

# I'm Perfect: A Self-Love Event

Brooklyn Public Library

Children

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Teens

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Young Adult

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Adults

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Intergenerational

## **I'm Perfect: A Self-Love Event**

Mar 16, 2018

**\$1,001-2,500**

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Byline

Lisa Borten, YA Senior Librarian I, Brooklyn Public Library

Inspired by the idea that loving and caring for oneself is essential to well-being, the Brooklyn Heights Library Youth Council presented a self-love event called I'm Perfect. The event was held at the nearby Brooklyn Bridge Park in May 2017, and featured music, arts and crafts, food and guided meditation.

## **Advanced Planning**

I hoped to have some of our teen patrons plan and execute a community event. The goals of the resulting teen council were for the participants to learn about budgeting, marketing, proposal writing and event planning and to create an event that the community (and the teens!) could enjoy.

These teens had been spending time at the library for a while before the council began; a few were former interns who led craft programs for kids and adults, and they would occasionally bring their friends to play board and video games or just hang out at the library. I think the fact that they saw the library as a safe space where they could escape the daily grind of school/work/family pressure helped create this place where they felt comfortable bringing in their own ideas.

Karen Keys, coordinator of YA Services, and Erin Shaw, coordinator of Youth Education Initiatives, served in an advisory capacity as I interviewed and selected six teens for the council and led them through the planning process. In their program planning, the teen council were inspired by a quote from Mandy Hale that one of them found: "It's not selfish to love yourself, take care of yourself, and to make your happiness a priority. It's necessary. " The resulting event was I'm Perfect, a self-love event.

The council met weekly for 10 weeks to plan and execute the event. The teens got along very well, despite not knowing each other prior to being on the council; I attribute this to the icebreakers and improvisational games I incorporated into the sessions, and the fact that I laid out clear expectations for each session.

One challenge we faced was the teens' indecision on the programming aspect of the process. At one point I had to intervene when, a week prior to the event, the teens

wanted to change the event structure by canceling an activity leader. After some conversation, they decided to leave it as it was.

## Marketing

The event was promoted through fliers that the teens designed themselves and passed out at school and at the library. They posted on the library branch's Facebook account to promote the event as well.

Many of the attendees were people the teens had invited personally, while others were people in the park who heard music coming from the event and stopped by out of curiosity.

## Budgeting

We had a \$1,500 budget and we underspent considerably. The majority of the budget went to the stipends for the participating teens (six teens at \$120 each), with the remaining doled out for food for meetings and for the event itself (\$500).

The food was our smallest expense, as I provided the teens with healthy snacks from the local grocery store, such as peanut butter and apples, carrots and hummus, etc.

## Day-of-event Activity

The day of the event, all the teens arrived at a local park at 3:30 to set up for a 4:30 start time. We had one additional staff member (Danielle Turner, intern at Youth and Family Services) and one additional teen to set up a few tables, balloons, food, coloring supplies, music and speakers, and chairs for the meditation session. Set-up went smoothly. (**View photos under Photo Slideshow at right.**)

## Program Execution

The teens were anxious at first about people showing up for the program, but their colorful set-up and free food for participants — as well as their vocal enthusiasm for the event — helped draw participants.

We had about 40 attendees in total, and the event ran as scheduled. There was time for the participants to color, decorate t-shirts, mingle near the food, and participate in a free meditation workshop with [Sydney Faith Rose](#), a local mediation instructor. We also had healthy snacks, such as fruit and veggies with hummus and bottles of water.

The event was held outdoors at a local park so there was also promotional and participatory signage such as a self-love Post-it wall and music to draw people to the event. We gave out pots and seeds at the conclusion of the event so people would have a tangible takeaway and be encouraged to grow something new.

