

Making Space for Young Adults in Public Libraries [name removed] County [name removed] Library

Staff Video

Narrator: This is being shot at [name removed] County Library, [name removed], [name removed]. We're a small community of about 9 thousand people in a county that only has about 42 thousand people. We're walking through our main library on our way to the teen area. This expansion to our library was designed and built 2006-2007. We actually occupied it in March of 2009.

Here you can see our [name removed] area. We had a contest and all the teens entered ideas for the name of this room, and some adults entered ideas, too. This is the one that the teens voted on. They call it the [name removed].

That shows our enclosed area where the glass doors can be closed for noisy activities. We also have a designated teen area that's outside of those closed doors, where we house the [1:03] teen nonfiction collection and have quiet space for teens to study that is totally enclosed in the adult area.

When we were selling the idea of our expansion to the [name removed] public, we stressed that we would not be the answer to all of the teen issues that are in our community, but that we could be part of the solution; so it was very important to us to make our [name removed] as lively and well used as possible.

The furniture in this area is low to invite lounging, although it is quieter for study. We have tables that are set near the windows. We had a teen on our planning group, and one of the things that the teen stressed as well as other members of the community is they wanted a very much natural-light, open, airy space, so we... that was one of our goals [2:07] as we built this area, lots of natural light.

We took this a step further. I'm going to go into the quiet space... I mean into the noisy space, where the teens can have lots of fun activities. We took this a step further by putting our teen area right up to the front of the building, so actually, a teen driving by on the street can see whether people are active, whether the teen area is hosting a raucous crowd, and they can decide to come in. It makes it a better place to meet your friends if you know, going in, that some of your age... friends are in the building.

Here's where we have music, DVDs and CDs for teens. It's a nice asset. All of our [3:01] furniture is low, the bookshelves are low, to let the light through. Teens actually selected several of the pieces of furniture. This was selected by the teen group, and actually, the fabric was selected by the teen group. We have bistro tables that are well used, regular, low-lying tables, and here's our computer area for our CPUs. We also have wireless throughout the building, which means that we have laptops to check out to teens and they can sit in here on the more comfortable furniture and use the wireless.

So we didn't hide our teen area away in some obscure corner, but put our most active area right up front for the public to see, and deliberately showcased this active area.

[4:00] The reference section is also around the corner. Actually, we can kind of view it through the windows here, so as the teens are outside in the quiet study area for teens, they can get easily to the reference. We have a teen advisory board who helped us with some of the decision and helped us plan some of our activities. We put cork strip along the ceiling and feature collages of the activities that have been done throughout the year. It makes for a bright, stimulating place where people can see some of the things that the teens are doing, and the teens can take pictures and we can post them themselves.

Teen magazines... We also have a circulation desk here right in the teen room, where [4:58] they can check out or present their cards to use our gaming rooms. We have three gaming rooms. Teens check them out with a card. One teen checks them out, and then they are responsible for who they invite to join them in the room, so it's just not a free-for-all, but they say who comes in the rooms, and we have up to three people in the rooms at a time playing games.

...Try to keep our collection very fresh and current because that's the kind of books that get checked out, but as teens come in thinking they're going to just use computers, they find other activities going on and they also find books, so we have a very good amount of books that are checked out.

Passing through the glass doors, and another look at the reference area... excuse me, not [6:02] the reference area, but the teen nonfiction area, and then the reference area is just around this corner.

So this is our library. We're particularly proud of our teen area, because it is always active and brings in a lot of teens. Thank you.

[End of Staff Video]

Youth Video

Narrator: This is the new teen section of the [name removed] Library. It's called "the [name removed]." As this building was being built, the library was over in a building near here, and the librarian in charge of the teen section at the time was trying to figure out how to make the teen section more popular and to get kids into the library. Well, his idea was that if we got kids into the library, then they would start checking out books and it would be a safe and fun environment. But we had to figure out how we were going to do this.

One of the popular things that we came up with was to build three gaming rooms. Each of [1:04] the gaming rooms has a different gaming console, and we use this to get kids in. We have a Xbox and a PlayStation and a Wii. These different gaming systems really do bring in a lot of kids, and many times, as they go through, they end up taking a look at the computers, the laptops, the fun treats that you can win by knowing the five vocabulary words of the day as well as their definitions.

The library's also... or the teen section of the library is also very involved with various [1:56] fundraisers and activities. There was a science club that met for quite a while, called Sort of Science (S.O.S.). And it just kept going on and on. We had a... we have an annual 5K run that we do. There was Halloween activities and building candy bread houses, and then you have "TAB," Teen Advisory Board.

That's basically where all of this started, and this is where I come in, because I was part of TAB when it was first started, back when this new building was being built. We were trying to figure out all these new things and we came up with the theme between all the [3:04] furniture and we came up with other various activities that haven't yet been mentioned, and even these bookshelves. They're a... they're in a pod shape, and so this triangle, each of the bookshelves can fit on up to three sides so it gives us some room to maneuver around and let us fill up the space any way we want. And it's been pretty popular so far. We've had lots of kids in here, and a good environment. Well, it's not quiet. You do hear laughter quite often, and yeah, it's become quite a popular place for today's teens.

[4:00] And that's the [name removed].

[End of Youth Video]