

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Henrico County

Program Title: Jumpstart Your Summer Teen Volunteer Fair

Program Category: Community Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Mandy Arnold

Title: Teen Librarian

Department: Libraries

Complete Mailing Address: Tuckahoe Area Library, 1901 Starling Dr, Henrico, VA 23229

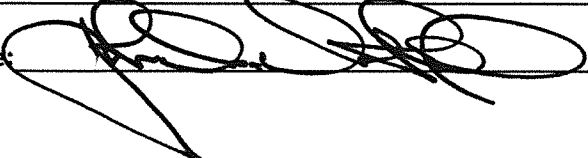
Telephone # 804-290-9130 Fax # 804-270-2982

E-mail: marnold@henricolibrary.org

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: John A. Vithoukas

Title: County Manager

Signature: 

Overview

Beginning in the spring of 2013, the Tuckahoe Area Library's Teen Librarian, Mandy Arnold, invited and hosted representatives from non-profit organizations for a 'Jumpstart Your Summer' teen volunteer fair to meet with teens to discuss opportunities for volunteering. The teen volunteer fair brought together non-profit organizations and local high school teens as a way to serve the community and help teens earn community service volunteer hours prior to graduation from high school. The fair was so successful, that it has become an annual event for Henrico County Public Library (HCPL). The program is a great way for the library to partner with local businesses, nonprofits and other county agencies, while helping local teens earn community service hours.

Problem

Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) encourages all students to complete 80 hours of community service between ninth and twelfth grades in order to receive recognition at graduation and a special seal on their diplomas. If a student participates in advanced coursework or a specialized curriculum, community service becomes a requirement and the amount of required hours increases. Local teens, just like teens across the country, are highly motivated and willing to do the extra work needed to give them a boost when applying to colleges and universities or entering the job market. In the weeks just before summer, Teen Librarian, Mandy Arnold, receives an overwhelming number of phone calls and inquiries about HCPL's teen volunteer programs. The beginning of the school year brings the same shower of calls, and even though HCPL offers a variety of teen volunteer programs, the library cannot accommodate everyone who applies. Out of this dilemma an opportunity appeared.

How the program meets criteria

The Teen Volunteer Fair provides an opportunity for the Library to reach out and partner with local organizations and businesses while also supporting the school system's goals for its students. School systems nationwide recognize the importance of service in shaping their student population to be civically responsible and engaged citizens. Over the past decade many schools have embraced "mandatory volunteerism" policies as a means of encouraging, while at the same time, compelling students to lend a hand in their communities. The benefits are numerous and undoubtedly worthwhile: teens are active in the community, they are learning, they are communicating, they are acquiring skills for the workplace, and much more. The public library is a community meeting place and a natural partner for connecting local agencies with teens.

How the program is carried out

In the fall of 2012, Ms. Arnold began contacting local nonprofit organizations that accept teen volunteers. The list included county and state parks, animal rescue organizations, community centers, day camps, and adult day services. Ms. Arnold told these organizations that HCPL had an answer to their volunteer shortage and they quickly responded with excitement. The nonprofit organizations agreed to participate in the "Jumpstart Your Summer" teen volunteer fair as the main attraction. Throughout the winter and spring, Ms. Arnold promoted Jumpstart Your Summer as a way for teens and their parents to meet nonprofit representatives and sign up for volunteer positions on the spot. Ms. Arnold wanted to make the process as simple as possible for teens in the hopes that mandatory volunteerism could become an enjoyable part of their high school experience rather than something they had to reluctantly endure.

Both the 2013 and 2014 teen volunteer fairs took place on a Saturday for one hour in mid-May. By having a weekend event, it enabled working parents to accompany their teens and timing it just before summer break worked well for students who have several commitments during the school year, but during the summer have more free time. The Tuckahoe Area Library was used to set up information tables in an expo-style configuration for teens and parents to peruse the nonprofits at their own pace. Ms. Arnold encouraged nonprofit representatives to bring posters, pictures, small give-aways, candy, etc. to entice teens to the tables and it worked. The local animal rescue organizations were invited to bring along animals, since dogs and cats were an undeniable draw for teen volunteers.

In addition to the in-person connections, the fair facilitated an online application station with two laptops set up. This station was used to guide teens to other nonprofits' websites where they could apply. In the months leading up to Jumpstart Your Summer, Ms. Arnold collected paper-based volunteer applications for local government, the food pantry, art programs, and more. These materials were displayed next to the online application station.

Staffing & Costs

There were no costs associated with the event outside of staff time. One staff person organized, promoted and staffed the event. The Library's Public Relations Librarian promoted the event on the Library's website, social media, blog, print program guide and monthly programming press release.

Results

More than 120 teens and parents attended the May 2013 event and 130 attended the May 2014 event. Six nonprofit organizations had representatives on hand to speak with them at both the 2013 and 2014 events. As teens and parents exited at each year's event, library staff asked them to complete event surveys. There were many notes of appreciation from parents who no longer had to drive their teens around all summer knocking on doors and cold calling nonprofits. Teens were thrilled not to have to settle for volunteer positions that did not suit their schedules or appeal to their interests. Just a few of the positive student comments from the surveys discussed how it was a "cool thing" to help keep students "busy [over the] summer" and how the "volunteer ideas for Special Olympics" interested many students. The Jumpstart Your Summer Teen volunteer fair gave teens a variety of options and the tools to continue their search. Nonprofit representatives expressed their thanks for the opportunity to recruit potential volunteers face-to-face and said it was worth their time and energy.

This program met and exceeded the desired outcome and the return on investment of time and resources to make this event happen was well worth it. As a result, HCPL plans to offer its third annual Jumpstart Your Summer Teen Volunteer Fair again in spring 2015, using lessons learned to grow the event and help even more teens help more people through community service.



Teen Volunteer Fair

@ Tuckahoe Area Library

Saturday, May 17th
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Do you need volunteer hours for school? Learn about **volunteer opportunities** and fun programs for teens just like you. Enter to win **cool door prizes** and get information about teen volunteer programs at HCPL. Sponsored by Friends of the Tuckahoe Area Library.

Meet representatives from...

- HandsOn Greater Richmond
- Children's Museum of Richmond
- Circle Center Adult Day Services
- Henrico County Human Resources
- Henrico County Public Library
- Henrico Recreation and Parks
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society/Central VA Chapter
- Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
- March of Dimes
- Special Olympics Virginia

NOTE: This list is tentative and subject to change.

www.HenricoLibrary.org | 804-290-9100



