



Youth Volunteers at Your Library

Engaging Youth in Your Library

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Thank you,

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HeartWood
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Youth Development*



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Introduction

About this Handbook

“Youth Volunteers at Your Library” was brought into being by the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative (CVI). The information in this resource is the result of a coaching project and a research study that supported and explored public libraries as they shift their culture to meaningfully engage young people as volunteers. We hope this handbook will act as both a resource for libraries who are interested in learning the benefits and challenges of youth inclusion and as a guide for library systems that want to actively explore the process of including youth as volunteers. The handbook is divided into two sections: the first section, “Food for Thought,” focuses on theory while the second section, “Tools for Action,” highlights the practical aspects of engaging youth. We feel that it is essential to develop a firm understanding of the language, philosophy and theory of youth inclusion before moving into its practical application.

How This Handbook Was Developed

This handbook was shaped by HeartWood’s experience and research in community youth development. It draws on local observations from the current CVI project, individual and focus group interviews within the Halifax Public Library (HPL) system, consultations with library systems across Canada and recent research related to youth inclusion and the best teen services practices in North American libraries.

Background to this Project

In 2001, the Government of Canada created the five-year Canadian Volunteerism Initiative. The goals of CVI are to:

- encourage Canadians to volunteer with organizations,
- improve the capacity of organizations to involve volunteers and
- enhance the experience of volunteering.

Volunteer Canada and Imagine Canada were chosen to deliver CVI. They have created 3 national centres:

1. Community Support Centre (Volunteer Canada)
2. Information, Capacity Building, and Awareness (Volunteer Canada)
3. Knowledge Development (Imagine Canada)

(<http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/canvol-init.php>, retrieved January 24, 2006)

Canadian Volunteerism Initiative

For more information about CVI

visit: www.volunteer.ca

HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development

*For more information about HeartWood
visit: www.heartwood.ns.ca*

Halifax Public Libraries

*For more information about the Halifax
Public Libraries
visit: www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca*

The Community Support Centre and HeartWood

As part of CVI, the Community Support Centre develops and tests new and innovative methods for sustaining volunteerism through funding demonstration projects. In 2005, HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development received funding to explore how an organization can shift its operations and services to embrace meaningful contributions by youth volunteers. This project focused on a partnership between HeartWood and the Halifax Public Libraries.

HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development

Established in 1989, HeartWood's vision is for meaningful youth participation in building healthy communities. HeartWood's mission is to work with youth to develop their skills and confidence as community builders, and trains and supports adults, young adults and agencies in the skills and tools required to support meaningful youth participation in building healthy communities. HeartWood's work has evolved to include organizational development, youth leadership development, consultations, and research at the local and national level. HeartWood collaborates with community leaders, private citizens, agencies, groups and all levels of government to build on and strengthen their efforts to promote and support community-based youth development.

The Halifax Public Libraries (HPL)

The Halifax Public Libraries' mission is to be the life-long learning centre of the community and the place people turn to for the discovery of ideas, the joy of reading and the power of information. The HPL was created in 1996 as the libraries in the City of Halifax, Halifax County and Dartmouth merged. The HPL system consists of 14 permanent and two mobile branches. It serves a population of 359,183 individuals dispersed over 5,889 square kilometers. In 2005,

Section 1: Food for Thought

Youth Engagement Becomes a Library Priority: HeartWood partners with the Halifax Public Libraries

“We have always recognized that young adults have fallen off the plate to some extent... This new teen services direction is a result of recognizing that some of the issues we were having were things that we could do something about... we needed to work harder to make the library welcoming, we need to think more as a staff about our own actions and reactions, and we needed to create options and opportunities for young people so that they would be engaged.” - HPL personnel (2006)

The creation of the Halifax Public Libraries Teen Service Report captures the movement of the HPL to prioritize youth: “The Halifax Public Libraries has a strong history of providing responsive and high quality library services and programs to rural and urban communities. In the past, however, the emphasis of service development and resource allocation had focused primarily on children and adults, with limited attention being given to the unique needs of teens. Recognizing the importance of serving youth, the gaps in current services and the increasingly evident need to address youth development and youth issues in the branches, the HPL reallocated resources to create a Teen Services Resource Manager (January 2005), Teen Services Library Assistant (March 2005) and a Teen Services Team (April 2005)” (Hodgins & Dahl, 2005, edited p.1).

“While youth were identified as an under-served population, the library also recognized that some branches were heavily utilized by “under-served” or “at risk” youth who lacked many of the resources, opportunities and supports for positive youth development and contribute to healthy individuals and communities. The HPL made these young people their first priority and decided to work more thoughtfully to engage both this population and their peers who were not currently being served by the library.” (Hodgins & Dahl, 2005, edited p .1).

Through the support of CVI, HeartWood partnered with the HPL in June 2005 to explore volunteerism as a means to engage youth within the library system. HeartWood worked at 2 levels: with a specific rural branch and with the wider HPL system. HeartWood worked directly with the Sheet Harbour Library branch to initiate the Leading Readers pilot project: coaching and supporting library staff to work collaboratively with youth to develop and implement a program that pairs youth volunteers who mentor children to increase their reading capacity. HeartWood also worked on a broader scale with the HPL system: supporting individuals on the Teen Services Team and conducting youth engagement workshops with managers, supervisors and librarians.

