

Teen Drop-In Social Hour

[Seattle Public Library](#)

Young Adult

Teen Drop-In Social Hour

Jun 16, 2015

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Byline

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This weekly youth drop-in program, held at the Central Library in downtown Seattle, is co-hosted by Teen Services Library and New Horizons, a shelter and drop-in center for youth experiencing homelessness. While the drop-in is targeted at homeless youth, all are welcome and attendance is diverse. Activities vary and include video and tabletop games, crafts and movies. Snacks are provided, and youth are offered the chance to connect with social service resources via New Horizons or job and education skill-building via the library.

Advanced Planning

For six months, two teen service librarians built a partnership with New Horizons Ministry, a local drop-in center for homeless youth. We began by meeting with staff and taking a tour of their facility to get a better sense of what they do and how we could help. We then moved into outreach efforts, like tabling at an on-site job fair. We also revamped the New Horizons Ministry on-site library.

By this time, we had really gotten to know the staff and had spent a good bit of time at the shelter talking with the youth. In these conversations, teens mentioned that there were weekly gaps in drop-in services. They also expressed a desire for help with job and education goals. In response to this, our partners suggested that we all collaborate to co-host a weekly drop-in at the library on Thursday afternoons, when both downtown youth shelters are closed.

Marketing

The program is mainly marketed through word of mouth, small fliers and librarian visits to New Horizons and other youth-serving organizations and shelters in the area.

Budgeting

The budget for this program is approximately \$700 a year, which is spent almost entirely on snacks.

Day-of-event Activity

This program is low-impact on the library's daily activities. It is casual, with the course of any activities steered by the youth who attend the event. There are some regularly scheduled activities, such as Wii and X-Box gaming on the first Thursday of each month.

Program Execution

Attendance varies from 5 to 20 youth per week. Feedback, which is collected through surveys and interviews, has been positive.

We are working with youth to identify major outcomes and ongoing methods of evaluation. However, we are already seeing mental shifts among participants. Youth who feared they wouldn't be welcome in the library, or who had previously visited but had never spoken to staff, are now regularly accessing library resources. Our partners have seen more youth accessing their resources, too, and we've connected at least one participant with a job.

Advice

The key to this program is that several staff from the partner organization co-hosts with us each week: the outreach coordinator, an adult intern and a peer intern. They are all very talented at working with youth and full of great ideas. It's absolutely a co-production from both partners. Drop-in wouldn't work if the library tried to host it on our own.

Supporting Materials

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- Feedback (Coming Soon!)
- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

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Young Adult (17 - 20)+ |

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