

fact sheet #5

for Friends and Foundations

HOW TO ORGANIZE A TEEN FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY GROUP

Teens and libraries? YES! Teens can be excellent Friends and volunteers. It gives them a feeling of responsibility and a way to give back to the community. In addition, a Teen Friends group is a great way to nurture a love of reading at a time when so many other (and perhaps, less desirable) diversions are calling them!

1. Decide on goals for the group. These could include motivation to use the library or volunteer to help in the library by shelving books, decorating, assisting with story hours, etc. Parents or a member of the regular Friends group can serve as adult leader for this group. Youth Services staff can and should help, but to minimize the work for them, it is best to recruit parents or Friends to oversee this group.
2. Target the group's age range based on availability of adult sponsors. Typically 12-18 is good (though you are likely to get most from the 12-15 age range). Start with a workable group; you can always expand your goals.
3. Set dues, even if very low – it increases the importance of the group. The adult Friends may set aside funds for Teen Friends, especially in the formative stages, and provide refreshments, membership cards, etc.
4. Hold an organizational meeting. Depending on age of group, develop by-laws, determine dues structure, and discuss potential programs and projects.
5. Select/elect officers and encourage the group to act as any “official” group by following *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*. Well-run and organized meetings will help the teens learn valuable skills that will serve them well in the future.
6. Appoint task forces for achieving various goals, being sure to involve everyone in at least one task force. Consult with the youth services staff for potential task forces that might include: writing book reviews and recommendations (for the young adult collection), developing programs, projects, membership, and publicity.
7. Potential projects for Teen Friends are: writing book reviews for other teens, decorating for holidays, clipping for files, sponsoring for various contests, and helping with story hours and community festivities.
8. Keep work and fun projects in balance.

9. Do not let adults assume responsibility for planning. Members should make decisions with the assistance of adults, being careful not to plan projects that are too ambitious.

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