have come across this program, while it was in progress are able to see and read and share the stories as well. The thing, however, was, again, Queens is our focus this place and the connections that people have to the borough past and present. And what we found was week after week, a lot of people would join, many of whom had a means connection, but many of whom did not they were interested in the program. They heard about it through other networks. Perhaps they've participated in Life Story Club programs elsewhere. So we have recipes in our cookbook that connect to Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, but don't have the Queens connection. So in winter 2023 we launched a version that was hyperlocal and hybrid, focusing on two branches, St. Albans and Ridgewood. And the thinking was, you know, we have this Queens Memory Cookbook volume one that includes Queens stories and stories from elsewhere. Let's see if we can make it really rooted into specific neighborhoods, and have it be reflective of the communities and neighbors and library patrons who who will connect to the these two library locations. And here you see our St Albans group, which month after month has been really cohesive, both online and in person, partly because of outreach efforts with the Addisleigh Park Civic Organization, which is a historic neighborhood that is right outside the St. Albans neighborhood. They don't have a local library in that neighborhood. St. Albans is their local branch. So many of the members have been welcomed to this particular program through personal contacts of mine, Lisa Wade and Helen Dobbins Bryan, who are in the middle of that portrait here, who've been inviting people that they know many long-, long-time residents who have connections to this neighborhood. And the hybrid model has worked differently at those locations month after month. It's worked differently too. But what we found is that some people will join online, some people will join in person, and some people will join it all. And some people may not have even heard about this but are contributing recipes because they saw your calls on social media or heard about it through their friends and they've been using this submission form which is linked to an airtable that we use for various projects of ours. And if you click on that link, you'll see it's really specific to recipes to food stories to the types of material that we're in by getting people to share. So this connects to our overall mission, again, of documenting the different histories of Queens. And the millions of people who call this place home or who live here and go to school here, work here or have some other connection past or present. And asking somebody to do an oral history interview may feel overwhelming, they may not know, you know, oh, gosh, that's such a big thing to ask. But if you're asking somebody to share a favorite recipe, that can be a really friendly entry point to personal archiving. And by helping people record stories, record recipes that may not have been written down prior to this point, I'm hearing that a lot from our our members this year, that these are inherited recipes in many cases that were never passed down in written form, they've been transferred orally. So this may be the first time that people are recording a story, recording the measurements, recording the recipes and adding scanned photos, scan recipe cards, other materials that they like to contribute to the cookbook. And our goal is to create two new volumes of the Queens Memory Cookbook, which will again be shared freely with the participants, the contributors shared digitally with anyone who would like to have access to the book, put in circulation, and also archived at the library. You can read more details at the Queens Public Library blog posts there. So some of the highlights you'll see here. Just in the interest of time, I will include links to that you can see how the cookbook series has cooked up other related programs. We've had a food festival, food and family recipe festival we have a series of Juneteenth food traditions, we have this favorite food activity, to invite people to think about what are the stories that are important to them about the food that they may be making for themselves thinking about family members thinking about their connections to community, and have it be a way for people of all ages, whether they're a kid like Jacob, who contributed his pizza recipe with his mother, so are people who may have been making this, these dishes for their 90 years. It's welcoming in a way that feels really, I think, friendly and fun, enjoyable, and personally very meaningful as well. And here you can see all the different ways that you can connect with Queens Memory, please reach out I'm happy to talk about the ins and outs of this program and how you may be able to bring it to your library as well. So thank you for watching and hope to be in touch with you soon.