



I'm New, What Do I Do?

N.C.L.A. Children's Services Division
and
N.C.L.A. Young Adult Services Division
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Suggestions for Creating Great Teen Programs

Peter Cirona

Massapequa Public Library

799-0770, ext. 305

peterc.mpl1@nassaulibrary.org

- Have fun! Don't be afraid to use your imagination and to "think outside of the box."
- Field trips and "lock-ins" are very popular. Be sure to get permission slips back well in advance of the program date. They can be difficult and time-consuming to run, however.
- Keep a well-organized, current, large, easy-to-read desk calendar in a safe place *in your desk*.
- Be sure to block out times for vacations and other time off well in advance of scheduling your programs. If you forget to do this, your calendar will fill up and you won't be able to schedule any time off for yourself.
- Remember the importance of attracting boys to your programs. *Food* is the best way to draw them in. Be sure to offer refreshments whenever you can. Schedule food crafts and programs whenever possible. Girls enjoy these, too.
- Parents play a key role in the success of your programs. Their support is essential. Don't be afraid to "talk up" your programs when you see parents in the Library. Have your flyers ready, near your desk, so you can approach parents and teens about programs you believe they might enjoy.
- You may have parents in the community who have ideas for running crafts or other programs for you. Don't be afraid to ask them for suggestions or even to hire them, if what they have to offer is good for your Library.
- Ask your Internet "person" to post your program schedule on the Library's Web site. Try to have your email address, preferably with a working link, and your telephone number and name included on the Web site.
- Remember to *network, network, and network!* Your contacts with other young adult librarians are of the utmost importance! I cannot stress this enough! Be sure to join N.C.L.A and its Young Adult Services Division (and renew your membership annually)!
- Be sure to attend Renee McGrath's young adult meetings monthly at the Nassau Library System. She is Youth Services manager. Her meetings and programs are usually held on Thursday mornings. *Memorize* her telephone number, 516-292-8920, ext. 232, and her email address: rmcgrath@nassaulibrary.org.
- Book discussions can be successful if you ask your teens what books they want to read. Let them draw up a list of suggested titles for you. I always serve pizza at my book groups. I usually raffle something off also, such as a Barnes and Noble gift card.
- Try to offer community service credit whenever you can. Teens earn one hour of credit for each hour they participate on my Teen Advisory Board or as a Book Buddy during the summer.
- Reserve display cases or other space whenever possible at your Library to show off what your teens have been up to. Ask them to contribute crafts that they have done. Ask for their help whenever possible in designing displays for Teen Read Week, the Summer Reading Program, or whatever else you decide on.

- *Do not over-schedule programs!* With some trial and error, you will learn the frequency that is best for your community. Many libraries schedule about three programs per month. If you schedule too many things too close together, you will dilute your programming efforts.
- Try to keep your material fees low! Fees of three dollars or less or best. You should always charge something, since teens are more likely to show up if money has been paid out. If possible, ask your Library to contribute towards materials fees if your programmers insist on charging more than about four dollars. You want to keep the fees charged to your teens *as low as possible!*
- Become acquainted with your school librarians, especially at the middle and upper elementary level. They will gladly help you to publicize your programs.
- Beauty programs are very popular. You cannot miss with offerings such as manicuring or makeup classes.
- Chess is another sure winner. The game is very popular! It's also a great way to introduce your community to intergenerational Library programming. I have had great success with multi-week programs co-sponsored with Adult Services, Senior Connections and the Children's Room.
- When you have a successful program, be sure your director knows about it. Remember to keep your director and your trustees updated.
- Create a separate brochure, separate from your Library's newsletter, highlighting your summer programming. Try to get the schools (public and parochial) to distribute it to all students in grades 5 through 8 or 9 a week or two before the regular semester ends.
- Send out regular press releases to your local papers highlighting your programs. Be sure that your releases run. If they don't, contact the calendar or news editor immediately so that they know you are out there and you are watching them!
- **Believe in what you do!**
- ***Again, have fun!***