*For this project “youth” refers to the ages between 13 - 18.

What is Youth Inclusion?

“Involving young people in an organization at every step... making them feel important and valued in an organization and that their voice really matters.”

- HPL personnel (2005)

“Bringing youth into the planning and implementation stages of library services and programs.”

- HPL personnel (2006)

“Young people being engaged and involved in activities and providing direction in terms of what they are interested in, what their needs are...”

- HPL personnel (2006)

“[Youth inclusion] for the library is about creating opportunities for youth to build relationships with staff... and to be meaningfully involved.”

- HPL personnel (2006)

“The meaningful involvement of youth in the planning, decision-making, and program delivery of important parts of our society – our governments, our organizations, and our communities (Siegbahn Warner, Gilbert, 2002, p.2)

Why are libraries engaging youth as volunteers?

"We have a lot to learn from youth."

- HPL personnel (2006)

"The youth's energy is so contagious."

- HPL personnel (2006)

"Youth inclusion creates opportunities for everyone... [staff] will become much more effective in everything that they do."

- HPL personnel (2006)

"...the workshop re-invigorated the board and has the whole organization looking at our role with respect to youth in a new light!"

- HPL personnel (2005)

"...the real motivating factor is that young people in the community are looking for recreational and volunteer opportunities, and many people in the area could benefit from the boost of encouragement that a teen reading coach can provide."

- HPL personnel (2006)

The Benefits of Engaging Youth as Volunteers

Including youth as volunteers has traditionally been seen as positively affecting the young people involved. While this is indeed the case, an increasing number of organizations has started to recognize the powerful impact of meaningful youth engagement on the organization as a whole (Camino, 2000; Hughes & Curran, 2000; Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes & Calvert, 2000). One HPL resource manager stated:

"We are just realizing how much the library and community have to gain from youth involvement. It is not just that we have things to give, we also have so much to gain."

Youth engagement in the library system is seen to have positive effects that extend far beyond the individual youth volunteer and library:

"The Sheet Harbour community's impression of their library is changing just by starting the Leading Readers [Program]. Parents are all a-buzz! The school has never been so excited! It wouldn't be this way if it wasn't for the youth volunteers who are giving their time and talents to the program, and making this new initiative possible.... It's great for the children, the youth, the library and the community!"

Meaningful youth engagement is seen by some as a means to reenergize and revitalize their library. As libraries start to engage youth as volunteers, they often become more:

- **Action Oriented** – “knowing that it is an accepted approach to just go out and try something different and move beyond the traditional service... inspired some of the staff.” Similarly, Tolman and (2001) has stated that engaging youth, often eager to try things and unafraid to work in a changing environment, creates a work atmosphere that encourages creativity, innovation, energy and new knowledge.
- **Empowering Culture** – “In our planning meetings, the youth tell me exactly what they think about what went well and what was not so good. They aren't shy to share at all.” When an organization goes beyond instructing youth volunteers to creating real responsibility and allowing youth to demonstrate their skills and leadership, a sense of freedom, responsibility and ownership among the youth occurs (Van Wagner & Langlois, 2004). At the same time that youth volunteers are becoming empowered, the organization increases its capacity to trust, listen and communicate.
- **Relationship Oriented** – Youth-adult partnerships are the foundation of a successful plan to engage youth as volunteers (Tolman et al, 2001). One library staff spoke of how important it was to have youth volunteers included in their training session. Among the benefits she noted were the creation of stronger relationships between youth and staff and renewed commitment and excitement among staff as the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of the youth volunteers was highlighted.
- **Values Driven** – Youth's passionate energy can foster a sense of community as youth volunteers bring people together around renewed vision.

Benefits of Youth Volunteers in Libraries

Benefits to Youth

- Increased awareness and knowledge of library services and resources
- Develop new skills
- Increased employability
- Recognized by the library and community
- Develop a sense of belonging in library and community
- Enhanced self-confidence
- Meaningfully engaged
- Develop new relationships
- Enhanced interpersonal and communication skills
- Promote positive image of youth in community
- Increase youth participation in community

Benefits to Library

- Improved literacy and enhanced statistics through increase in library use
- Better prepared to deal with youth “issues”
- Awareness of trends = ability to remain relevant
- Openness to new ideas
- Assistance with program and service development, promotion and implementation
- Develop possible future staff
- Increased energy and enjoyment
- “Action-oriented” approach
- Improved connections with other youth-service providers and community members
- Enhanced interpersonal skills
- Promote positive image of library

Benefits to Community

- Motivated and inspired by youth leaders
- Provided additional services and supports through youth volunteers
- Promotion of lifelong active citizenship
- Increased positive behaviour among youth
- Increased involvement of additional leaders and key partnerships in youth development as libraries engage youth
- Increased awareness of youth skills and abilities
- Support for parents
- Support for teachers and schools
- Improved youth and community services through increased partnerships

Based on interviews with HPL personnel (December, 2005 – January, 2006) and *New on the Shelf: Teens in Library* (2004)

Fiction and Fact:

(adapted from Chelton as cited by Cart, 2004)

Fiction #1:

Adolescence is a time of tumultuous upheaval, which must, at all costs, be kept under control.

