You have a big event planned at your library but not enough staff. What do you do? You need to provide outreach in the community but not enough time, funds, or people. What do you do?

I highly recommend a volunteer group for all libraries. Every library, no matter the size, needs a teen volunteer group. They go by many names such as Teen Advisory Board (TAB), Teen Advisory Group (TAG), Young Adult Advisory Council (YAAC), etc. At Autauga-Prattville Public Library (APPL), we have a TAB with 29 volunteers with ages ranging from 12-18 years old.

APPL uses a TAB throughout the year at different events inside and outside of the library. Our TAB started in 2013 with seven teens, and each year we gained anywhere from eight to ten new members. Of course, we also lose a few each year due to graduation, moving, or being too busy with other activities.

Some of the functions a TAB can help with around the library include shelving (they must be trained), helping prepare for story times, decorating for seasons, etc. They also help with ‘Milk & Cookies with Santa’ by running the stations (crafts, photo booth, face painting, etc.), the Easter Egg Hunt (one was our Easter Bunny) and special after school programs like our ‘Geronimo Stilton Party’ (two members wore rented costumes). TAB members also represent the library in events like Prattville’s 4th of July and Christmas parades.

One of the programs TAB teens love most is ‘Letters from Santa.’ Children turn in their Santa letters, then Santa and the teens (the elves)
will answer each letter. We do it during our December meeting (short meeting then 90 minutes to write letters). Letters are delivered from the North Pole to the library where kids can pick them up or wait to get them at ‘Milk & Cookies.’ The teens enjoy seeing kids read letters from Santa’s elves.

Teenagers are also adept at creating their own events like ‘Harry Potter’ or ‘Star Wars Night.’ They come up with crafts, games, and snacks and do the bulk of the prep for the event and man the stations the night of the event. I’m very proud of the leadership these teens show as they interact with other teens and young children.

Our TAB team works at every major summer program and other large programs throughout the school year. At each event, whether it’s in the library or other locations around town, the teens wear badges on lanyards with their name and photo; they represent the library wherever they go. I also remind the teens that young children watch them, so be a good ambassador to encourage them to also join TAB in the future. I currently have 10 and 11 year-olds express excitement that they are nearing the age to join our group.

Where did my teens come from? From all over! In the beginning, I asked a few teacher friends at the junior high school if they knew of any students who would like to volunteer and be a good fit for the library. In addition, I had several teens that were coming to the library ever since they were babies and wanted to help out with programs they had participated in their entire lives. Over time, other teens saw TAB members working at events or shelving books and they would ask about joining. I also post on Facebook and put up flyers around the library to generate interest in TAB for about a month before orientation. I’ll have a few current TAB members with me in the meeting to share their experiences with new prospective members. I’ll also have applications, reference forms, and an interview schedule sheet at the meeting. Teens need to have two references from teachers, youth ministers, or other mentors, and they hand in applications and references to me at the interview. Interviews typically take 10-15 minutes and it’s mainly to get to

“Being a part of TAB has given me sense of responsibility and confidence that has been the backbone of everything I’ve been able to achieve since. Skills - like time management and working with adults - helps me in academics and professional experiences.

“TAB has really made me grow into a different person, but in a good way. When I joined TAB, it was very small. It changed me and everybody else who was a part of it. I love the fact that I can come here to escape. Whenever I’m having a problem, I can come here. I’ve learned how to work with children, teens, and adults. TAB has really changed me and made me the person I am today.

Yakety Yak
know them as a person and not just a name on a piece of paper. They usually come in nervous and it’s nice to see them put so much careful thought into joining our group.

We have teens from public, private, and home schools in grades 7 – 12. Once they graduate from school, they are also welcome to volunteer at any events as TAB alum. Most will volunteer the summer before they go off to college and will also assist when home on Christmas break.

We have two TAB meetings a month. We used to have only one, but if a teen misses a meeting, a second meeting keeps them from falling behind or feeling left out. The teens suggested having two meetings each month. At the meetings, we have ‘Member News’ where teens can talk about anything they’ve done since we last saw them (e.g. new driver’s license, upcoming school play, getting braces off) and we also celebrate birthdays.

