

Teen is Not a 4 Letter Word: YA Programming That Works.

After a most delicious lunch on Wednesday, we teen librarians, or at least I assume we all belonged to that unusual breed, were exposed to three successful and doable programs: Senior Savvy at the West Hartford Library, the Cheshire Library's Teen Book Board, and an innovative summer reading program- Deal or No Deal at the New Britain Library.

Senior Savvy @ the West Hartford Library was an innovative way to meet the needs of two library patron groups, the seniors and the teens. In this program high school students in the West Hartford schools were recruited to be the tutors of seniors who wanted to learn more about using computers. After intensive screening and training, the teens provided one on one sessions, one time per week, to interested seniors. According to Susan Hansen, who obtained an LSTA grant for this program, it was successful beyond her imagining, both in terms of numbers and in terms of personal relationships between the two groups. The seniors gained skills, the students gained confidence and everyone had a great time at the end of the program party.

Each month the Teen Book Board of the Cheshire Library meets for about an hour to talk about books in an informal setting. Those students in grade 6-12 are invited to write reviews and talk about books. With only a few general guidelines the kids have fun, learn about new books and assist the librarian in recommending new books for the collection. They also blog about the books they have read and sometimes the negative reviews get the most responses. Sarah Kline Morgan, teen librarian, learned by experience that the traditional book discussions do not attract as many teens as her more informal group, which involves talking and laughing, discussing, writing reviews and getting simple incentives and, of course, eating.

Steve Zampino and Barbara Klipper of the Ferguson Library in Stamford loved the book *Hardware: Jewelry from a Toolbox*, by Hannah Rogge, which gives ideas to make jewelry from items which can be found at any hardware store. For about \$5 per teen, both boys and girls from grade 6 and up made necklaces, bracelets and earrings from nuts and bolts, washers and elastics and other unusual items. The jewelry samples were really creative and attractive. It was easy to imagine teens wearing the jewelry and being proud that they had made it themselves.

Ann Marie Naples, currently the teen librarian at the West Hartford Library, has had an auction each year at the end of the summer reading program. The teen participants earn "book bucks" throughout the summer, that can be spent at a live auction at the end of the program. And each year she has tried to even the playing field for the fast readers and the slower readers. This past year she decided to cash in on the popularity of TV's Deal or No Deal. She designed treasure chests with random numbers in them. A summer reader, after a brief report on what they read, could open one or two boxes on the treasure board, to determine how many book bucks they could earn. The kids loved it, and each one had an equal chance to get more or fewer book bucks.

It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Because the presenters gave detailed information about how to run each program, I am sure that many teen librarians will be complimenting these presenters by attempting their own version of some of these programs.