Fact #1:

Adolescents should not be controlled, but supported, as they move toward a more mature sense of identity and purpose.

Fiction #2:

Adolescents are children.

Fact #2:

Adolescents differ both cognitively and biologically from children. "Treating adolescents like children in library service interactions is a foolproof way to make them avoid the place in the future" (Chelton, 2001).

Fiction #3:

Adolescents are a homogeneous group.

Fact #3:

Adolescents' needs, desires, interests and passions differ as much as any other group of individuals.

Fiction #4:

Adolescents and adults suffer from a generation gap.

Fact #4:

Research suggests that the one thing young adults say they want most is the presence of a caring adult in their lives.

Youth Development and Libraries

A National Movement: Libraries as opportunities for youth development

To engage youth as volunteers, libraries need to understand and support the unique needs of young people. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (as cited by Cart, 2004) identified the following 8 developmental needs of adolescents:

1. To find a valued place in a constructive group
2. To learn how to form close, durable human relationships
3. To feel a sense of worth as a person
4. To achieve a reliable basis for making informed choices
5. To know how to use the support systems available to them
6. To express constructive curiosity and exploratory behavior
7. To find ways of being useful to others
8. To believe in a promising future with real opportunities

An increased understanding of these development needs will enable libraries to offer support and volunteer opportunities that encourage young people's meaningful involvement. By involving youth as volunteers, the library becomes an ideal organization to help youth meet their developmental needs. Michael Cart (2004) stated that a library that views its operations and services as opportunities for youth development will better serve the needs of young people and the growing demand of the library as a community gathering place.

Libraries increasingly recognize the importance of investing in youth and have found multiple innovative ways to engage youth, including the:

- creation of youth advisory groups, or other means to involve youth in significant decision-making;
- utilization of youth volunteers in the creation, development and delivery of meaningful and relevant programs, services and collections; and
- promotion of community partnerships.

Through these and other similar efforts, libraries are enabled to develop relationships with youth that foster their learning, social development and ability to make meaningful contributions.

The Shifting Organizational Culture of Libraries

Across North America, the organizational culture of libraries has shifted in significant ways as they engage youth as volunteers (Hodgins & Dahl, 2005). Within the HPL system, the traditional notion of a library as a quiet refuge that provides information and resources is shifting to that of an organization that also strives to meet the varied and multiple needs of the community.

A New Approach to Teen Services

As the library's organizational culture shifts to become increasingly youth inclusive, changes can be observed in its approach to teen services. This new approach focuses on:

- **Strengthening Assets** – young people start to be seen as resources or problem solvers, rather than issues or problems. “It was not just that youth were problems; that they needed to be kicked out of our buildings. It was that we needed to work harder to make the library welcoming, we needed to think more as a staff about our own actions and reactions, and we needed to create options and opportunities for young people so that they would be engaged” (HPL Personnel, 2006).
- **Cooperation** – opportunities to partner and cooperate with youth serving organizations, community networks and youth are pursued.
- **Relationship-building** – building relationships and working collaboratively with youth begins to take precedence over providing services and creating programs. “Fundamentally, I think that in order to [offer great programs] we need to have relationships with kids, we need to know who they are, and what they are interested in, and where they are coming from and why they are there...and then you can build from there” (HPL Personnel, 2005).
- **Formal Youth Voice** - teen advisory boards, youth councils and youth action teams are created as vehicles to meet the needs of youth and to serve the mission of the library.
- **Active Involvement of All** – Peter Benson (2005) a leader in the youth engagement field stated “If you can breathe, you are on the team.” This implies that healthy youth development should not be left to the “experts,” but that everyone can be involved. “There are different players across the library staff who will lead the way... It could be the person shelving books on the floor or dealing with security or circulation -- anyone who is receptive and youth friendly and who sees the possibilities and gets excited about them” (HPL Personnel, 2006).

“Positive Youth Development...”

is an approach toward all youth that builds on their assets and their potential and helps counter the problems that may affect them.

Young people are far more likely to succeed if they are active participants in decision-making that affects their lives and their communities.”

- US Department of Health and Human Services (2002)

Section 2: Tools for Action

Foundations for Youth Engagement:

1. *Community Youth Development Framework*
2. *Youth Inclusion Spectrum*

Tools to Engage Youth Volunteers

Based on 17 years of practical experience and research, HeartWood has developed the Community Youth Development (CYD) Framework and Youth Inclusion Spectrum as tools to better understand youth engagement. While the CYD Framework identifies the ingredients and resources at the core of youth and community development, the Youth Inclusion Spectrum identifies the multitude of possibilities for youth engagement. These tools were used by HeartWood as a foundation for the HPL system as it sought to engage youth volunteers. Participants in the HeartWood training sessions stated:

“The HeartWood training has been absolutely great... not only just [for] internal skill development but also because it really is providing us with the language to express our philosophy - it legitimizes our philosophy within the library system – [HeartWood provides us with] a language to express ourselves when we are working with outside agencies and organizations.”