We also have a TAB council which includes a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and members at large. Elections are held each year and members of the council help create program ideas, fundraisers and provide leadership for the group.

I strongly encourage my teens to branch out into other activities within school and community. Most of the teens are involved with band, theater, scouts, track team, swim team, archery and the list goes on. I believe that it makes teens more well-rounded and connected to their community. They can use earned volunteer hours at the library for Beta Club hours, scout or church hours, and school community service.

TAB is one of the best things that’s happened to me. You get immersed in this world where everyone loves and supports you. TAB showed me that making mistakes is a good thing and you learn and grow from them. The library in general just gives me the feeling that I can be anyone who I want to be, free of judgment. TAB has helped me step out of my comfort zone, especially with public speaking. If you would have said I’d willingly do a speech in public three years ago, I would’ve said you were crazy. TAB has helped my confidence grow and I’m so thankful for it and what the library has done for me.

This past year, I’ve had three teens ask me for college advice because they wanted to pursue a career in Library Science. ‘Welcome to the Rebellion, my little Padawans!’

Teens use a time sheet to keep track of their volunteer hours. They record the date, time in/out, and duties assigned. I keep track of their hours in a spreadsheet. It comes in handy when the teens bring in a school form requesting the total number of hours earned over a six-week period. It also looks great on college applications.

We also have a couple of events during the year just for our TAB members. We’ve held murder mystery parties, trips to the movies, lock-ins and more. The teens call TAB their library family and they look out for each other at school and in the community. Several have become great friends since meeting in TAB.

Yes, having a teen volunteer group can take time (they like rules and order) but being a part of any volunteer group allows teens to grow into hard working, respectful young adults. They gain leadership skills, team building abilities, and an overall pride in themselves. TAB provides a safe outlet for all; everyone’s accepted and truly becomes part of the family.

For more information, please contact Barbara at bcurry@appl.info, call (334) 365-3396 ex 3, visit the library’s website at www.appl.info or check out the Autauga-Prattville Public Library’s Facebook page.

Teen volunteers develop valuable skills that grow them into hard working, respectful young adults.
STEAMing along

Make a weather vane to explore the magic of wind science

Alabama has some crazy weather in the spring: many days of rain, cooler-than-normal temps, and gusty winds. This activity is perfect for those blustery days.

01 Gather Supplies
Sturdy disposable dinner plate (an extra is optional)
Marker
Small plastic food container and lid
Pencil with eraser, sharpened
X-Acto utility knife
Straight pin
Plastic drinking straw
Scissors
Small rocks or glass baubles
Hot glue
Construction paper or cardstock
Compass or smart phone

02 Draw
Make two perpendicular lines on the bottom of the plate that intersect in the middle. Cut an extra plate in half to use as a template.

03 Cut
Make a small X-shaped incision in the bottom of the plastic food container with the X-Acto knife (adults only). Hole will need to be large enough for a pencil to fit snugly in place.

04 Label
Place the container lid-side down in the middle of the upside down plate and trace around it. Label the four quadrants: North, South, East, and West

05 Rock
Weight the weather vane with rocks or glass baubles. Hot glue (adults only) the lid and secure to center of plate using traced lines as a guide.

06 Shove
Drive sharpened pencil, lead first, into the center of the plastic container, ensuring it is straight.

07 Pierce
Make a hole in the center of the drinking straw using a straight pin. Then, insert the pin into the pencil eraser. The straw should spin freely.

08 Make Shapes
Cut a triangle and a square shape out of the heavyweight paper. Cut a small slit in each end of the drinking straw, and fit the shape in each end of the straw. Lightly glue shapes to straw if fitting loosely.

09 Take It Outside
Head outdoors with your weather vane and use a compass to properly align it to see which way the wind blows.

To read more about the wind, check out:

It's Windy Today
Sterling, Kristin; 978-0761342601

Wind
Bauer, Marion Dane; 978-0689854439

The Wind Blew
Hutchins, Pat; 978-0689717444
Summer Reading Programs plan to rock out

The 2018 Summer Reading Program kicked off Feb. 1 with more than 180 librarians having a rockin’ good time. The summer reading committee presented some excellent programs to those in attendance.

