

SURVEYMONKEYSURVEY REPORT

Introduction

...in which we learn that StringThing is Big.

Researcher Expectations and Assumptions

... in which we learn that StringThing is Cool.

Procedure

...in which we learn that the Survey was Fun.

Analysis

... in which we learn that some projects will be handed off to a few people, some will be done by a small group, and some will be planned for the group at large.

Results

...in which we learn what the survey said

-- In general

-- Specific proposals

Conclusions

...in which questions are answered and we find specific plans have emerged from the nebulous ether of statistical wonderment.

Appendix A (useful contact information for various projects)

Appendix B (kick ass graphs)

Introduction

In the Spring of 2010 StringThing conducted a survey (created by Katherine, via SurveyMonkey) to assess member interest in various charitable projects, and types of projects.

StringThing currently sees 15 - 20 members each week. The mailing list includes about 40 people, 30 being "active" participants and 10 listed as "Friends of StringThing."

24 people answered the survey (most questions had at least 20 responses). From the contact information available, we had a reasonable range of participation from long-time members to brand new members, and regular to occasional members.

Summary:

StringThing is big (30-40 people).

About half the members answered the survey.

Researcher Expectations and Assumptions:

From general knowledge of the group, I expected to see a wide diversity of charitable work in which members are already involved. ¹ I also expected that in terms of group work, a majority of members would be interested in organizations that benefit children and animals, our local community, and environmental causes. ² I also expected that many people are willing to contribute small pieces to a larger knitting or crochet project, but less interested in doing non-knitting service in the community (that is, specifically in relation to StringThing). ³

In the past, we've had good results (ie, an effective product that served a specific need, and a darn good time doing it) when the suggestions arose organically from interests close to a member's heart, matched with projects that were quick, easy, and didn't involve personal interactions outside StringThing.

Basically, we've made a lot of afghan squares and a lot of hats.

It's worked well.

Questions I've wondered include:

"Should stringthing focus on one charity over a long term period, or do a wider variety of projects?"

"Should community service or charity work be an assumed part of a group like ours?"

"How can we most effectively focus our amazing energy and talent to help others?"

"What kinds of charitable work are the most fun for us a group, in terms of community building within Stringthing itself?"

"Should we stick to the kinds of things we've done in the past, or try something new?"

Summary:

I think StringThing is cool. We've made a lot of squares and hats.

1. true
2. true
3. false

Procedure:

The survey was designed to assess member interest in different types of activities (ex., knitting small items, collecting non-knit items, interacting directly with other groups, etc.), different types of charities (ex., local, international, faith-based, political, etc.) as well as specific projects which had been proposed for this spring.

A final question assessed the meta-value of the survey for group dynamics and personal growth. ¹

Katherine wrote the survey while Rebecca looked over her shoulder and fussed at her about format, demanding that more questions be added when it was already done. The survey was then emailed to all StringThing members. There were some temporary technical difficulties with the link, but this was in no way intentional nor do we believe any identifiable groups were marginalized or discriminated against by these technical difficulties. However, if any member feels that their voice has not been heard for any reason we warmly welcome their comments.

More than half of the respondents² gave their name at the end of the survey, and those individuals were each personally contacted about projects they were interested in or suggestions that were offered.

Summary:

The survey was fun!

1. Literally all of the respondents had a positive reaction to the survey, though none felt it was the best survey ever. 5% experienced enhanced self esteem, and 50% were profoundly, magically affected in a physical sense.

2. 67%: 16 out of 24, but one of them is me, and one is Katherine, although she didn't put her name, but I totally know it was her because I was there.

Analysis:

Given the data sets we were working with (more essentially categorical than numerical), and our general purpose and intent (to gauge the overall interests and mood of the group), it seemed more useful to look at modes and percentages rather than mean or median averages. Not everyone answered every question, but for the “larger” questions at least 20 people answered.

Responses indicating negative interest were grouped together (ie, no means no) while “maybe” and “definitely “ categories have been kept distinct.

