

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: Loudoun County Public Library
Program Title: After Hours Teen Center - Celebrating 10 Years of Success
Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Chang Liu
Title: Library Director
Department: Library Services
Complete Mailing Address: 102 North Street NW, Leesburg, VA 20176
Telephone # 703-777-0368 Fax # 703-771-5238
E-mail: Chang.Liu@loudoun.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Tim Hemstreet
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 



A Place of Their Own

Celebrating Ten Years of Success • After Hours Teen Center
Loudoun County Public Library

Summary

The After Hours Teen Center (AHTC) at Cascades Library, a branch of Loudoun County Public Library (LCPL), was developed for teens in 2005 in direct response to a Loudoun County Board of Supervisors initiative that focused on meeting the gap of community services for youth ages 12-18. Available every Friday evening, the AHTC became - and continues to be - the county's only non-sport centric program offered weekly to teenagers. There are no comparable weekly programs of this frequency or longevity elsewhere in the Commonwealth of Virginia or the nation. The AHTC plans educational and engaging activities to keep youth occupied and safe, therefore helping to prevent youth from engaging in problematic activities or behaviors. In addition to being a safe place for teens to spend time, the AHTC aligns with The Search

Institute's framework of 40 developmental assets for teens, which states that inclusion in youth programs promotes and strengthens the advancement of well-being in adolescents. Since its inception, the After Hours Teen Center has been consistently appreciated by parents as an enriching environment. The success of the AHTC is demonstrated through the attendance which averages 90 teens every Friday night with approximately **45,000 youth served since 2005.**

The AHTC is a place where intellectual and physical disabilities are not a barrier for participation and social integration. Educational and recreational activities planned with and for all youth in attendance ensure involvement and a valued experience.

...inclusion in youth programs promotes and strengthens the advancement of well-being in adolescents



...the county's only non-sport centric program offered weekly to teenagers



The After Hours Teen Center was selected as one of 15 programs in the country to be featured in the American Library Association's 2008 publication "Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults." In 2005 LCPL won the prestigious \$10,000

Challenge

In 2005, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors undertook a major youth initiative which focused on assessing current adolescent needs in the community. The goal was to develop an action plan that would engage the total community in meeting those needs. Faced with the challenge of a rapidly growing community, Loudoun County leaders reached out to government agencies and community groups, tasking them to find ways to create and support activities for teens.

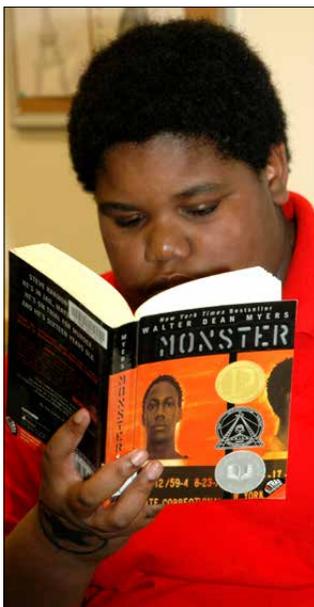


...youth in Loudoun County are assured every Friday night that they have a place that they can call their own

John Cotton Dana Award for the development of the After Hours Teen Center. Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the inception of the After Hours Teen Center, youth in Loudoun County are assured every Friday night that they have a place that they can call their own.

... one-third of the population of Loudoun County is under the age of eighteen

Loudoun County Public Library was one of the most active and engaged members of the initiative - bringing forward ideas and developing creative solutions for out-of-school activities for middle and high school-aged youth.

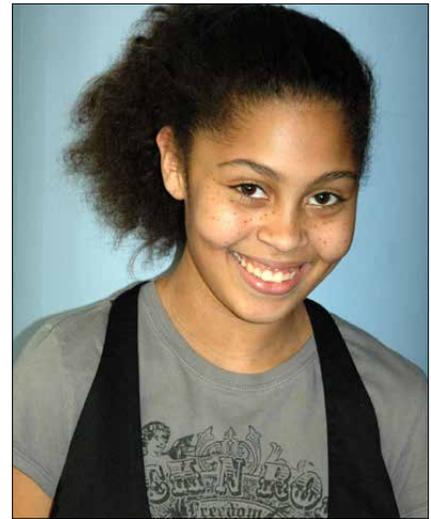


Loudoun County Public Library also fully embraced the spirit of the initiative, reaching out and listening to the county's youngest citizens and enlisting them fully in the development of those ideas and programs. Instead of looking at young people as recipients of services and programs, LCPL looked at youth as resources and as partners who can make valuable contributions in planning and implementing activities. Understanding the importance of youth as leaders now - not just in the future - and wanting to assess their needs, LCPL and other organizations hosted hundreds of youth forums. Through these "Listening to Youth" discussions, teens were asked two questions:

What do you see as constructive forces supporting growing up in Loudoun County?