“The kind of structural and attitudinal changes that are required [to increase youth inclusion] will require a re-education of folks at all levels here, and I think HeartWood is best positioned to start us off in the right direction.”

Community Youth Development (CYD) Framework

The CYD Framework depicts the tools and resources necessary to work with young people and communities. The Framework identifies five tools that create a strong foundation when working with youth in the library and other community groups. These five tools, and examples of how they can be applied, are:

1. **Meaningful Contribution:** Providing opportunities for youth to take actions that meet genuine needs. In the Leading Readers Program, the youth are not only meeting their graduation requirement to fulfill community volunteer hours, but are also encouraging and motivating children to read.
2. **Adventuresome Learning:** Providing opportunities for youth to participate in engaging, real-life experiences that challenge them to step outside their comfort zones to learn and grow e.g. - The experience of one Leading Readers volunteer has encouraged her to learn more about and to practice, supporting children with Attention Deficit Disorder.
3. **Peer Support:** Creating an atmosphere that fosters a strong peer team in which individuals feel connected, appreciated and supported. The Library supports the Leading Reader volunteers by creating an environment for hanging out, getting to know each other and having fun. The volunteers participate in team building training sessions as well as regular planning and debriefing meetings. The volunteers will also be recognized in an end-of-program celebration. These efforts help to ensure that a strong peer team is formed.
4. **Youth-Adult Partnerships:** Providing opportunities for youth and adults to develop relationships of mutual caring and respect through which they may feel inspired, guided and supported. For those staff intimately involved in the Leading Readers Program, the honesty and openness of the youth volunteers' feedback is encouraging. In addition to the value of youth input, their openness also signifies a high level of comfort and ease in their relationship with staff.
5. **Empowering Culture:** Providing opportunities for youth to initiate, commit, plan and choose paths to work collaboratively with their peers and community. Leading Readers volunteers meet both before and after each session to plan, problem-solve and make decisions. This provides opportunities for input and for their voices to be heard. The library is approaching this program as an in-road for increased youth involvement. Sheet Harbour library has not only experienced an increase in the usage of the library by youth volunteers and youth volunteers have become involved in implementing other activities and offering ideas for what the library could do next.

Although Leading Readers was highlighted as an example, if adapted in response to local abilities, needs and circumstances, these ingredients can be used by any library to engage youth volunteers if adapted in response to local abilities, needs and circumstances.

CYD Framework

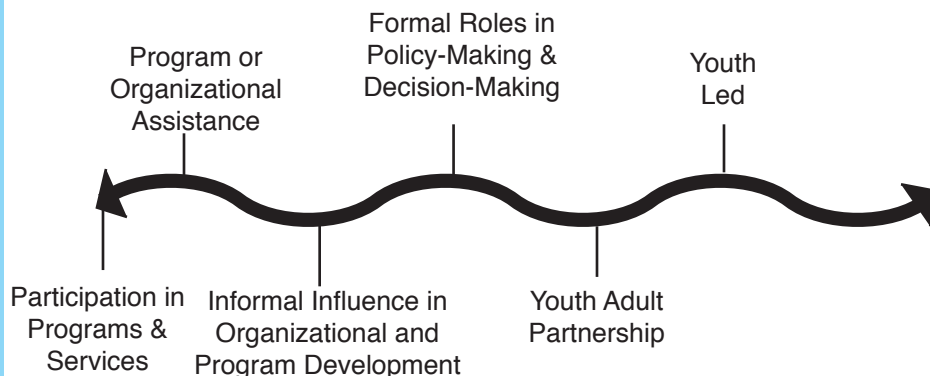
For more information on HeartWood's CYD Framework see Appendix A.

HeartWood's Youth Engagement Spectrum

For more information on HeartWood's Youth Engagement Spectrum see Appendix B.

Youth Engagement Spectrum

The Youth Engagement Spectrum depicts the multiple ways in which young people can be involved in an organization. The range of possibilities for youth engagement extends from Program Participation to Youth Led projects. The Youth Engagement Spectrum can be used as a map: not only displaying the vastness of possibilities, but also allowing a library to discover where it is currently located and plan where it might go. At any given time, a library may be engaging youth on a number of levels or not at all. As experience and confidence in involving young people is gained, it is likely the level of youth engagement within the library will increase. Further increasing the ease of including youth in the library is the parallel development of the youth's confidence, leadership skills and decision-making abilities.



When using the spectrum, it is essential to remember that there is no right or wrong place to enter the spectrum; each library must determine the level of youth engagement appropriate for them. To create deeper experiences, a library can move along the spectrum. To move along the spectrum a library will need to adapt and use the five tools of youth engagement (see the Community Youth Development Framework).

