

LIBRARY ARCADE BUILDING & STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY WITH RETRO GAMES



WHY GAMING?



60% of Americans (and 82% of Americans under 18) play video games of some sort, so there's probably interest!

Video games provide unique educational, social, and storytelling opportunities.

Gaming allows players to make friends, improve communication, and spend time together.

WHY RETRO GAMES? (INSTEAD OF MODERN ONES)



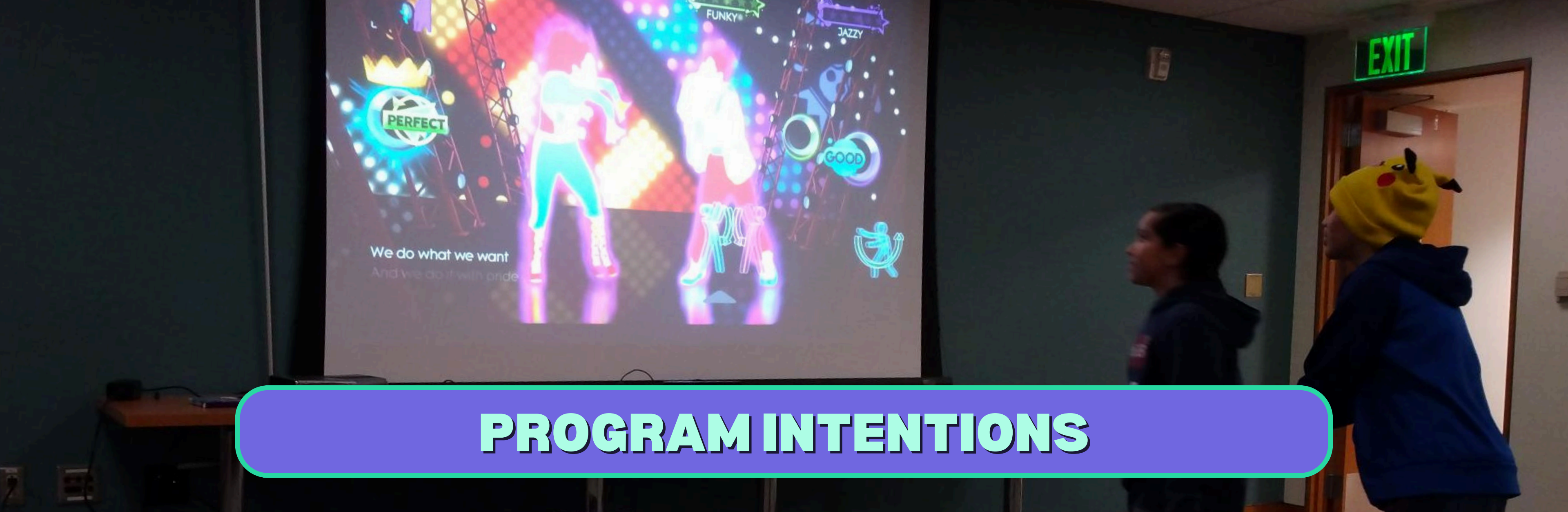
- **Nostalgia:** Adults get to play the games they played as kids with their own kids (or grandkids).



- **Novelty:** Most kids in our community haven't played the older systems as much as newer ones.



- **Circumstance:** Use what you have/what you can get easily.



PROGRAM INTENTIONS

Create a space for patrons to engage with older technology and learn about the history of a modern hobby

Encourage children and their caregivers to connect with one another over shared interests

Utilize gaming to spark conversations, forge friendships, and build a welcoming community among youth.