For the purposes of this survey:

number of responses	%, roughly	translates in report as	interpretive indicators
0	0	none, no-one	Nobody who answered the survey, not nobody in the world
1 - 2	about 8%	a few	Probably not a good choice for a group project, but these two people should get together
3-5	about 20 %	some	We'll form some smaller interest groups.
6-10	25% - 50%	many	We'll do it.
11-19	50% - 75%	a hell of a lot	Thundercats are GO!!!
15-20	about 75%	almost all	
20-24	80% -100%	everybody, all	

Summary:

If at least 5 people want to, we can do it - we might make up a small interest group.

If a dozen people want to, we'll make it a whole-group opportunity.

Results: General Trends

In general, a hell of a lot of StringThings are involved with some kind of charitable or service work. Specific projects mentioned ranged widely from work for children (Project Linus, Stitches from the Heart) to adults (Dress for Success, helmet liners); local projects (Durham's Communities in Schools) to international organizations (Mother Bear); and from fiber-focused (Red Scarf) to knitting-connections (P/Hop) to work that taps our non-string-oriented passions and talents (Durham Literacy Council , animal rescue).

Some StringThings are willing to help with any group project we do, though almost all say it depends on the project. A few would like us to bug off (but we still love them).

Many people (43%- the upper end of many) said they prefer to donate an item they made. But a surprising hell of a lot of people said they'd prefer to be more directly involved in a service project, if given the option! A hell of a lot of us are also willing to donate to non-crafting collections or drives.

Many people are willing and able to design patterns as part of a charitable effort.

A hell of a lot of people (52%) said they'd be interested in teaching a skill either to an individual or a group; the same percentage were interested in selling their work as part of a charitable benefit.

Almost all respondents were willing to engage in a service work day, and many were willing to help with events like group yard sales.

Noting that these categories overlap: Almost all are inclined toward local causes, and toward environmental causes. A hell of a lot of us want to help children's benefits, animals, and have an interest in health/mental health causes. Some are interested specifically in international charities. Some are disinclined to work through faith-based programs, and a hell of a lot of us are turned off by politics. On the other hand, a hell of a lot of us are interested in social justice issues.

Specific Projects

Stringthing is big enough that we don't all need to be involved in every activity in order to still have a goodly number of people participating. For activities that might get a smaller-group interest base, we will arrange to get together "on the side."

<i>Results:</i>	<i>Decisions:</i>
<p>p/hop: a Haiti benefit through Doctors Without Borders</p> <p>Many people were interested but some were not.</p>	<p>Stringthing has a link on the website; people interested in supporting p/hop can find their way there.</p> <p>Ways to be involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - design patterns to donate to their organization - "buy" patterns from them - offer yarn to swap - "buy" yarn from others
<p>Haiti benefit later on: details tba</p> <p>A few people were very interested in this, and a hell of a lot of us thought we might help out.</p>	<p>Needs a dedicated organizer:</p> <p>People who are passionate about this should look into some organizations that will continue to work in Haiti, and think about ways our work could support theirs. <i>Get back to us, and it seems like there will be a strong support base!</i></p>
<p>A few people are very interested in supporting Often Awesome, and many people said they might be willing to help out.</p>	<p>If you're interesting in doing this, you should get in touch with Maya. <i>Once there's a pattern for the armbands, StringThing can send it around to see if there are more people willing to help out.</i></p>
<p>MOMArt (May 1): Some people are interested in selling crafts as a benefit for Genesis Home.</p>	<p>Interest group: Rebecca will organize this.</p>
<p>Animal Shelter raffle table (May 22): Many were interested, many were not, and many were "maybes"</p>	<p>Interest group: Rebecca will organize this. The larger group will be invited to help out with a donation-potluck.</p> <p>We might combine this with building a fence with the Coalition to Unchain Dogs.</p>
<p>Habitat Workday: Many were interested, many were not, and many were "maybe" willing to help.</p>	<p>Interest group: Needs an organizer. This person would get in touch with Habitat, and help pick a date. There would probably be a group of 10 attending.</p>

Run a monthly knitting group at Genesis Home:

A lot of maybes...

This moves to the back burner.

Other Ideas:

Many specifically said they'd like StringThing support for a project dear to their hearts!