Yuki Lewis from Huntsville Madison County Library’s Oscar Mason Branch dressed as Wilma Flintstone and got us moving and shaking with the Bedrock Twitch! She spoke about how to plan an inexpensive Flintstones / Bedrock Summer Reading kickoff party.

Mobile Public Library’s Cherold Rhodes wrapped it up with a back-to-school Price is Right activity. Kids are handed tickets before being called to “come on down” to play various pricing games. In between activity segments, there are also “commercials” for different library services, and school supplies are awarded prizes for the event.

Other presentations were:

**Beyond Shakers:** Rosanna McGinnis (Lewis Cooper Jr. Library) talked about how to make easy, inexpensive musical instruments to compliment the summer theme.

**Toot Someone Else’s Horn:** Cassie Chenowith of the Orange Beach Library spoke on how to incorporate local musicians, school bands, etc. in library events. She incorporated instruments to set up a musical petting zoo with assistance of local orchestras and school bands.

**Beating the Bushes:** Ricky Statham Jr. from the Oneonta Public Library shared how to reach out to the community and beat the bushes to help with summer program funding. These techniques also happen to work at other times of the year.

**Library Outside the Box:** Stacie Williams of the Montgomery City/County Library discussed using “unusual” holidays like National Hot Dog Day to augment summer programs or story times.

**Shhh! Making Noise in the Library:** Emmet O’Neal Library’s Matt Layne shared open source resources and software to write, create, and record music.

**No Sweat Self-Directed Programming:** Morgan Allen from the Demopolis Library showed how to set up easy and inexpensive passive programs to augment existing summer programs. Pretty much all you have to do is count participants.

**Don’t Act Like an Adult This Summer:** Barbara Curry of the Autauga Prattville Library gave a PowerPoint presentation that illustrated how to borrow elements from programs intended for other age groups and adapt them for adult programs.

Representatives from Alabama’s CollegeCounts 529 Fund were available to share how to save for college. See page 7 for more details.

Last — but certainly not least — artwork for the upcoming Alabama Bicentennial Summer Program was unveiled. The artist is Logan Tanner of Huntsville.

The kickoff was a great success with lots of food and fun! Thanks go out to all the generous librarians who shared wonderful goodies to sustain us throughout the event. Presentations are also available on APLS’ website at http://webmini.apls.state.al.us/apls_web/apls/apls/slp.

Artwork from Huntsville artist Logan Tanner will be featured for the upcoming Alabama Bicentennial Summer Program.
Kat and Meg Conquer the World
written by Anna Priemaza
Released Nov. 7, 2017

Review by Cassandra Brindle

Kat and Meg are polar opposites. Kat is shy, prone to panic attacks, and hates doing anything out of her comfort zone. Meg is loud, has ADHD, and doesn't seem to have many — if any — boundaries. It doesn't seem likely that their paths would ever collide, but when they end up paired together on a year-long science fair project that will be worth 30 percent of their final grade, everything changes.

Kat doesn’t know what to do about Meg invading her life. Meg shows up at Kat’s house without calling ahead, invites herself in, and seems intent on making herself at home. But when they find out they’re both fans of the famous YouTube gamer LumberLegs, the ice between them finally breaks. Meg finds someone who doesn’t seem to mind her lack of filter and actually shares some of her interests; Kat finds someone who’s surprisingly supportive when needed.

Still, the science project looms over their new found friendship. Kat is anxious to have everything completed well before the deadlines and to meet her high standards. Meg, who has trouble focusing even when they end up picking a project she’s interested in, would rather procrastinate. The stakes are raised even higher when a last-minute prize for winning the science fair is revealed that might make Meg’s dreams come true, and also be the stuff of Kat’s worst nightmares.

