Teen Tech Tutors

Cornwall Public Library

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Teen Tech Tutors

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Free

Byline

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Teen Tech Tutors is a hands-on monthly program in which local teens help others (mostly older adults) with technology questions. Patrons bring their own devices to the library where teens are available to answer questions and give one-on-one tech advice, training and support. This is a drop-in program; registration is not required.

Advanced Planning

The goals of the program are: 1) to provide a more centralized way for the library to offer tech support than through one-on-one help via the reference librarians on duty; and 2) to strengthen the community by creating connections between teens and seniors.

We started planning the program a few months before it began by getting out advance promotion and recruiting our volunteers. The program started slowly with only a couple volunteers but has since grown into a pool of eight volunteers.

Recruiting volunteers is often a challenge, as students are so busy with school work, sports, etc. It is best to recruit them when they are freshmen or sophomores, as once they become committed to the program you will have them for a longer period of time. However, volunteers often hear of the program and simply show up at the library asking to join. As an incentive, we always stress that the volunteer hours they earn can benefit both the community and themselves, as they can be used on college applications.

Marketing

The events are promoted continuously throughout the year through the following channels: the library's website, fliers posted in-house and around town, social media and press outreach. We make an extra effort to promote program dates that occur right after the holiday season in order to take advantage of new tech purchases received as gifts.

Budgeting

The program is completely cost-free, as it is volunteer-driven. There are indirect costs associated with marketing, as well as purchasing in-house tech devices for the library, as these are also used for staff training needs. We use the devices to sometimes help patrons "pet" other devices they may not own but are considering purchasing.

Day-of-event Activity

The program is run by one staff person who is responsible for contacting the teen volunteers each month, setting up the tables and chairs in the library’s community room, and recruiting new volunteers when people graduate. Once teens have been engaged with the program for several months they tend to take ownership, and the staff person is only needed to work as an additional volunteer and ambassador to the library.

Program Execution

This will be the third year that we have offered the program. The attendance per monthly program ebbs and flows. Attendance usually increases for a few months after the holidays, drops toward the summer, and then increases in the fall.

We have had as many as twenty drop-ins, but sometimes only three people attend. There are always at least five volunteers per session.

Feedback from the community has been excellent. Seniors, once they have surmounted the fear of admitting they need help with technology, are ecstatic when they leave the program with newfound knowledge. Additionally, people are grateful that the library offers for free what might cost them a high fee at a Best Buy or an Apple store.

Advice

It is better to have more volunteers than people dropping in for the program. Things tend to get chaotic when people are waiting for someone to help them, and it impinges on people being able to spend as much time as they wish with a patron. On the occasion that we aren’t seeing a lot of people dropping in, I always have other tech activities for the volunteers to do, such as updating our in-house laptops or loading needed software onto devices.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images







Image



More Programs

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Adults (21 and up)+ | □□
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Back to the Future: Programs for the Technology-Challenged

Audiences:

Audience

Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Jun 10, 2015
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | □□
Image



Sunday Morning Computer Help for Seniors

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Intergenerational
Mar 23, 2016
Adults (21 and up)+ | □□
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Coding for Adults: Newbies Only

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)