

## **Collaboration and Beyond: Teen-Led Library Programming YALSA's 2019 Young Adult Services Symposium**

Lynne Haase and Erin Hoopes, Free Library of Philadelphia  
[haasel@freelibrary.org](mailto:haasel@freelibrary.org), [hoopese@freelibrary.org](mailto:hoopese@freelibrary.org)

Why involve teens in planning their own programs? There are many practical benefits:

- Attendance increases when teens take ownership.
- Teens are more likely to enjoy and actively participate in programs when they are personally invested in them.
- Less waste of staff time planning programs that aren't of interest.
- Teens can use their experience at the library to build up their resumes.
- Teens can get volunteer / service hours for school.

Get started...

- Create a safe and welcoming library space for teens.
- Establish relationships with your teens.
- Do your best to make sure your teens' basic needs are met.
- Identify your teens' specific interests and build programs around those interests.
- Informally involve teens in program planning by asking for their advice and expertise.
- Consider your logistical needs and get creative!
- Develop and use your relationships with community partners.

Go deeper...

- Create joint teen/staff committees and working groups to plan programs.
- Evaluate your programs through surveys and analyze the results.
- Empower a teen committee to make all decisions for a specific program.
- Use teen focus groups to hone program plans.

Questions to consider:

- How have you incorporated teens into your program planning process in the past?
- What concerns do you have about teen-led library programming?
- How do you define a successful teen program?
- Do you have an existing program that you could envision teens taking more leadership roles in?
- How do you balance meeting teens where they are with also helping their world views to expand?

Resources:

- <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>
- <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/positive-youth-development/what-is-positive-youth-development/connection/index.html>
- <http://page.search-institute.org/40-developmental-assets>