

Librarian's Shelf by Rachelle McPhillips

Connecting Teens and Ideas @ your library™

The library is continuously looking for ways to better serve the community. Columbus Public Library continues to expand programming for all age groups, add digital services and technology, and strive to make the library more inviting and comfortable for our visitors. Since establishing the Teen Space on the second floor of the library several years ago, the space has evolved alongside the rest of the library, paying special attention to the unique needs of library visitors with an interest in our events, collections, and space.

During the school year, the library provides comfortable space for young people to meet with friends, access the internet, and study. When Columbus Middle School has early dismissal on Wednesdays, the library provides special drop-in programming for after school visitors. In the last few months on Wednesdays, we connected with our creative sides when we crafted monsters out of vegetables, drummed with special guest, Michael Fitzsimmons, and learned how to knit with our fingers. In April, Wednesday visitors can make yummy springtime art using Peeps and marshmallows, and create their own pop-up books and puzzles.

Young adult patrons are encouraged to ask Rachelle about our new street team that will create a stronger connection between young people, the library, and the community. This group will have opportunities to plan and promote events for their age group as well as offer help during library programs for all ages.

In an effort to make the collections in the Teen Space easier to browse, we recently rearranged them. This gives them more room, higher visibility, and should more quickly connect patrons to the items they are seeking. All of our regular Young Adult print fiction and our YA audiobooks are in the same location nearest the department entrance. Young Adult nonfiction, Scouting books, and magazines are in a more visible location at the other side of the room, near our large collection of manga and graphic novels.

Books are just the beginning, though! The Teen Space houses special collections that can be accessed upon request for use here in the library. With a grant from the Nebraska Library Commission last year, we put together a "boredom buster" collection that consists of a variety of crafts that can be made independently by our middle and high school visitors. With support from another grant from the NLC and one of our talented staff members, the Teen Space has a standing pegboard marble run that patrons can use at their leisure when visiting the space. Last year, CPL introduced Sphero robots to library patrons. This year we were able to purchase two Ozobots. The pegboard, robots, and items purchased with the NLC grant this year are intended to connect our young adult visitors with STEM concepts in a relaxed environment.

At the beginning of the year, CPL connected with the Art Outreach class at Columbus High School. Working in groups, students designed and created five canvases that are currently on display in the Teen Space. The installation of this art connected the two halves of the department and made it look cohesive and finished. I am impressed with their creativity and talent, and am very proud of their work.

Stop in and see the Teen Space. Enjoy the art, browse the books, and see how young people connect to the community and the world here at your library. For more information about young adult services, please contact Rachelle at 402-562-4201.