Of those projects specifically mentioned, half were oriented towards babies, and Project Linus came up more than once.

In general, **a hell of a lot of us** want to support children's charities and almost all of us are at least somewhat interested.

Most of these projects involve making a toy, small blanket, or tiny hat, and indeed, 90% of StringThing likes to make a small item to donate to a cause.

The Purple Hat project that came up recently is obviously a GO. People are involved in this right now...

Many other great organizations were mentioned:

Project Linus (blankets for children who are ill or have been through trauma),

Mother Bear (toys for children with HIV/Aids in emerging nations),

Stitches from the Heart (blankets and hats for preemies),

Red Scarf project (for foster children on the way to college).

Over the summer, I'd love to see a larger-group project emerge around these topics. *Want to be in charge?*

Working with cancer patients

There are a hell of a lot of people interested in finding ways to support health-related causes.

We've done some knitting for chemo patients and could do similar projects. Working directly with patients involves some serious training, but we have contacts for individuals who want to know more about that.

Teaching children to knit in connection with a storytime knitalong at a public library

Isn't this a cool idea? Someone should ask at the public library to see if this is something they'd support, and then check with stringthing to see how many people are interested.

Conclusions:

“Should we focus on one charity over a long term, or do a wider variety of projects?”

Stringthing should do a wide variety of projects, because we have so many interests and ideas.

“Should community service or charity work be an assumed part of a group like ours?”

Probably, yeah.

“How can we most effectively focus our amazing energy and talent to help others?”

As we got started, one or two big group projects each year seemed reasonable, but now that the group is bigger having more, smaller interest groups form might work even better.

“What kinds of charitable work are the most fun for us a group, in terms of community building within Stringthing itself? Should we stick to the kinds of things we’ve done in the past, or try something new?”

People seem to like “making small things” to contribute, as we’ve often done, so we’ll continue that pattern.

A surprising number of people are interested in doing non-knitting “work”, too. It’s time to give that a try!

Interest in selling things, and in designing patterns, is focused in smaller numbers so those activities will be done in smaller interest groups.

So what are we doing?

1. This very Sunday (3/14) several people will be working on making purple baby hats, and Shannon will be collecting them.
2. For people interested in supporting P/Hop, Often Awesome, or working more directly with cancer patients, we can get you connected.
3. For people who want to sell crafts at MomArt (Genesis Home benefit) or make items for a raffle table (animal shelter benefit), smaller interest groups will form.
4. We’ll try a Habitat Work Day this summer (and/or a fence building day). We will need an organizer to help get this rolling.
5. We’ll do another project for a children’s charity this summer. This might-could be connected to a Haiti benefit, or it might not. I’d love to have a couple of people organize this by choosing a project and coming up with some specific suggestions for ways to kick it off.

Appendix A - Useful contacts/links for projects mentioned

P/Hop <http://www.p-hop.co.uk/>

Often Awesome <http://www.oftenawesome.org/>
To help out, contact Maya (cactustree@gmail.com)

MomArt/Genesis Home <http://www.justafewfriends.org>
<http://www.genesishome.org/>
Contact Rebecca (reba_435@yahoo.com)

Animal Shelter/Coalition to Unchain Dogs <http://www.apsofdurham.org/>
<http://www.unchaindogs.net/>
Contact Rebecca (reba_435@yahoo.com)

Habitat for Humanity <http://www.durhamhabitat.org/>

Cancer patients: If you're interested in doing knitting lessons or knitalongs with cancer patients, contact Cecilia Minden (ceciliaminden@yahoo.com).

PURPLE baby hats (supports education for parents to prevent shaken-baby syndrome)
<http://www.purplecrying.info/loc/goingin.php?locpg=50&loc=mb1r3p6>

Project Linus (blankets for children who are ill or have been through trauma)
<http://www.projectlinus.org/>

Mother Bear (toys for children with HIV/Aids in emerging nations)
<http://www.motherbearproject.org/>

Stitches from the Heart (blankets and hats for preemies)
<http://www.stitchesfromtheheart.org/>

Red Scarf project (for foster children on the way to college).
<http://orphan.org/>