

Reaching out while building up: How one library promoted their services during construction

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Background

Traditionally, hosting events and programs has been a valuable way for Towson University Albert S. Cook Library to create partnerships and introduce students to library resources. In early 2022, however, we began a year-long construction project to build an Academic Commons on our main floor. The construction has been unpredictably noisy throughout the day, which has made hosting traditional in-person events, such as author talks, problematic. Also, our campus has stressed a return to in-person learning after the COVID-19 pandemic so online events were not likely to be successful. In order to meet the need for connection that programming can provide, Cook Library staff and student leadership developed the following three programming series.



A-LIST Student Leaders tabling in the library lobby ahead of the construction

Construction Tabling

Reaching out to the Towson University Community through tabling information sessions held in the 3rd-floor lobby of the Library about the Academic Commons and its construction happened at the beginning of Spring 2022. A week of tabling included handing out infographics that consisted of information about what to expect during construction and a QR code that links to information about what Academic Commons is all about. Conversations between A-LISTers and the TU community led to productive discourse about the changes that were made due to the construction and how those changes did not result in the disappearance that the resources the 3rd floor initially possessed but are temporarily moved (and will soon be coming back), such as the help desk on the second floor.

National Library Week

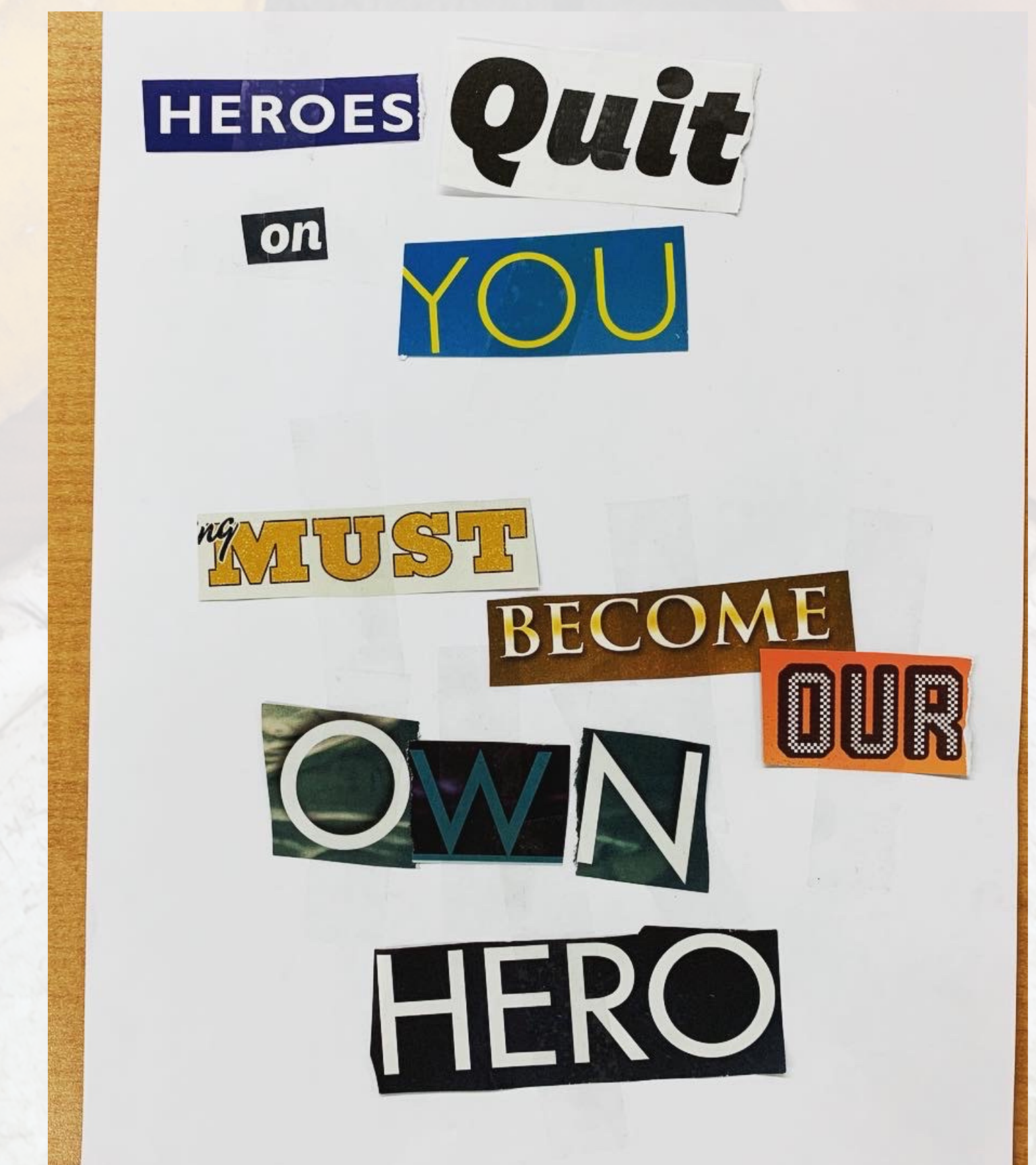
“What do you love about Cook Library?” was the question asked amongst the TU Community during National Library Week. This tabling event was a way for students and faculty to share their thoughts as to why Cook Library is a place they go to, what the library provides, and what about the library they love. Whether to study, read, look for resources, or get a cup of coffee, the library being the central part of the TU Campus, everyone had something they could write down on their heart-shaped, colorfully, and uniquely self-decorated paper.

National Poetry Month

For National Poetry Month there were two events, one passive event held through the whole month of April and an in-person poetry workshop event held in the last week of the month. The passive event was to create your own poem with words cut out and recycled from different magazines, newspapers, journals, and articles. People either took their one-of-a-kind poems with them or left them at the table where the event was located. TU Voices and the A-LIST program collaborated on working together to reach out to creative voices on campus who were interested in writing poems. The poetry workshop was a way for students and other participants to have some TU Voice members read and look over people's work before submitting it to a poetry competition that TU Voices and A-LIST sponsored. Both events were efforts to reach out to passionate and creative writers and celebrate their voice through the art of poetry.



A heart that a student made during National Library Week tabling



A poem that was created from magazine scraps. It reads: Heroes Quit on You Must Become Our Own Hero.

Conclusions

When construction prevented Cook Library from hosting traditional in-person and online programming, staff and student leaders turned to tabling events, passive programs, and strong partnership building. Through construction tabling, National Library Week tabling, as well as National Poetry Month passive programming and partnership events, we were still able to engage TU students. Moving forward, we will continue to host passive programming and rely heavily on partnerships to help us develop and host events.