The following statements highlight both an awareness of the different levels of youth inclusion and the need to ensure that libraries are engaging youth in ways that are most appropriate to them at any given time:

"I don't even know what I think about the level of youth involvement at the board level or the policy stuff.... We are aware that that question is there but right now we are trying to focus on getting something in place so that maybe we could build towards that."

- HPL Personnel (2005)

"The library was trying to pilot a youth advisory council... [but] I realized very quickly that the system isn't ready... we are not in a place to move that forward. It is a goal... but I put it on hold for now because [the library] is not there yet.... the Halifax North [branch] potentially could pilot a youth advisory committee... they are probably the closest out of all of the branches."

- HPL Personnel (2005)

Steps for Libraries to Shift Toward Youth Inclusion

While the process of engaging youth volunteers is exciting, it often involves a big shift for a library. The assistance of an external organization with expertise in youth engagement and organizational change can help to ensure success. For the HPL system, the support from HeartWood was central to moving forward. HeartWood's approach to assisting the library shift toward youth inclusion brought them through multiple steps, including:

Step 1: Assess Your Library

Organizational Assessment

It is important to start by assessing the library's overall health. The health of your library includes factors such as staff satisfaction, access to resources and relationships between staff and management. These indicators will help you determine whether it is time to take on innovative or new projects such as including young people. This initial assessment could result in reallocating resources to more accurately reflect staff energy or stopping an existing activity to create room for new projects.

To assess the readiness of your library involves honest conversation some example questions are:

- What skills and attributes do we need as a library?
- What current services are creating excitement among library staff? Among patrons?
- What or who are the sustainable sources of energy?
- What internal and external resources exist to support our library?
- What current projects or activities does the library need to stop doing?

Assessing your library's health will help you develop an understanding of why and how youth can meaningfully contribute to the library. It can help avoid a situation in which youth engagement is based on the vague notion that it is "the right thing to do." The careful planning and thought required was emphasized by one HPL manager who said "We were not willing to just jump onto the bandwagon when we were not sure that this was the right bandwagon to be on." It is the meaningful engagement of youth that can encourage innovative thinking and new learning within the library (Robertson, 1997). And meaningfully engaging youth requires planning, resources, enthusiasm and time.

Youth Inclusion Assessment Tool

After your library has explored its organizational health, HeartWood's "Are you Ready?" self-assessment tool is a good place to start exploring your readiness to engage youth volunteers. This quick assessment identifies underlying desires and structures that could support the inclusion of youth volunteers. You may realize that your library will need to make some changes in how it addresses youth needs or that your library has many of the necessary policies in place to support young people. Having library personnel participate in this self-assessment not only provides insights into the library's readiness, but also introduces the idea of youth engagement to staff. Within the HPL system, this type of assessment helped the library to discover that it was essential to offer staff professional development training around youth inclusion and to pilot projects in those branches where support existed.

Assistance from those experienced in youth engagement and organizational development is vital:

"It is groups like HeartWood... that will help reinforce our recommended approach."

- HPL Personnel (2006)

"HeartWood's partnership has helped to give us a framework to work [with]."

- HPL Personnel (2005)

"It is vital to get people in place who have an understanding of what youth inclusion means... our connection with HeartWood [got us] up to speed on that very early in our process."

- HPL Personnel (2005)

"HeartWood's Are You Ready? survey showed that... we do not yet have the training or structures in place to support youth involvement and volunteerism in the library."

- Hodgins & Dahl (2005)

The "Are You Ready?" Self-Assessment Tool will provide insight into the:

- *Library's Readiness to Engage in Youth Inclusion*
- *Library Personnel's Attitude, Behaviors and Commitment*
- *Library Structures*
- *Support and Training Required*

See Appendix C for the complete "Are You Ready?" Self-Assessment Tool

Start with Identifying Already Existing Resources:

“There are different players across the library staff who will lead the way, and they may not necessarily be the managers. It could be... anyone who is receptive and youth friendly and who sees the possibilities and gets excited about them. I think there are people lurking who will really be fired up and mobilized by the direction we’re moving in with youth development.”

- HPL Personnel (2006)

“I am starting to talk less about staff training and more about staff development – recognizing that we all bring things to the table and that we all have a lot to learn.”

- HPL Personnel (2006)

“The library attracts so many amazing people! You just never know who will be working here.”

- HPL Personnel (2006)

Step 2: Identify and Build on Strengths

Using an appreciative approach when involving youth volunteers can help a library focus on strengths, potential and possibilities. To use this approach, a library starts by identifying the resources currently available within the library, including knowledge and life experience. After identifying these resources, the library then explores ways to build on and strengthen them. This results in the library using existing resources, assets and skills to create solutions before seeking additional resources or relying on outside “expertise” to fix problems (Ure, 2005).

An appreciative approach means:

- Seeing the library with fresh eyes
- Reflecting on what works well
- Considering how something could happen
- Discovering available assets that are un- or under-utilized
- Realizing that everyone has something to offer
- Creating a vision for the library
- Seeking solutions, assets and strengths

Some starting questions you may want to ask are:

- How is the library already engaging youth?
- Why are young people coming to the library?
- What is my library’s approach to youth development?