The event was designed as a space for teens to take a break from the pressures of everyday life and connect with other teens in a relaxed environment. In addition to the activities we chose, the teens wanted to have a guided discussion about things that were causing them stress. We ultimately chose to go with the Post-it wall for a positive spin on this instead, partially because we did not have the time (in a compressed timeline) to find and review someone qualified to lead such a discussion. The event became one that was celebratory and focused on positive ways to release stress.

The program was received very positively by those who attended. People of all ages came up to us and told us they appreciated the activities we had and the fact that there was a positive (and free!) way for them to spend their afternoon. The teens themselves were very proud to have run a successful event and to have learned useful skills such as budgeting, event planning and marketing in the process.

## **Advice**

I would recommend that peers interested in holding similar programs create a structured environment for the teens so they have a sense of what to expect. Though this is an after-school program, they are learning valuable resume-building skills, such as collaboration and planning, and there is a lot to cover in a compressed

period.

If possible, I would recommend that this program be done over an entire year rather than a few months. Make your expectations clear from the beginning and you will have a successful and rewarding experience.

## Supporting Materials

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

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

## Slideshow Images



Image



Image



## More Programs

May 29, 2015

Children (9 and under)+ | ☐

Image



## Summer Music Programs for Teens and Tweens

## Audiences:

## Audience

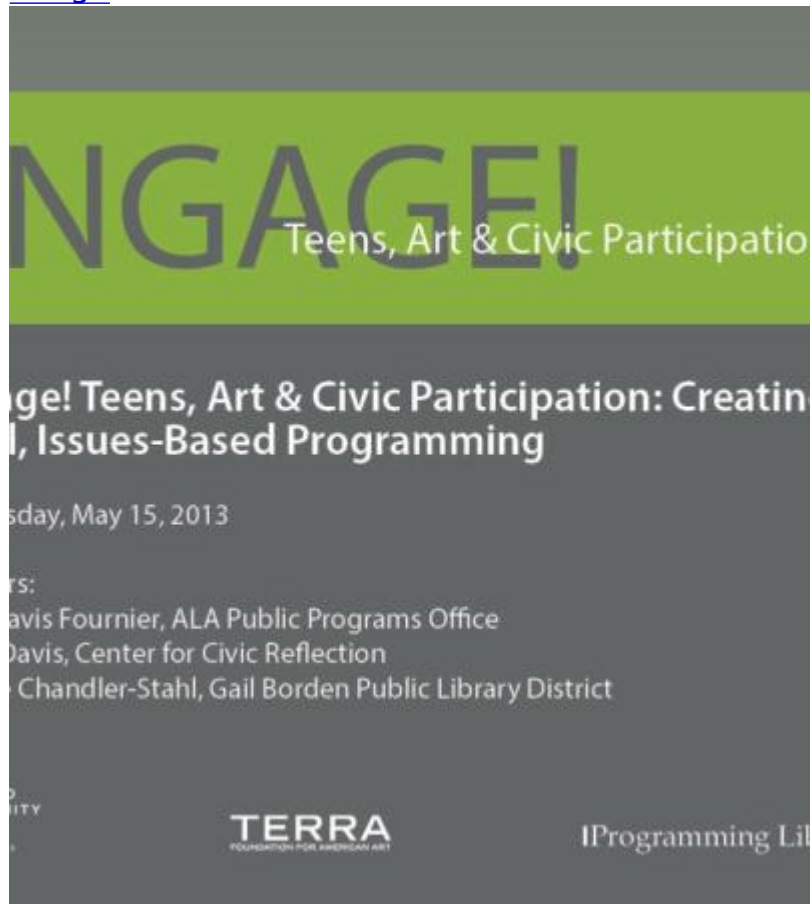
Children (9 and under)

Young Adult (17 - 20)

May 15, 2013

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[Image](#)



## **Engage! Teens, Art & Civic Participation: Creating Local, Issues-Based Programming**

### **Audiences:**

Feb 21, 2018

Children (9 and under)+ | ☐☐

[Image](#)





## Creative Engagement with Youth

### **Audiences:**

Children (9 and under)

Teens (13-16)