

Best of 2018 Teen Programming

From the YA-YAAC list (ya-yaac - YALSA Young Adult Advisory Councils)

Food Programs

- Teen Cooking Competition
 - Teen Iron Chef
 - Cupcake Wars: We do 3 rounds in this super popular program. The deconstructed cupcake is judged on taste, theme cupcake is judged on how well it is decorated to fit a specific theme, and the third round has the top 6 contestants moving on to the best overall cupcake...judged on taste and appearance. (Added by Liz @ Cumberland RI: lots of libraries do variations on this, mine included and you can find many notes on teen library blogs and FB pages as well as ya-yaac archives.)
- Pizza taste-off
 - as our finale to summer reading each year.
- The Great Ramen Challenge
 - I hosted it 3 times and each time had over 25 teens
 - The Great Ramen Challenge was a "cooking" competition. Each teen was given half a pack of instant ramen noodles (no flavor packet). Then I had an array of spices (everything from creole to cinnamon), sauces (soy, curry, teriyaki, etc), and add-ins (corn, chow mein noodles, seaweed, etc). Teens had 25-30 minutes to create a ramen dish. I had a coffee urn with hot water in it. They could make it either like a soup or noodles with sauce. Myself and other brave souls tried each dish and chose the top three (who won prizes). I was glad I had the teens leave the room while we judged because some were really inedible.
- Food Programs:
 - Tiny Food Party - Make (or have the teens make with you) miniature versions of favorite foods and dine. See [my post](#) on the Teen Services Underground Blog
 - Candy Kabobs - we did it for Valentines Day but could be any season
- DIY Ice Cream
 - Ingredients to make the vanilla ice cream per teen are:
 - ½ cup of whole milk
 - ½ cup of half and half
 - ¼ cup of sugar
 - 1 tablespoon of vanilla extract
 - 1 quart size freezer ziplock bag
 - 1 gallon size freezer ziplock bag
 - 1 cup of Morton's Ice Cream Salt
 - Ice
 - Mix all ingredients together with the exception of the ice and salt and pour into the quart size freezer ziplock bag.
 - Place that bag inside of the gallon sized ziplock bag and add scoops of ice with the salt rocks.
 - Shake until the consistency is thick and creamy.
 - I usually have mini M&Ms, mini Chips Ahoy, whipped cream, sprinkles, and fudge as toppings. Every time I host this I have a great turnout.
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Zt1EulEhvw Here is a video to illustrate how to do this.

Anime and Pop Culture

- Anime
 - How-to-Draw Manga, more specifically
 - Candy Sushi, or [Breakfast Sushi](#)
- Harry Potter
 - anything, and this program would make sense with the second Fantastic Beasts movie coming out
 - Minute-to-win-it style mystery theme mashup. Again, this was thought up and planned by our advisory group, but it was pretty staff-intensive b/c they just did not have time for the details in our monthly, hour-long meetings.
 - One of my most successful programs has been a Harry Potter "class" with potions and care of magical creatures.
 - We made a mini monster book of monsters using my own design (I'd be happy to share it if anyone likes) and then "potions". The biggest potion hits were the slime of course, calming glitter jars, and bath bombs. Less successful but still fun were the invisible ink and borax crystals.



- <https://www.instructables.com/id/Little-Monster-Book/>
- On July 31 I hosted a Harry Potter Birthday Trivia event. It was open to all ages, but advertised as a teen event. It was attended by more than 40 people, and 20-25 of them were teens (the rest were helicopter parents and little siblings.) I based it on the local bar's team trivia, but gave it my own framework to avoid copyright infringement. I will happily share questions if anyone wants them.
- My library is on its third year of doing a Yule Ball. This program happens in December, and we typically offer Harry Potter themed food and crafts. The first year, we estimated we would get 35-50 people and had 110 attend, and last year we estimated 150-200 and got 300 people. It is open to all ages this year, but teens are heavily advertised to. If you want more specific information on the food/crafts/etc. you can email me at briedeman@ppld.org
- [Another version](#) of Harry Potter Monster Book can be done with a post-it pad, brown felt (which you muss into "fur") which is a lot cheaper than faux-fur fabric. I did that version and people liked it.
- My library does a huge multi-ages Harry Potter Day every year and I'm happy to send people the long list of activities we have done. Usually we have a teens only event which has included "Werewolf" (the popular game, played in honor of Lupin of course), Wizard Duels (a card game I developed with the help of other Teen Librarians on the "Teen Librarians" Facebook page), and a Harry Potter Escape Room (see the Escape Room section). - Liz, liz@cumberlandlibrary.org

- DIY Wands with B<https://boxycolonial.com/diy-harry-potter-wands/>amboo Cooking Chopsticks were a big hit at our library. <https://boxycolonial.com/diy-harry-potter-wands/>
- We did a Harry Potter event last year for the anniversary of the Philosopher's Stone. One easy activity that went really well was button making! If you have access to a button maker, I am happy to share some of our designs with you. -Maureen, Fort Bend County Libraries; maureen.fitz-gerald@fortbend.lib.tx.us
- Star Wars
 - [This super-dope but sort of pricey](#) but totally worth it lightsaber craft
- Guardian of the Galaxy movie night where we made [cell phone holders out of cassette tape cases](#) (we decorated them with galaxy print)
- Hamilton Singalong: We served Schuyler Sisters punch (that multicolored sherbet/ginger ale classic) and showed YouTube videos of Hamilton karaoke. I expected to have just a singalong but we filled two hours alternating karaoke and all of us singing. I had the instrumental version music to play whenever someone was truly brave. 24 teens attended, and NOT my usual crew either!!
- Homestuck Fan Night

