

## ***“Librarian’s Shelf” by Rachelle McPhillips***

### Columbus Public Library Welcomes Young Adults

When the school day ends, the library revs up with the arrival of middle school students. These young adults gather here to hang out with their friends, wait for rides home, and use library resources including books and computers.

The library is an excellent place for young adults to spend time. Whether they are talking with their friends in a relaxed environment or reading and studying on their own, the library can be a safe haven for our tweens and teens.

Daily interaction with library staff provides an opportunity for positive relationships with adults other than their parents. These relationships can make young adults feel valued in the community. It can also teach our youth how to be responsible community members.

Young adults are a unique group to serve in the library. Mostly because they arrive in large numbers. It is important that we give our best service to all our patrons and our after school youth visitors are no exception.

One of the things CPL is doing to better serve this group is to provide programming during the after school "rush hour." In October, a room full of young adults made creative and creepy zombie finger puppets. Thanks to the Friends of the Library and patron donations, we acquired an exciting collection of board games in time for National Gaming Day in November.

We played Wii games on a borrowed system several days after school in December. Just before the holiday break, we decorated five dozen sugar cookies (and turned some teeth bright blue!) In January, twenty-two young people participated in CPL's first youth advisory group meeting. I've been asked when we're decorating cookies again, and we'll do that this month. We should also have the Wii for a few days before Spring Break in March.

It is important that adults provide young people with opportunities to demonstrate good behavior. It is also important that we address misbehavior. All patrons, young and old and in between, are asked to "assist in maintaining an atmosphere conducive to the public's use of the library." Our policies and procedures go on to state, "Any individual who behaves in an improper manner may be asked by the staff to leave the library premises without a warning."

In most cases, CPL staff will offer assistance and make an attempt to redirect misbehavior. When redirection isn't successful, one verbal warning may be issued. If the behavior continues, the patron is asked to leave the area or the building.

Behavior that is violent or criminal will result in a call to the Columbus Police Department.

I am enjoying getting to know our young adult patrons this school year. Columbus youth are humorous, creative, and thoughtful. If your child spends time at the library after school, please stop in and meet our staff and see what we're up to @ your library®. If you have any questions or if you'd like to know how you can support young adult programming, please contact me at 564-7116.