VINTAGE VIDEO GAME NIGHT

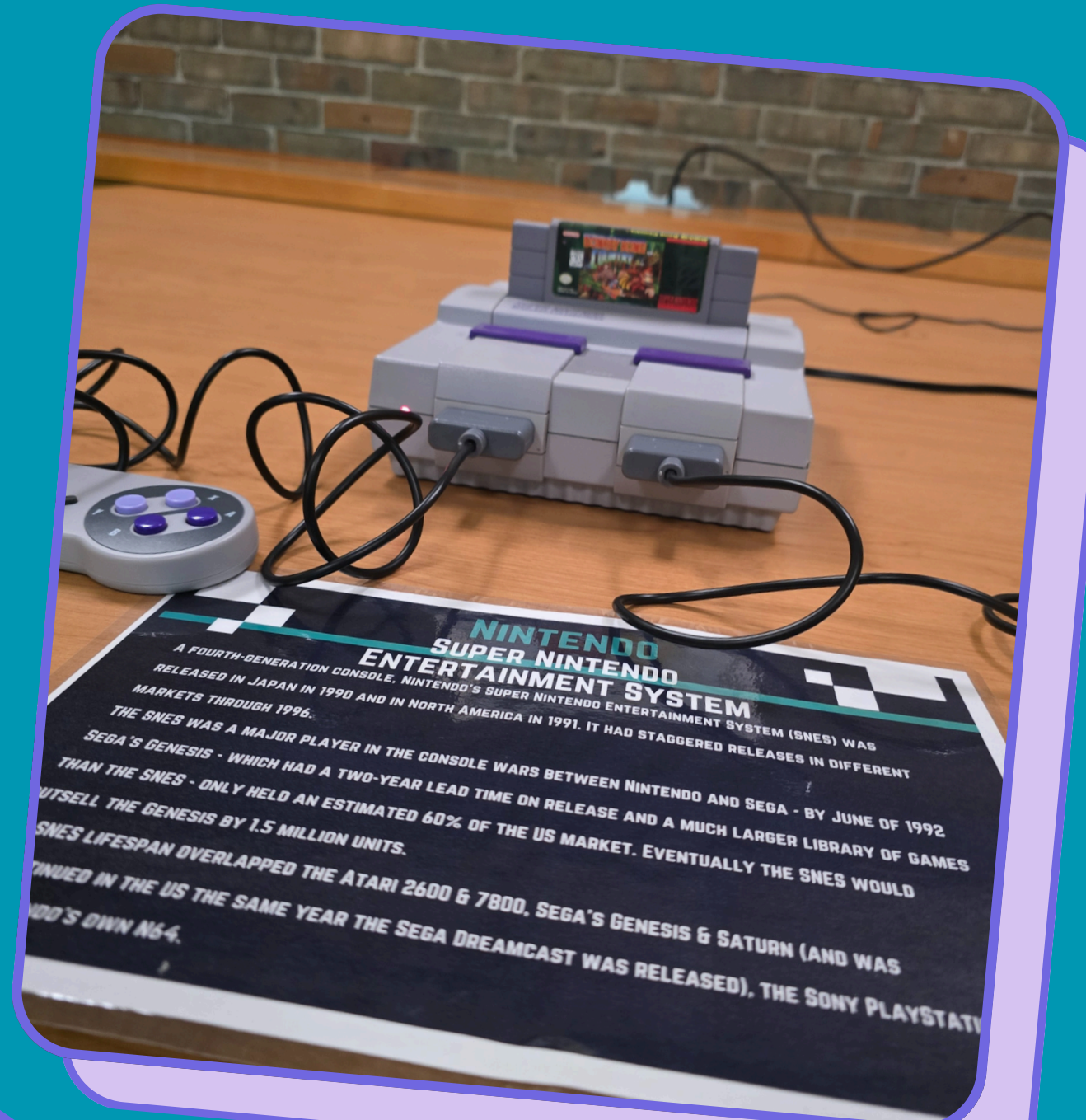
- **After hours event held a couple of times a year**
- **Several consoles set up around the Youth Room**
- **Originally marketed for ages 8–13, but will be 8 and up the next time we have one**
- **A chance to sample and learn about a variety of systems/games**

Older technology
doesn't always play
nicely with today's
technology

Older technology
breaks

Older controllers &
games aren't always
intuitive for today's kids

LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES





GAMER LOUNGE

- **Monthly after school program**
- **3 consoles, 1 in each of 3 lower level meeting rooms**
- **Intended as a casual hangout/third space for late elementary/middle schooler to socialize**
- **Kids can bring their own handheld system or laptops to play**

MORE WAYS TO USE RETRO VIDEO GAMES



01

Provide context in other programs
(e.g., book discussions)

02

Enrich programs focused on long-standing IPs
(e.g., Mario, Pokémon, Sonic)

03

Use in place of/alongside modern gaming systems in youth/teen spaces and events



HOW IT WENT

- **A wide range of ages was interested in attending.**
- **Attendees worked together to problems solve unfamiliar games.**
- **Adults & children expressed appreciation for the physical space to hang out and socialize.**
- **New families were brought into the library after hearing about these programs**



HOW IT WENT (PART 2)

- **Programs opened up space for conversations and building relationships.**
- **Parents who were originally intending to work/read while their child played ended up joining in play.**
- **Staff were able to build rapport with parents and provide & promote library services and materials.**

TIPS & TRICKS



- Get to know your local game store/repair shops and reach out to your community
- Double (and triple) check your inputs & outputs
- Establish behavior expectations
- Create opportunities to learn video game history and spark conversations with information cards about the games and/or consoles.
- Be ready to adapt & adjust

RELATED RESOURCES

- [2024 Essential Facts About the U.S. Video Game Industry](#)
- [The Game Console 2.0: A Photographic History from Atari to Xbox by Evan Amos](#)