Kat and Meg Conquer the World is a really enjoyable story. There are three common plot templates a story like this could have fallen victim of, and Priemaza avoided them all. Classic underdog story? Nope. Romantic interests being a central plot point with a possible dash of two friends liking the same boy? Never came close. Geektastic story that instead just centers around them playing videogames most of the book? Real life has too much going on to have something like that happen. I can’t tell you how much I enjoyed reading a story in which the most important relationship isn’t romantic. No cattiness, no high school cliques, no excessive drama, or any other high school tropes that feel so worn and tiresome… especially when the main characters are female.

I’m not sure I have the words to describe how refreshing it was to read this book. I didn’t realize this was what I needed until I started reading. Besides everything Priemaza avoided, she also hit a lot of high notes — too many to detail here — but here are some of my favorites: A positive and supportive friendship. A minority main character that mentions racist issues and other characters actually listen without it becoming an argument. A positive (I believe)
portrait of living with ADHD and anxiety. The characters weren't teenage caricatures. Romance wasn't idealized. Mistakes were made, and in the end both parties were responsible and apologized. The science fair project was attainable and fun instead of needing a genius to create and execute it. It made you think about how you could apply science to your favorite interests rather than making you feel as if the bar for success was impossibly high. The author's use of the word "halflings" to describe half-siblings. How the ties between a step-parent and child can be affected by divorce. How she dealt with celebrity worship.

As I said, the list could go on and on. I’ll end by simply stating that this is a wonderful book and I highly recommend its addition to any library that carries YA books.

**Recommended for:** Fans of realistic fiction with a geek/gamer twist (especially the female demographic.) This is such a positive book for girls.

**Things to watch out for:** Mild swearing, kissing, and sex (not much and little if any detail besides the fact it happens).

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**What Do You Want to be When You Grow Up?**

**Partner with the Alabama Treasurer's Office and CollegeCounts for this NEW Summer Reading Activity**

At the Summer Reading Kickoff in February, Anita Kelley and Sebastian Alvarado visited APLS to discuss CollegeCounts and a partnership they would like to forge with us and our libraries. If you missed it, here's a quick recap:

CollegeCounts, Alabama’s 529 Fund, is a qualified tuition/college savings program sponsored by the State Treasurer’s Office. CollegeCounts is partnering with the Alabama Public Library Service to offer a new program to get children to think about different careers they could have when they grow up and draw an item associated with that career to take home.

This summer, CollegeCounts wants to partner with your library as you inspire children to dream big about their future. Plus, we want to help connect them with all the resources your library has to offer, so they can start small – and start now – to achieve those big dreams.

**CollegeCounts will provide the following:**

1. Ten career “trading cards” from Alabama’s top 10 careers. Information on the card would include the following:
   - Brief description of the career
   - Tips and tools of the trade (item children could draw)
   - Blank space for librarians to fill in the library for more information
   - Steps to take now to jumpstart a career (including saving for education)

2. Drawing pads
3. Bookmarks
4. Book section markers for librarians to indicate areas to visit for information on specific careers
5. A CollegeCounts representative to speak to parents and provide materials on saving for college

**For more information or to participate, please contact Sebastian Alvarado with CollegeCounts at 866-529-2228 or sebastian.alvarado@ubt.com.**
April 4

It's a New World: How to Cultivate Your Community Online

Join Dana Ostornel, Firespring's vice president of nonprofit industry development, to discover the secret sauce of cultivating a community primed and ready to support you. (Firespring) https://www.firespring.org/education/webinars.html

School & Public Library Partnerships: STEAM to Students

Join Deb Gaff, youth services librarian at the Bartholomew County Public Library—and former teacher—as she discusses the STEAM programs she does for students both in school and at BCPL. These programs include Coder Dojo, working with robots, a Nick & Tesla book club, and more. She'll explain how BCPL got started with these initiatives, share strategies for establishing a relationship with schools, and offer tips for libraries who may have less resources than BCPL. (Indiana State Library) https://continuinged.sl.in.gov/find-training/online-training-series/

April 5

Online Fundraising Best Practices for Nonprofits

In this educational session, Jay will share best practices—including detailed formulas that every nonprofit should be using—to track the effectiveness of their fundraising efforts. (Firespring) https://www.firespring.org/education/webinars.html

Mysterious, Magical, and Mischievous: A Sneak Peek of Newly Selected Middle Grade Books