An appreciative approach does not ignore problems. One of the main contributing factors to the HPL system’s movement toward youth inclusion was the challenges some branches were experiencing with young people. Rather than focusing on these challenges, however, HeartWood encouraged and supported the HPL discover and build on the assets that young people were bringing to the library.

The following is a poignant example of how one library branch used the appreciative approach to be proactive in their interactions with youth:

A group of youth was using the entryway and parking lot outside a library to skateboard. Although the library staff was worried about the safety of both the youth and other patrons, they decided to refrain from getting angry and reporting these youth to mall security. Instead, they reflected on why youth were using this area to skateboard and how they could engage the youth in creating a mutually beneficial alternative. Upon learning that the youth used this area because there was no other place to skateboard, the library decided to support these youth to create a coalition to advocate for a community skate park. The library is currently assisting this group by providing a meeting space and reaching out to other community members to turn the “problem” of skateboarders into an opportunity for youth leadership and development. - HPL Personnel (2006)

This example clearly demonstrates that working with an appreciative approach enables a library to work collaboratively to create innovative solutions that uses the skills, knowledge and expertise of those involved.

Step 3: Trying New Things

Libraries sometimes need to give themselves permission to step outside of tradition to explore and discover new things. Library staff are often the first to note that “change will be challenging” (HPL Personnel, 2005). Recognizing this challenge does not mean that library staff are unwilling to try new things. Those willing to push the boundaries and step outside their comfort zone realize that this is how confidence is built, new discoveries are made and opportunities for learning and personal growth occur. “[The idea to] try something different and move beyond the traditional service... inspired some of the staff people to develop more close and informal relationships with young people” (HPL Personnel, 2006).

Starting Small

It is common for both individuals and organizations to revert back to their comfort zone when things appear too challenging. We do this because within the familiarity of the comfort zone, things are safe and easy. For libraries new to youth inclusion, it may be important to start small: building relationships, smiling and learning youth’s names. For some staff, learning that respecting youth and showing a genuine interest in their lives was the most important starting point, helped to turn youth engagement from “Mount Everest... to a little five minute walk!” Starting with small steps allows the comfort and confidence levels of staff to increase over time, slowly expanding their comfort zone. Through starting small and piloting new programs, libraries feel that they are given the freedom to view mistakes as learning opportunities and to adapt their programs accordingly.

The Sheet Harbour Library recently initiated the Leading Readers Program, a youth volunteer opportunity pairing teen reading coaches with younger children. The program was initiated upon recognition that youth were underserved by the library, looking for recreational and volunteer opportunities and able to provide young children with encouragement as reading coaches. Still in its initial stages, Leading Readers has already met with a great deal of success: highly dedicated volunteers; enthusiastic and supportive parents, teachers and library staff; an improved image of the library in the community; a waiting list for the next program; and the first intentional engagement of youth within the library. One HPL staff stated that “Leading Readers is forcing the staff to look at young people in a different way and to start building those relationships. And although they may not always have the skills and the confidence, they are interested, want to engage with young people and have a reason to do it.” The staff views this pilot as an opportunity to try something new, engage youth and bring energy into the branch. There is already discussion of sharing the Leading Readers Program as a possible regional direction for other branches to consider, as well as looking at how young people can be involved in other aspects of the library.

Change is Difficult

“It’s going to take time, it’s going to take persistence and it’s going to require an attitude shift. It is easy to write down but it is really hard to accomplish.”

- HPL Personnel (2006)

“...for some people it was... scary because [youth inclusion] was really leaving the traditional library model and that was a very comfortable zone for a lot of people.”

- HPL Personnel (2006)

Helpful Reminders:

“You have to go and take one step at a time.”

- HPL Personnel (2006)

“The first time you try anything new will be the worst you’ll ever be at it. You will get better with each try.”

- Mike Haynes, paraplegic athlete and manager of Rehabilitation Services at the St. David’s Hospital Wheelchair Fitness Program

Evaluating Library Services to Youth:

1. *Qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools should be utilized to examine the impact of library services and programs on youth.*

2. *Process evaluations, which help to improve programs as they are implemented, should be considered. Gathering process data and providing feedback to help solve problems along the way is especially important when piloting new programs. It also helps to ensure that the learning that takes place during the process of engaging youth is valued and seen as being as important as the final event or product.*

Step 4: Evaluating

Similar to other organizations, libraries recognize the importance of evaluation in understanding the effectiveness of their work, improving programs and generating knowledge. Evaluation is a learning and skill building process that can enable youth and librarians to work together more effectively in creating locally relevant library programs and services. It is also recognized that evaluation is essential to acquiring additional funding and support.