What do you see as the biggest challenges and major obstacles to growing up in Loudoun County?

Participants recognized a strong sense of community as well as identified the lack of programs, resources and dedicated teen space in the county. By naming their specific needs, the teens helped form the mission of the Loudoun County Public Library's service to teens for 2005 and into the future. Teens identified "a place of their own" as critical to their well-being. Paramount to the identified goals of the project was the establishment of a weekly After Hours Teen Center at a branch of the library system. This innovative program would establish the library as a leader in its services to youth.



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Implementation

To make the After Hours Teen Center a reality, teen representatives from the community and LCPL approached the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors for out of budget cycle funding of \$50,000 to create a dedicated space for young people to meet.

The program would be staffed with three part-time library assistants, two security guards and a Teen Services Librarian. Teens using the After Hours Teen Center would have access to programs, educational games, music, computers, food and activities - all dictated by the interests of the teens. Beginning in June 2005,

...the Cascades Library became the place to be for teens on Friday nights

the Cascades Library became the place to be for teens on Friday nights. The center was publicized in area schools throughout the county and through non-profits and county agencies working with youth in the community. Throughout the summer months

AHTC is a welcoming, entertaining space for all teens, with no regard to popularity or abilities.

young people participated in the activities with the attendance growing each week. Continual marketing of the center's activities was done through the media and the youth themselves.

Ten years later the After Hours Teen Center continues to grow and provide the same high quality service that it did at its inception. This is accomplished by staff regularly evaluating the achievements of the center and its

programming and adjusting the presentations based on comments from teens. Utilizing 15,000 square feet of the building, regular Friday night activities include: youth using PCs, iPads and gaming consoles; watching a movie; listening to music; creating craft

projects and eating pizza. Each week a unique program is hosted by an outside

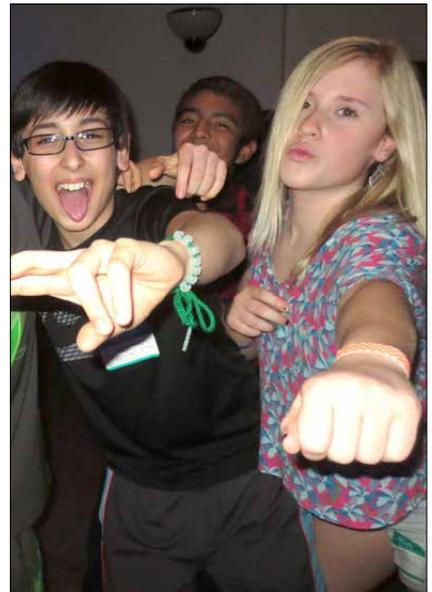
presenter or staff member. DJ-led dance parties, fashion shows, laser tag, iMovie workshops on iMac computers and holiday celebrations are presented throughout the year. AHTC is a welcoming, entertaining and educational space for all teens, with no regard to popularity or abilities. Perhaps the most telling observation by the youth participating in the AHTC activities is "We want to keep it going forever!"



Recognition

The achievement of the Loudoun County Public Library's After Hours Teen Center has been acknowledged by many groups and organizations. The Advisory Commission on Youth, which is comprised of representatives appointed by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, yearly presents to the county the status of Loudoun Youth Report. Each presentation has featured the Loudoun County Public Library's After Hour Teen Center as a positive example of an opportunity for adolescents to engage in meaningful activities as both participants and decision makers. The Loudoun Youth Initiative, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to support programs that provide teens positive out-of-school activities, recognizes the After Hours Teen Center as a significant opportunity for young people to develop connectedness and healthy relationships. The national awards that the After Hours Teen Center has received have established it as a model for public libraries throughout the nation.

The After Hours Teen Center addresses one of the most significant issues in positive youth development today: how to create social inclusion for teens. Every Friday night for ten years Loudoun County youth know that they have *a place to call their own*.





May 22, 2015

2015 Achievement Award
Virginia Association of Councils

Dear Virginia Achievement Award Selection Committee,

The Loudoun County Public Library (LCPL) is the finest example of an organization that exemplifies community engagement. For Loudoun County's youngest, to its most senior, the library is more than a place where the community goes for information. It is even more than a place where the community comes together. Our libraries are places where our community is embraced and defined.

