

Library Summer Meal Programs: Youth Development Opportunities



Summer Meals at Sacramento Public Library
2013 – 1 branch, 2321 meals
2019 – 13 branches, 21,555 meals
2021 – 10 branches, 31,800 meals (grab n go)

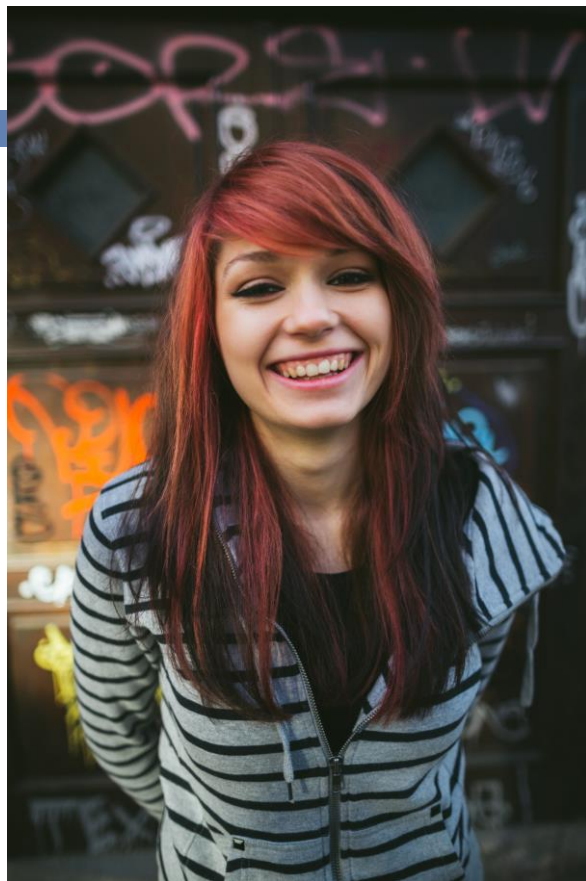


Teen program coordinators
and volunteers are an integral
part of this initiative



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Meeting the needs of your community of volunteers



Volunteer Needs

- Teen volunteers come to the library for a lot of different reasons
 - Interest
 - School requirements
 - Resume/ college application development
 - Relationships with staff and other volunteers



Supporting Development

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) components:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision Making



Supporting Development

- Provide clear, straightforward, consistent instruction
- When connecting volunteers with opportunities be thinking of what support they need to get started.
- Check in regularly to ensure task is being completed correctly and the volunteer feels supported
- Ensure volunteer is enjoying their task



Recruiting

- Different branches have different opportunities
- Know your community
 - Where are the local schools?
 - Are there other organizations serving youth near you?



Supporting Diversity of Teens

- Preparing for mixed ages & experiences
- Developing brains need repetition
- Foster and support different types of interaction
- Model "leveled" approaches to volunteering
 - Having tasks that match teen skills & branch needs
- Making their experiences universally exceptional & equitable



Retention

Relationship building is they key to retention

How are you building relationships with your teen volunteers?

- Check-in meetings?
- Casual conversations?
- Offering other support



Respecting teens by having high expectations



Respect and Expectations

- Teen volunteers want real work and life experiences
- Teen volunteers are our colleagues and partners
- Everyone has the right to know the rules of the game they're playing



Respecting the Experience

For teens, part of the benefit of volunteering is the experience they gain, so give them a real experience with responsibility

- Real work places have guidelines and expectations
 - Volunteer Handbook
 - Anti Discrimination and Harassment Policy
 - Safety protocols

Respecting the Experience

- Teens have very busy and different lives
- Making an effort to reach out to us can be a big deal for them
- Having consistent positive interactions is critical in supporting self-esteem and inclusivity
- Commit to creating clear messaging about volunteer process
 - Provide an overview of what they can expect from the experience
 - Explain the steps in the application process
 - Elevator pitch for all staff to have ready



LUNCH
at the
LIBRARY



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Scaffolding: The Bottom Layer

First, make the program's structure transparent:

- Logistics
- Hours reporting, attendance, time commitment
- Behavior
- Communication channels



Scaffolding: Relationship Building

Talk to your teen volunteers!

- Ask about their interests, goals, and comfort levels and share yours
- Assign them tasks that meet those interests, goals, and boundaries
- Provide training and task descriptions that include the reasoning behind the tasks



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Scaffolding: Relationship Building

- Provide clear but equitable/flexible options
 - Volunteering is voluntary
 - They have to be willing/able to do the task
 - Tasks offered should be varied to accommodate diverse strengths and needs
- Ensure they have multiple communications channels, and express the expectation for communication



Scaffolding: See Them Rise



- Give them autonomy to do what you've trained them to do!
- Set goals together
- Talk when something isn't working, maybe something wasn't clear
- Offer support in achieving their goals
- Provide positive feedback

Scaffolding: They Are Partners

- Trust established? Be the mentor!
- Honor their expertise and experience
- Welcome ideas and support their projects
- Provide reasoning for creating structure or for saying “no” to an idea
- Ask them for feedback on how you're doing
- Invite them to lead others



Allowing teens to see their community impact



Show Community Impact

Tying effort to outcome is a great way to let volunteers gain meaning from their experience, and know that they are appreciated!



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