

POS Focus Group
Columbia, Greene & Ulster Youth Services
February 8, 2006

Challenges / Issues

Teens:

- Teens are a growing service population for libraries to provide for; budget, staffing and space issues related to this
- What is the role of the library for teens?
 - Community center vs. traditional library models
- Community is lacking any services for this demographic, looking to the library to fill the gap; possible partnership opportunities
- Budget issues in expanding YA services
- Need separate space for YA services
- Difficulty getting teens into the library
- Difficulty with supervising teens on the Internet; what is the library's responsibility? Liability? Don't want to become the "library police"
- How to get teens to read
- Staffing for teen services: what skills are most needed by staff to deal with the challenges of teens in the library
- Security issues related to teens in the library; how to manage misbehavior
- Big need for after-school programming; homework helpers
 - Supervision of latch-key kids is difficult
 - Impact on adult patrons

Children's

- Parents are looking for more (and more!) programs for kids
- The demand for programming is higher in the summer
- Competing with other community events and family commitments; Families are willing to drive 30+ minutes to an event creating an even wider pool of potential competition
- High-demand for toddler/pre-school story hour
- How to pick the right time (time of day, day of week, season) to schedule programming
- How to "spruce up" story hour
- Need to make story hour adaptable for a variety of ages in within one program
- Homeschooler support – what is the public library role for homeschooler support?
- Full-day kindergarten impacting traditional library story hours; pre-K emphasis for libraries?

Parents

- They don't have a lot of time
- Currently relying on print materials to get the word out about early literacy
- Discussion: parent/child workshop format with information education/outreach for parents during kids programming (Carol Corrigan)

System Services

- System holds, delivery, remote access for patrons (Request-a-Title) are #1 priority

- There is a strong need for continual patron education about the catalog and HomeACCESS
 - Out-of-the-box program on how to use the OPAC and HomeACCESS
- Provide help for libraries in communicating to patrons about Internet-based reference resources like Google Earth
- Libraries are still dealing with the need to teach basic computer and Internet skills to patrons, especially older patrons
- How can a library use a mentor or volunteer system to teach patrons to use the computer and Internet?

YS-specific

- Important to be able to tell the age appropriateness of items in the OPAC
- Would like a network for those counties without a solid YS group to meet and exchange ideas; occasional system-wide meetings of YS staff would be appreciated
- Need time savers, like the postings to the YS List and the resources on the web site; the smaller the library the harder it is to spend the time to find the needed information
- Could use help with skill sets for staff dealing with teens; how to deal with disruptive behavior especially

How do you define quality service?

- Responsive.
- Getting the right information to the right person at the right time.
- No one leaves without a positive experience or interaction with library staff
- "We're small but can get you anything!"
- Smile!
- Staff proactively asks you if you need assistance; no grouchy staff
- You feel welcomed in the library
- More personalized, staff make an effort to remember your name; proactive assistance
- Common courtesy
- Let patrons know that they are important to you
- Treat patrons with respect; don't talk down to them
- Know your community; understand your patrons' needs
- Technology is in working order (especially Millennium)
- Keep patron confidentiality sacred