In 2005 Loudoun County undertook a major youth initiative. Faced with rapid growth, county leaders reached out to government agencies and community groups, tasking them to find ways to create and support activities for youth. No small task when one-third of the population of Loudoun County is under the age of eighteen.

The LCPL was one of the most active and engaged members of the initiative, bringing forward ideas and developing creative solutions for out-of-school activities for middle-school and high-school aged youth. LCPL also fully embraced the spirit of the initiative, reaching out to and listening to the county's youngest citizens, enlisting them fully in the development of those ideas and programs.

The LCPL Teen Advisory Boards and extensive teen volunteer opportunities are the lasting legacy of this youth engagement. LCPL acknowledges that the best programs for young people are developed and operated with the direct input and advice of those young people. This extensive outreach, while creating the best short-term results, is not easily maintained over the long-term. LCPL has sustained this special and very active youth engagement, not only creating popular and timely youth programs, but creating substantial leadership opportunities for young people.

LCPL's youth engagement programs have obtained the enviable win-win. Not only does the community benefit from substantive and meaningful programming, but the young people are able to develop critical, real-life skills, allowing for a transformative experience.

The tens of thousands of youth served through the After Hours Teen Center exemplify our library's ability to connect to the community in meaningful ways, providing relied upon activities and personal growth opportunities for our county's youngest. LCPL provides a critical foundation to our community....a foundation that is recognizable, celebrated and that gives definition to community.

Loudoun County Public Library allows the community to be engaged by being deeply engaged with us. LCPL is essential to the vitality of this community. They are what makes Loudoun County the best place to grow up!

Sincerely,



Carol A. Kost

Carol A. Kost

Founder and Chair, Loudoun Youth Inc.

Chair, Loudoun Youth Initiative Steering Committee, 2004-2006

Director, Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce, 2009-Present

Co-Chair, Loudoun County Chamber Non Profit Initiative, 2009-2014



ADVISORY COMMISSION ON YOUTH (ACOY)

PO Box 7000
Leesburg, Virginia 20177

May 22, 2015

2015 Achievement Award
Virginia Association of Counties

Dear Achievement Award Selection Committee:

I am writing as the Chair of the Advisory Commission on Youth (ACOY), whose Board is appointed by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. The Board also has participating membership representatives from law-enforcement, Loudoun County Public Schools, county agencies as well as youth representatives. The purpose of ACOY is to ensure that a positive environment is created in our community for youth, ages 12-19.

The Loudoun County Public Library is an integral part and one of the most committed partners in our county government's Loudoun Youth Initiative, a strategic plan for service to teens. This service model recognizes youth as contributive members of the community and strives to create projects where teens actively participate in each and every stage of development. The Loudoun Youth Initiative is dedicated to providing a high quality of life for its youth through the implementation of a range of forward-thinking campaigns. These ventures look to address the challenges facing youth and, by working directly with teens, seek solutions and better understandings.

The Library's leadership has been instrumental in creating numerous opportunities for teens in Loudoun County. In 2005, the Library established the award-winning "After Hours Teen Center" at the Cascades Library, which has welcomed 90+ teens every Friday evening for the last ten years, offering an enriching atmosphere for all youth that attend including teens with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Teens working with staff have created and designed dedicated areas for youth at each branch library, allowing for social interaction and giving young people a sense of bonding and belonging to the library. Young people also contribute ideas that are used to develop the vast array of youth-oriented programming that reaches every part of our community. The Loudoun County Public Library has become the embodiment of what the Loudoun Youth Initiative truly is. Through their commitment and sheer determination, the Loudoun County Public Library has emerged as a symbol of how public sector can provide the leadership and vision to support a community's youth through the sometimes difficult and treacherous teen years.

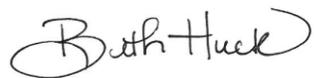
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON YOUTH (ACOY)

PO Box 7000
Leesburg, Virginia 20177

Loudoun County Public Library has become our community's "safe harbor" for youth and we are a stronger community because of the role and leadership of our Library and the unselfish and committed professionals who lead it. Our Loudoun County youth have no finer and supportive mentor than Loudoun County Public Library.

It is with all of these accomplishments and efforts that I highly support and encourage you to consider Loudoun County Public Library for the prestigious 2015 Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award, on behalf of the Loudoun County Advisory Commission on Youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Huck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "B".

Beth Huck
Chairperson, Advisory Commission on Youth
Loudoun County, VA