Listen in as JLG editors Susan Marston, Liz Gavril, and Maria Wang discuss some of the must-read books their team hand-picked for middle school this spring. From high-interest novels and engaging nonfiction to thrilling fantasies and mysteries, they will share new titles that will help you provide the right books for your readers. (Junior Literary Guild) https://bit.ly/2GE1GN3

April 10

STEM vs. STEAM: Science and Art in the Classroom

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics have proved to be invaluable foundations in the curriculum, but there are many areas where the arts naturally intersect. This free, hour-long webinar, sponsored by Workman, DK, Lerner, Holiday House, and Black Rabbit, will offer up a wide range of titles for students, be they more STEM or STEAM inclined. (Booklist) https://www.booklistonline.com/webinars

April 11

5 Easy Wins to Increase Online Donations in 5 Minutes

Getting more people to donate online can sometimes seem more like voodoo than science: Your ED says to add more links. Blogs say to run intricate A/B tests for button colors. You just want the thing to friggin’ work on mobile! What strategies actually work? And better yet, which ones will yield the biggest return for your effort? In this webinar, we'll answer those questions by reviewing 5 easy wins all nonprofits should do to increase donations online. These are 5-minute tweeks we'll show you how to do yourself—no more waiting for the webmaster to make one change. (The Digital Nonprofit) https://www.thedigitalnonprofit.com/free-webinar/

Sustainable Connected Learning for Youth

Connected Learning is an innovative approach to youth learning that is based on the principle that learning happens best when it is interest-driven, peer supported, and academically oriented. Learn how the connected learning model has been implemented at Cuyahoga County Public Library’s 27 branches and how you can implement similar programming in your library. (Georgia Library Association) https://gla.georgialibraries.org/carterette-series-webinars

April 12

Interactions with Teens

Join this YALSA webinar facilitated by knowledgeable youth development experts and library staff that focuses on interactions with teens. (YALSA) http://www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelibrary/webinar/free_competencies_webinars

April 16

Protecting Children in the Library

Join staff of the Department of Health and Welfare as they share information important to library staff working in public places and their role in providing safe spaces for children. (Idaho Commission for Libraries) http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/info2go

April 17

Stellar Series Nonfiction Spring 2018


Amplifying Student Voice with Technology

Putting students at the center of the learning experience has a transformative effect on a classroom. Powerful learning happens when teachers can bring forward student voices and when they position students as the drivers of class culture and community. And technology can help you do that! (edWeb) https://home.edweb.net/upcoming-webinars/

April 18

The Importance of Empathy in the Customer Service Experience

When patrons are rude or overly demanding, it can become difficult to remain calm and professional. This webinar will introduce the importance of empathy in the customer service experience to help staff avoid unpleasant interactions with library patrons. (Georgia Public Library Service) https://bit.ly/2GX5EOC

April 19

Assessment Made Simple

We generally do a solid job of recording basic statistics, like the number of programs held and their attendance. However, it’s much more challenging to measure, understand, and share the actual impact our programs and services have on our community. In this short webinar you’ll get an overview of how to use free tools and readymade surveys from Project Outcome to tackle this tough problem in a simple, straightforward fashion. (North Dakota State Library) https://bit.ly/2GXaw6It

April 24

Read to Read! Board Books, Picture Books & Middle Grade Novels

Explore new titles for grades PreK – 8: from board books to picture books, to middle-grade novels. (Booklist) https://www.booklistonline.com/webinars

Making Global Connections at Your School Library

Ready to make global connections at your library? Not sure how to get started? In our future-ready libraries, it has never been easier to allow students to escape our traditional four walls and experience a new level of learning. (American Association of School Libraries) http://www.ala.org/aasl/ecollab/upcoming

May 5

Off to Mars! Programming Ideas for the Insight Launch

Join the STAR Net team and guest presenter Steve Lee (Denver Museum of Nature and Science and Space Science Institute) to learn all about the exciting and innovative Insight mission and fun ways to celebrate its launch and landing at your library! (STAR Net) https://www.starnetlibraries.org/event/off-to-mars-programming-ideas-for-the-insight-launch