

Between Storytime and the Prom: 'Tween Programming Fills the Gap



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Where did the idea originate?

- In 2009 MID was about to replace a Youth Services Librarian.
- We identified a gap in collection development and programming to children ages 8 -12 years.
- We took the opportunity to make changes to the position description of our Youth Services Librarian.
- Strategic Approach: Build on strengths

Why 'Tweens?

- Bridge building between story time participants and Teens
- Engage students in library activities & events while they are still impressionable; still have enthusiasm; marketable; and will usually follow a fashion trend that is set for them
- Help others in the community appreciate this age group & all they have to offer – Overcome the stigma
- Increase Teen services participation

No real proto-type for this initiative

Risk taking venture

- Mindset to... *“Make it up as we go.”*
- Expected to put some **Time & Energy**
- Be adaptable * Willing to explore & discover



Position Description Edits:

- ...is a **member** of the Youth Services **Team**
- ...with a **focus** on 'Tweens (ages 8 – 12)
- ...and the development of the 'Tween (ages 8-12) collections
- ...with an **emphasis** on 'Tweens (ages 8 – 12)
- Facilitates the 'Tween summer reading program...

Commitment & Foundation

- Youth Services Department identified the need; therefore, supported the idea
- Publishing companies and authors have made advancements and a great deal of progress in meeting the needs for greater variety in literature for readers in this age group
- Personal commitment, as Director & Administrator

Started Small & Subtle

Development Continues.....

- In less than a year = separate **display shelving unit**, **separate programming budget** and **separate collections budgets**.
- Two years later = 'Tweens have their own department at Middleton Public Library. Librarian position is a member of the **Management Team**.



Administrator's View

Investing & Expanding services to Youth is.....
a long term investment

**They are our future
library leaders and supporters**



Who Are 'Tweens'?

- Ages 8-12
- Intentional overlap with “Children” (birth-8) and “Teens” (12-19)



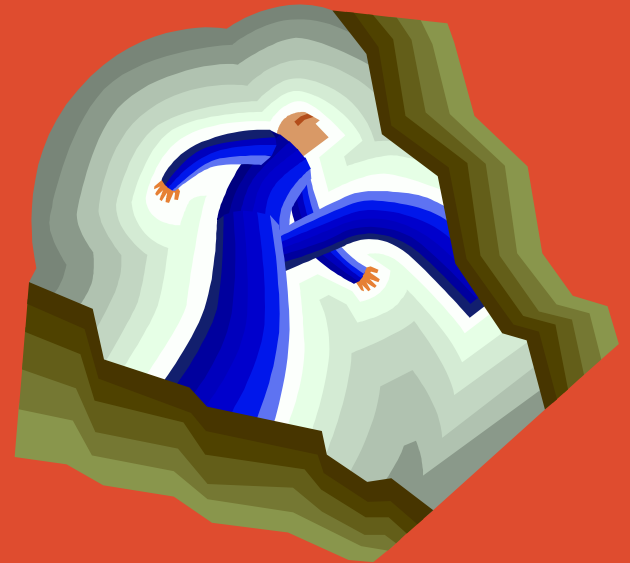
Starting Out

Take risks! Try new things! The sky's the limit!



Inevitable Challenges

- Knowing what 'tweens like
- Developmental differences
- Desperately seeking teen status
- Appealing to wide variety of interests
- Staying realistic



What's Cool? Do Your Research!

- Read popular books
- Watch TV and movies (even just a little!)
- Browse magazines
- Listen to the success stories of other librarians
- **Talk to 'tweens**



An 8-Year-Old and a 12-Year-Old Walked into a Library...

- Accessible Projects
- Choices
- Clear Instructions
- Keep it Simple



I Want to be a Teenager!

- Provide opportunities for 'tweens to be experts
- Invite 12-year-olds to participate in 'tween and teen programs
- Borrow ideas from the teen department



Borrowed Teen Ideas

- Voluntween



- Sharpie Tie Dye

(Instructions will be posted online)



Striking a Balance

- Appealing to a variety of interests
- “If it ain’t broke...”

VS

“Variety is the spice of life”

- Staying sane



Multi-Age and Intergenerational Programs

- Mock Newbery and Mock Caldecott Book Clubs
- Creation Station
- Drum Circle
- PAWS to Read
- El día de los niños/
El día de los libros



Key Ingredients for a 'Tween Program

- No-fail projects
- Variety
- Independence
- Activity
- Voice
- Interaction
- Fun



Tried and True 'Tween Programs

- Knitting Circle
- American Girl Parties
- Magic Tree House Party
- Scary Stories Told in the Dark
- Greece-ology
- Banned Books Club

Knitting Circle

You Need:

- A Knitter! (Look for a staff member or reliable volunteer– or both!)
- Supplies (Ask for donations)
- Steady meeting schedule (We meet on Tuesdays from 3:30-4:45pm)

We maintain a very free-flowing structure. Knitters work at all levels and choose projects themselves.

American Girl Party: Julie

- Create smiley face nametags using circular stickers
- Briefly discuss *Meet Julie*
- Stations:
 - Chocolate/fruit fondue
 - Macrame bracelets
 - Paper fortune tellers
 - Friendship pins
 - Tissue paper butterflies

Participants freely move between stations

American Girl Party: Kit & Ruthie

Four craft stations:

- Felt flower headbands
- Clothespin dolls
- Scrapbook paper party hats for dolls or stuffed animals
- Treehouse sticker books

Magic Tree House Party

Read an excerpt from a book, then do a related activity.

- *Vacation Under the Volcano*– Baking Soda/Vinegar Volcano
- *Day of the Dragon King*– Dragon Paper Bag Puppets
- *Mummies in the Morning*– Toilet Paper Wrap Game
- *Viking Ships at Sunrise*– Snack made from melon, toothpicks, and Fruit By the Foot
- *Dinosaurs Before Dark*– Take-home 3D T. Rex craft

Scary Stories Told in the Dark

Set the mood with an electric firepit, battery-operated candles, and spooky music

Read from scary story books from your collection (bring a flashlight to read by!)

Serve walking s'mores (small cups or snack bags filled with Golden Grahams cereal, chocolate chips, and mini marshmallows)

Greece-ology

Craft stations:

- Greek pottery– Black paper plates + Sharpie markers + black pipe cleaners
- Scrolls– Pencils + paper
- Olympic torches– Newspaper + red/orange/yellow tissue paper
- Take-home Trojan Horse

Movie: *The Lightning Thief*

Snacks: Olives, stuffed grape leaves, almonds, dates, pita bread

Banned Books Club

- One-time event during Banned Books Week
- Chapter books are available as optional read-aheads
- At the club, briefly discuss chapter books, then read and discuss several picture books
- Captain Underpants toilet toss game
- Harry Potter fortune tellers
- Banned Books BINGO

THANK YOU!!

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