Traditional forms of evaluation within the library system are quantitative, based on numbers and statistics. Libraries find it useful to know the number of patrons who participate in their programs and how frequently their collections are utilized. While quantitative data can tell us the number of youth volunteers in the library and their total volunteer hours, it fails to capture the experience and value of involving youth volunteers. It doesn't answer the questions: How do youth benefit as volunteers? How does the library benefit from youth volunteers? How can youth's skills, knowledge and expertise be better utilized?

Library staff increasingly recognizes that quantitative, or numeric, data does not tell the entire story:

"In anything we do, there will be really valuable lessons learned, and outcomes that may be positive even if they are not the traditional things we measure. We are... looking at more qualitative evaluation and thinking about how that can happen... [our evaluators need to] look at things in a different way and measure success more holistically."
- HPL Personnel (2006)

Involving youth volunteers focuses on building quality relationships and providing opportunities for empowering experiences. Given the qualitative nature of this information, as well as the time it takes for the effects to be felt, the library's traditional forms of evaluation are inadequate. It is, therefore, important that libraries develop and invest in recording and documenting qualitative data.

Evaluation is an excellent opportunity for involving young people. Youth In Focus, an organization that specializes in youth-led evaluation, states that "youth-led evaluation empowers young people by providing them with the tools to develop and validate knowledge and to direct the development of the programs and policies designed to serve their needs" (London et al, 2003, p.10). One HPL branch is in the process of developing a youth DVD project. The project would involve a group of teens that would learn film-making skills to create a DVD. The DVD would provide insight into young people's perceptions of the library as well as act as an opportunity for youth development and serve the evaluation needs of the library. This type of evaluation is a powerful complement to traditional evaluation methods.

Libraries could also start by collecting stories, quotes and photographs for use in evaluation. This type of data can help to "build awareness, educate, explain, guide or advise, give meaning, bear witness, provide hope, build team or community, influence, inspire and motivate" (Community Foundations of Canada, 2002). See Appendix D for a collection of success stories from the Leading Readers Program in Sheet Harbour. These stories are inspiring as well as act as It is essential that libraries develop evaluation plans and tools that meet the needs of their local branch.

Challenges and Barriers to Youth Inclusion

Within the HPL system, the library is shifting toward becoming an organization that strives to meet the multiple and varied needs of their patrons and community. This change in organizational culture has met with staff reactions ranging from enthusiasm to resistance. Given the vast differences between libraries within the HPL system, the shift has been smoother for some libraries than for others:

“Halifax North Library has always been more than just what one would consider to be a traditional library role, it has been the gathering spot for the community, it has been an active partner in community development initiatives.”

“Some staff are completely resistant and don’t understand the importance [of youth inclusion].”

Even the enthusiastic staff, and those who had previously been involved in community youth development work, recognize the numerous challenges involved. Some of the challenges experienced within the HPL library system include:

- **Inadequate resources:** limited resources can prevent action, hamper programs or result in an overburdened staff. It is essential to seek additional support through grants or newly created positions and to be creative in reallocating resources. It is also important to remember that “it doesn’t take much extra... to build relationships with kids.” (HPL Personnel, 2005)
- **Organizational change required:** training and structures to support youth inclusion need to be put in place.
- **Goals and objectives inadequately communicated:** it is difficult to find support when staff is unaware of what is happening. Clear and consistent communication between staff is essential.
- **Staff fears and resistance:** to address staff resistance, it is essential to foster a sense of ownership among staff by communicating youth inclusion messages early on, and providing opportunities for professional development and a safe environment to express concerns and fears.
- **Differing time frames of youth and libraries:** while youth tend to be action-oriented and prefer immediate results, the bureaucratic library structure results in long delays. The library needs new policies and practices that ensure youth are responded to in a timely manner.
- **Inflexibility within the library system:** finding youth-friendly ways to engage youth, seek their input and pay them for their work requires changes in the library’s traditional way of operating.
- **Unclear, or nonexistent, youth-related policies:** there is a need to establish a policy committee to look at youth-specific issues.

Challenges faced by HPL Personnel:

“It is challenging because if all of these branches up and decided they want to work with young people, there just isn’t enough resources within the system to be able to support that to happen.”

- HPL Personnel (2005)

“We, as board members, recognize the need and importance of youth involvement BUT we have been so busy struggling to survive that any proactive activity involving... youth has been impossible to achieve.”

- Pilot Organization Personnel (2005)

“I’m not sure that people are even clear about exactly what it is that we are trying to do, what our goals are, so it is a lot harder for staff to jump on board.”

- HPL Personnel (2005)

“The challenges are resources...not just money but it is also time.”

- HPL Personnel (2006)

“We have space issues in some of our branches.”

- HPL Personnel (2005)

Libraries providing quality services to youth have:

1. *Administrative Support*
2. *Knowledgeable Staff who Respect and Appreciate Youth*
3. *Opportunities for Youth Inclusion and Development*
4. *Responsive Services, Programs and Collections*
5. *Electronic Resources*
6. *Youth-Friendly Facilities*
7. *Community Partnerships*
8. *Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation Tools*

- *Young Adult Library Services Association*
with *Patrick Jones (2002)*

Best Practices and Next Steps

Libraries across North America are adopting youth inclusive practices and policies. This shift is occurring despite the many challenges involved. Within the HPL system, the Teen Services Team researched and compiled information on the youth inclusion practices and policies of libraries across the continent. Their learnings, and increased understanding of best practices, helped to shape their recommended goals and objectives. The following outlines their recommendations:

Administrative Support:

- Foster a library culture that respects and values youth and that is committed to youth development.
- Reallocate existing resources, and actively investigate additional resources, to support identified youth needs.

