TIG meeting minutes Wednesday, March 27, 12-1pm
Online meeting, using Blackboard
Minutes submitted by Beth Chandler, TIG secretary

Attending: Heather Owings (chair), Liz Sunderman, Liz Bowen, Krista McKenzie, Beth Chandler, Chang-Yu Hsiao, Allyson Evans, Allison Maricle, Kimberle Fields, Deidrah Reeves, and Susan (?)

Teen Noise in the library
Location can help or harm. Having the teen section walled off, or separate, can help. In some libraries, the teen area is on a different floor, so that noise isn't much of an issue. Other branches have open spaces for the entire library, or their teen areas are next to the Information Desk, where noise can become an issue. Moving computers or making other manageable changes (if renovations aren’t happening soon), can help.

There’s also a difference between types of noises: disruptive (cursing, against policy) or more harmless noise (music coming from a teen’s headset).

Many older patrons still think libraries should be quiet, so staff members need to explain that the library is now more of a community space. Sometimes, though, adult patrons are the noisy ones. Exceptions are made for adults with hearing loss issues. In general though, library staff needs to be consistent in dealing with patron noise. This means noisy adults (and children) should be spoken to about their noise as well as teens. Also, adults and teens should be treated equally in regards to level of politeness. For example, don’t say “You need to be quieter!” to teens, then say “Excuse me, sir, but can you please speak more softly?” to an adult. If all staff are not treating teens –or any age group- with the same level of equality, than the matter needs to be brought up with the branch manager as something to encourage in all staff.
Building a relationship with teens can help both with noise and with staff who are over-strict on teens: asking teens to be quiet in a pleasant way and adding information about teen programs/asking if they want assistance with anything. Also, some staff are more critical of teens than adults. Building a better relationship between them and teens is good: pair a staff member with a teen volunteer to help them with magazines or crafts, have teens do e-reader help with customers, and so on.

Making teen areas inviting/some are too inviting to adults

A “maker space” like Howard County has, for making music and doing other noise-producing cool things, is on the “wish list” of some librarians.

One librarian intends to set up a rotating display of teen art in the teen area. Another had a teen art contest—having staff vote gave staff interest in teens and their area.

Teen spaces often have comfy seating, are an enclosed space, or have separate PCs that adults like to use. Keeping adults out can be an issue. Signs posted that limit the area to teens only when teens are around (like after school) help but not a lot. And while some systems do ask adults to leave the teen-designated PCs, other libraries do not limit computers in teen areas to just teens.

Limits on what teens can view or check out

In some systems, anyone 14 and older can get unfiltered Internet and can check out any DVD they want; others allow only patrons over 18 to check out feature-movie DVDs (aside from designated “children’s” DVDs). MPAA ratings often don’t make sense, as the MPAA is a private industry, which is another problem that causes barriers to teen use. Allyson shared a memorandum on this issue.

Teen volunteer activities:

Have teens read to little children or do crafts with them. In some library systems, a library staff member has to be present with teens.
In many counties they volunteer to get community-service (SSL) hours required for school; in some they volunteer to “pay down” fines—50 hours of volunteering clears any fines and an additional 25 hours per year keeps the teen “fine-free.” Pratt has a "read down your fines" program [contact Jessica Brown at jbrown@prattlibrary.org for details]. This isn’t feasible for some systems that depend on fines for income. Also, parents sometimes run up fines on their kids’ cards, not teens. And parents are usually held responsible, or are the ones to pay, for the fines. It is up to the teens, however, to be responsible for monitoring their own cards.

“Tween” (preteen) Programs where the variation in maturity of 10 year olds to 13 year olds won’t matter:

- Star Wars and Hunger Games events with “stations”: craft, quiz, archery (with Nerf arrows)/Jedi “light saber” fencing.
- 60 second challenges/Minute to Win It: compete to see how many times you can bounce a ball, number of M&Ms you can eat with chopsticks, etc. Can search YouTube on “Minute to Win It” for videos, or go to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-qtW5f2LC8
- Optical Illusions event
- Medieval festival: costumes, build a Lego castle, etc.
- Pamper Yourself with all-natural products for girls
- Pizza, Ice Cream taste tests

Why older teens don’t come to events: school clubs, sports, and transportation problems.

Older-teen events that are well-attended: Teen writers’ groups, college-related events, movie night (have local TAG group pick potential movies), anime/manga group.

Teen pregnancy and Teen Parenting activities.

No one in the discussion had planned an activity or presented one directly. But all agreed it was an important audience to reach. One obstacle is that a large portion of the teen
parents did not come to the library before the pregnancy, so how do we get them in to the library afterward? And while some teen parents go to the library for storytime, most librarians do not see this audience until the baby is about 3 years old.

Ideas that have worked previously: Outreach with community centers, send a library packet for new teen parents to hospitals, cosponsor “how to read to your baby” with a community center, work with a sorority that hosts workshops for teen parents in the library. Most county governments have a teen-parent program that is a potential partner. One librarian made a binder of resources for teen parents and simply left it on the teen reference desk, and it got used by teen parents.

A Maryland woman does programs for teen parents:
http://www.mentorencourageliftandlove.org/

Regarding library programs and services about sexual issues:

Don’t weed teen books on sexuality because they aren’t circulating—many are being read in-branch for privacy reasons. Do weed books that are out of date (especially on AIDS). It helps to have teen-sex books in a separate area.

**Booktalk Round Robin: Books for Tweens/Preteens**

*Freaks* by Kieran Larwood  
*Drama* by Raina Telgemeier  
*Virals* by Kathy Reichs  
*Peter and the Starcatchers* by Dave Barry  
*Unspoken* by Sarah R. Brennan  
*Cinderella Society* by Kay Cassidy  
*In Between the Lines* by Jodi Picoult and Samantha van Leer  
*Inkheart* series by Cornelia C. Funke
Ideas that worked for tween book clubs:

- Have 4 choices for the group, let teens pick one
- Quarterly book party for book sharing
- Boys’ club “Supersonic Awesomeness Club”
- Middle School monthly club: a teen librarian goes to the local middle school and hosts a “brown bag” book club for interested students at lunchtime, one day for each of 3 grades once a month.

Our next meeting is at MLA/DLA on Thursday May 9th at 4pm in Suite 318, followed by Happy Hour at 5 pm at Liquid Assets (a nearby restaurant/bar/liquor store).

General teen/tween links provided by attenders:

Teen program list. You can filter the ages at the top:
http://www.fcpl.org/programs/teen-programs

Liz B’s Tween blog: goodtweenreads.wordpress.org

Documents shared throughout the chat:
“Welcome to the Teen Area” signage (Publisher) – shared by Kimberle Fields
Teen Art Contest Guidelines – shared by Beth Chandler
Teen programs from around Maryland – compiled by Liz Sunderman
Memorandum re R-Rated Films – shared by Allyson Evans