

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

Staff Video

Staff: Welcome to the [name removed] Public Library. We're heading towards the [name removed] on the third floor of the main library.

The library was built in 2006, and we got a lot of input from the teens at that time about what they'd like to see in a teen space in the new library.

This is the front of the space. We have rotating displays in the front. Right now it's for summer reading from the high schools. We also have a rack for different events going on as well as some book lists.

We also have a new arrivals section, and these are books that [1:03] have arrived within the last nine months or so.

The [name removed] is right next to the café, so it's really convenient for teens to get something to eat while they study or visit.

Here's the start of the graphic novels section. We do have a plasma screen here in the [name removed]. Occasionally we show movies here. We have to keep the sound low, so that's a disadvantage. We also do some Power Point presentations: new books, coming attractions, coming programs. Right now it's not turned on because the library's not open.

We have a seating area here, and on the other side of the graphic novels we have some [2:03] books on CD, still have those. We have some anime DVDs to check out, and a small selection of magazines. I wish we had more, but unfortunately our budget is not so good.

On the other side of the wall, near the café which you just saw, is the entrance to the outside balcony where people can go sit and just enjoy the weather or study. Teens use this a lot to get outside and enjoy the sunshine when the weather's good. We have these lounge seating areas. Teens use this after school. They visit; they study together; they talk. Sometimes we'll put tables together and have library programs here.

I found it's a [3:01] good way to have kind of just meetings. We have a teen advisory board meeting up here. People can drop in. We have had other programs here, book discussions, that kind of thing.

Here's the fiction shelves. What I really like about this design for the new library that we got is that many things are on wheels, and so, for instance, these bookshelves... I don't know if you can see... are mobile, and when we have a big program, like we had a poetry discussion group here, I pulled away the moveable shelves and created a much larger program space. We're fortunate enough to have meeting rooms for programs as well, and

we use that; that's on the first floor. But the opportunity to move shelves around and [4:03] move the furniture around also provides us with for a program space here in the [name removed] if we so want it.

Along the back wall here we have some individual study chairs with little desks, and again, these are all fairly easy to move around, pretty easy.

On this side we have six computer terminals. They also have the capability to play CDs and DVDs. These are used quite heavily after school when school's in session as well as throughout the year.

Here at our library we don't have an age limit for this room. It's open to teens and adults generally after school. Teens do kind of take over the room and [5:02] use it quite a bit. The materials in this room are generally from the ninth to the twelfth grades, so senior high school. We do have younger kids coming and using the room, though, too.

We have a staff area here. It's mobile and it opens up for a staff person to sit... after school and help teens with their homework and find books. One thing I don't like about this is that the site lines are pretty poor, so it's hard to see over this carrel if you're sitting down. But it's nice to have a staff space here right by the [name removed].

[6:00] Another disadvantage to the space that we've found is that it's all open. I think had I done it all over again, I would have preferred the room to be enclosed, maybe with a glass wall, and this is because the sound really carries to other parts of the library, so when it's really busy in here, lots of teens are in here, they can get quite noisy, and I would have much preferred this space to be enclosed so that the sound doesn't carry to other parts of the library.

We do have some group study rooms not too far away from the [name removed], and these are right over here so teens can use them without reservation and just shut the door and talk, work on a project, whatever they want to do.

I think I'm out of time now.

Again, I want to welcome you to the [name removed] Library.

One thing I forgot to mention is that we have these glass walls along the wall, and it's [7:01] really convenient for kids to draw on with dry erase, so we have some art projects, murals going on, and really easy to erase, put up something new, and rotate it out.

All right, thank you very much.

[End of Staff Video]

Youth Video

YA: Welcome to the [name removed] main library's [name removed]. I'm a library volunteer and I'm going to be in eighth grade. I spend a good amount of time here at the [name removed] looking at all the books. When I'm here, I see teens and adults reading, playing cards, getting a bite to eat at the café and working on their laptops or these computers.

These computers in this area are for teen use. The problem is that they are more often used by adults. People use the computers to play games, go on social media sites and sometimes work on a school project.

Over here we have the graphic novels, manga and magazines. We have a large selection of titles, series and issues. There are a lot of manga books, and I find them... but I find them hard to read. There are many graphic novels, but I'd like to see more of a variety of these and more titles.

I really like the comfy chairs in front of the flat screen, but I wish they were spread out more so you don't feel on top of the other reader. I don't always sit down at them if I'm [1:00] going to be right next to the person in the next chair.

And over here we have our teen fiction. We have different kinds of genres but they aren't separated by that category. I like that they're all together because I spend a lot of time roaming the fiction books to find new possibilities. It would be nice if they were a bit more spread out, though.

It would be really great if the library staff gave suggestions of other books to read from other young adults who have read similar titles, like 'if you liked this book, you should try such-and-such.' The selection is pretty good, but I read a lot of books and I'd like to see more young adult titles and I really wish the teen section was larger.

Having the teen section on the third floor is really great because of... the younger kids don't make the trip up to the third floor, we don't have... so we don't have little kids running around and it's quieter.

Here we have the young adult nonfiction. There are Cliff Notes, CLEP books, how-to books, history and school-related books, so the other... and so many other kinds of nonfiction, but it's a great selection. It seems to work well. But I wish it was separate [2:04] from the fiction so there was more space to review.

There's seating throughout the [name removed], and I really like the outdoor seating for when the weather's nice. It makes a very peaceful atmosphere. Inside, there's group study rooms which are perfect if you need a quiet spot to focus and complete work. There are large booths that are perfect for groups of teens to work together and collaborate on other activities. I love the white board here. I like to have the chance to look at people's drawings. One problem with the booths, however, is sometimes they will only be used by

one or two people. Sometimes there will be one adult working on their laptop in one of these booths. There are more adults in the [name removed] than there are teens.

There's some individual seating, like by the graphic novels or over by the nonfiction. There is some, but I would like to see more spots where you can curl up and read a book and not [3:06] feel like people are staring at you.

So over here we have [name removed] café. It was a great idea to put the café in, because it allows you to take a break and relax. And across the way we have the CD collection. You can look at pop, rock, country, or classical CDs, and we also have the movie collection where you can check out your favorite movie. I think it's really nice having the books, CDs and movies all in one spot, because it makes it so much faster to find what you want.

To sum things up, teen... the teen section in the library is really awesome. It provides a nice place for teens to go and feel safe and motivated. I would like to see fewer adults parked in here because I think it scares teens off. I would love to have more individual private seating. I would love to have many more books available to the young adult and teen age group. The library had a lot of vision when they planned the teen space, and I'm glad we have it available to us.

[End of Youth Video]