



VolunTeens:

How to get 'em,
How to train 'em, &
How to use 'em

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Starting up...

Figure out your needs and guidelines:

- What do you need help with? How often?
- Do you have any union rules to consider?
- How many VolunTeens can you handle at once?
- How will you deal with training them?
- Will you accept teens with court ordered community service or just teens who need hours for a class or civic group?

Age Limitations

Have a reasonably low minimum age:

- older teens are often looking for paid work
- MAKE SURE your VolunTeens will be old enough to be left “unsupervised” (*consult your unattended child policy*)

Recruiting

My methods include:

- library newsletter
- website & teen e-newsletter
- Facebook & MySpace pages
- local schools
- teen list e-mail announcements
- personal invitation

Recruiting

- Spend about 5 minutes speaking with the people around you about ways that you have recruited (or would like to recruit) VolunTeens for your library.
- Each group gets a chance to share a method of VolunTeen recruitment.

Training

SRP VolunTeen training activities:

- fill out VolunTeen information sheet (doubles as an application for SUV)
- sign VolunTeen contracts
- fill out their own SRP registration form
- demo of data entry using laptop & projector
- discuss VolunTeen rules/responsibilities

Training

- Spend about 5 minutes speaking with the people around you about possible activities to use when training VolunTeens.
- Each table gets a chance to share a VolunTeen training activity.

VolunTeen Levels

I use 3 levels of VolunTeens during SRP:

- Basic VolunTeen
 - entering at least 7th grade
- Super VolunTeen
 - 1 year prior experience, or entering at least 9th grade (to avoid prior experience requirement)
- Super Uber VolunTeen
 - at least 2 years experience (no exceptions)

VolunTeen Levels

Varying duties of different VolunTeen levels:

- Basic VolunTeen
 - 12 hours in SRP room
 - general sign up, check-in, and prize distribution
- Super VolunTeen
 - 16 hours in SRP room
 - above duties + data entry into SRP database
- Super Über VolunTeen
 - 20 hours in SRP room/programs
 - all the above duties + program assistance

Using VolunTeens

Many libraries have VolunTeens during their Summer Reading program.

- registration, weekly check-ins, prizes
- help setting up/cleaning up programs
- help during programs

But you can use them during the year too!

- storytime craft preparation
- help setting up/cleaning up programs
- shelf-reading, page duties, dusting

Scheduling

- **MAKE THE TEENS** take responsibility for scheduling their shifts!!!
 - treat it just like a “real” job
 - teach the parents to let go, too!
- **Post your schedule**
 - VolunTeens can see what is available
 - staff will know when to expect VolunTeens
- **Don't let teens write on the calendar!**
 - monitor the shifts they sign up for
 - avoid them signing up other people too

Scheduling

Much easier during the year!

- fewer shifts needed
- fewer VolunTeens to track

Drop-in Option

- set out sign in sheet for VolunTeens
- Include a list of activities they should do

Communication

- Insist on phone numbers!
 - can be used by the library
 - can be handed out as “sub” list (in summer)
 - also good for emergency contact
- Ask for e-mail addresses
 - easy to send mass messages
(send e-mails as “BCC” for their privacy)
- Have a Facebook or MySpace
 - they can follow your calendar and/or posts
(but let them send YOU the friend request!)

Tracking Hours

- Must check in & out for shifts
- Minimum hours requirement
 - gives them a goal to reach for
 - helps you estimate the help you'll get
- Excel spreadsheets
 - formulas add time for you
 - use to gather VolunTeen statistics for reports

Giving Thanks

- Rewards for participation
 - personalized certificate (name and number of hours)
 - raffle prizes, food coupons, and/or other donations
 - VolunTeen Appreciation Party
- Make your thanks public
 - press release in local newspapers
 - a blurb in your library newsletter
 - a sign in your library

Resources

- URLs provided on handouts
 - YALSA wiki on teen volunteers
 - YALSA blog on teen volunteers
- Items available via e-mail
 - pdf file of this presentation
 - pdf file of our VolunTeen application
 - pdf of our VolunTeen rules & shift tracker

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