After Hours and Parties

- An After Hours Event
 - I do an afterhours party on every 5th Friday
 - Our After Hours are always huge, we usually have a theme - gaming tournament and board games are the most popular.
- Murder Mystery Dinner
- A Ghost Hunt at the Library is my biggest hit every year.
 - We have a local ghost hunting group called Ghost S.O.S. so they come and bring in all their equipment for the teens to use. We hold the program after the library is closed and 90% of the lights are off in the building. We have one adult staff member with each group of teens as they travel through the library. The teens are encouraged to take tons of pictures and review them for orbs.
- Teen Escape Room-
 - Library scavenger hunt themed (we actually had to turn some people away from this one.)
 - Last year we held a zombie escape room at the end of October. The teens asked me to do it again with a different theme.
 - Harry Potter Themed - there are several versions available to download or to research by searching the Teen Services Underground Facebook page (that's where I got mine).
- Blacklight party (rent the lights - get LED kind if you can, they are easiest to move and don't get hot); decorate with neon poster Zombie Night board, get neon face paint, neon pictionary (that was another librarian's idea), butcher paper where they can draw with highlighters, glow bowl with bottles filled with glow-stick mixture; glow twister (paint an old twister board with neon paint)
- - Play Humans Vs. Zombies (<https://humansvszombies.org/> - I had to adapt it to our location and event time. I supplied bandanas. Anything they bring including nerf guns and ammo are their responsibility to keep track of.)
 - Watch a Zombie Movie & order pizza (Warm Bodies and World War Z have been favorites.

Games

- Video Game Tournament
 - We had great success with Super Smash Brothers tournaments on our old Wii; I bought a new Switch and the numbers have dropped off, but I anticipate improved numbers as kids become more familiar with the games. We have been hosting video game free play days this summer to give people an opportunity to play our newest games.
- Jeopardy competition
 - planned and executed by our Advisory Board
- Music Themed Escape Room - Clues based on songs, music videos, sheet music, on different formats. This program has been uploaded and posted on the Teen Services Underground Facebook Page
- Nerf Wars
 - so big we have divided them into age groups—grades 4-7 (tween) and 8-12 (teen). We categorize them as younger and older.
 - They consistently draw 30-60 kids.
 - We run them quarterly on Fridays after hours.
 - The year the last Hunger Games movie came out we hosted a Hunger Games Nerf event outdoors, and the kids are still talking about it. It drew about 70 teens. I may pull that one out again this year. It seems that whatever I do at the end of October brings teens in in droves.
- Monopoly Tournament.
 - Myself alongside veteran Monopoly teen players coach other teens how to play Monopoly with official game board rules, no house rules. Every summer we have Monopoly tournaments and they are a great hit!

Arts and Crafts

- Spa Night-
 - they could make their own lotions, bath bombs, etc and we had a nail station where they could paint their nails.
- [Book Hedgehog craft](#): I keep one on my desk and people always ask about it so I host it each year.
- [Candle Art Transfer](#): dollar store candles and tissue paper. Did it around mother's day for an easy cheap gift.
- Slime-Making Night
 - Pretty self-explanatory. We had ingredients laid out for making different types of slime on different tables and staff + teen volunteers to help show everyone how to use them. The tables and floor were covered with old newspapers, which was good because it was very messy. Over 100 people showed up!
 - Necessary items: old newspapers, plastic cups (to hold each kid's slime ingredients), stirrers, activator of your choice (saline solution, borax powder, liquid starch, etc.), Elmer's glue, shaving cream, water beads, glitter, food dyes, and so on.
- Rock Painting
 - We had samples that our staff had painted and pictures from the Internet out on tables to give the kids inspiration.
 - Necessary items: rocks, paint, paint brushes, modge podge, hair blow-dryer (to speed up paint drying process), acrylic finishing spray, cups of water for cleaning paint brushes, old newspapers for covering tables, paper plates for rocks.
- Perler Beading

- Only teens were allowed to handle the hot irons by themselves, younger kids had to wait for a staff member, caretaker, or older sibling's assistance.
 - Necessary items: Perler beads (pre-sorted by colors for ease of use), perler bead pegboards, irons, parchment paper, paper plates, and printed patterns and samples for inspiration.
- DIY Zen Garden: cigar boxes, sand, rocks, succulents or fake aquarium plants, done!
- Holiday Ugly Sweater Event (I bought the sweaters at thrift and dollar store decorations)

School and Stress

- Test or college prep
 - Always a favorite in our area
 - We usually offer at least one event per session.
- Paws to Destress therapy dog program - local volunteers with therapy dogs came to visit for after school hours at the end of the school year