Staff Support:

- Have knowledgeable staff that respect and appreciate youth. This should be supported through training and hiring practices.
- Recognize and endorse high quality and responsive service to youth at all levels.

Opportunities for Youth Inclusion and Development:

- Develop formal and informal youth volunteer opportunities.
- Hire local youth whenever possible. This supports youth to gain work experience, develop leadership skills, share insights and experience and make connections between the library and the community.
- Develop strategies to reach out and connect with under-served youth.
- Celebrate and show appreciation for youth contributions and achievements in ways that are valued by youth.
- Provide youth with opportunities to contribute to the library's development of Teen Services.

Responsive Services, Programs and Collections:

- Respond to youth's informational and recreational needs. Where possible, responding with timely action is especially important.
- Involve youth in developing and implementing programs and services.
- Provide library-based programming that meets the developmental needs of youth.

Electronic Resources:

- Build on youth's Information Technology interests and skills by providing them with opportunities to learn more and share their skills with others.
- Establish a youth-oriented area on the library's website. Include youth in its design and development as much as possible.

Youth-Friendly Facilities:

- Involve youth in enhancing or creating their personal space in the library.
- Advocate for library hours that better meet youth needs.

Community Partnerships:

- Partner with other community organizations to support and encourage youth development.
- Promote the library as a key resource for youth: as a service provider and as a source of information about services and programs of interest to youth.

Evaluate:

- Evaluate the library using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Although the Teen Services Team's recommendations have not yet been officially endorsed by the Halifax Public Library system, significant headway has already been made. Within the past year, new teen services positions have been created, resources have been reallocated, staff professional development sessions have been held and many new services and programs have been offered to youth. Some of these programs include open mic nights, computer drop-ins, board game night, young adults knitting club, book clubs, gamerz night, Leading Readers Program, African heritage month events, creative expression contests, Animanga night, braiding hair introductory classes, paper making, improv night and a film making program. Some libraries have already started to consult with youth in regards to their programming: one library held a celebratory Caribbean Christmas Jam through which they obtained youth input on how they would like to be involved with a future library project.

For some library staff, increasing youth inclusion has transformed their library and their work. One staff person stated that "It is like the lights come on at 12:30 when [the youth] come." While the journey ahead may be long, the library has the desire and many bright lights to help guide the way.

"I would really like to pursue connecting young people who have good people skills, but who also have basic IT know-how, with some of our seniors who are facing computers for the first time. I think this is an example of a possible volunteer or work opportunity for teens that would connect them with community in the library setting and help create a positive view of youth."

- HPL Personnel (2006)

"We can be the catalyst, we can call people to the table, and encourage this process and connect people and share resources and information."

- HPL Personnel (2005)

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Additional Resources:

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Ontario Library Association - <http://www.accessola.com>

Voices of Youth Advocates (VOYA) – <http://www.voya.com>

- VOYA is a bimonthly journal addressing librarians, educators, and other professionals who work with young adults. VOYA is the only magazine devoted exclusively to the informational needs of teenagers.

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) – <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/>

Appendix A: Community Youth Development Framework



HeartWood's Community Youth Development Framework

HeartWood has developed a Community Youth Development Framework based on its research into variables that contribute to successful youth engagement. The Framework is intended for application when working with groups of young people, young adults and adults within a given community or organization. The Framework blends youth development and community development, and is designed as a guide to encourage, plan for and support active engagement of youth with their communities and agencies. 'Community' may be defined geographically, or by group, organization, or by a network of shared interest. The Framework is adapted to fit the specific needs or desired outcomes that each community defines.

What are the Tools and Resources for the Community Youth Development Process?

Our experience and research based on working with youth in communities across Nova Scotia identifies five key tools for successful community youth development:

- **Meaningful Contribution:** Taking action to meet a genuine need.
- **Adventuresome Learning:** Engaging, real life experiences that challenge individuals to step outside their comfort zones to learn and grow.
- **Peer Support:** Creating the atmosphere that fosters a strong peer team where individuals feel connected, appreciated and supported by others.
- **Youth-Adult Partnerships:** Gaining inspiration, support and guidance through a relationship of mutual caring and respect.
- **Empowering Culture:** Providing opportunities to initiate, commit, plan and choose paths to work together with peers and the community as active citizens.

Appendix A: Continued

The Community Youth Development Framework also identifies four community resources that are necessary to put the program tools into action. The foremost resource is the untapped potential of engaged youth. However, three other resources are important to engage youth in the community development process:

- **Supportive Adults & Young Adults:** Supportive adults are essential to providing guidance for young people as they develop as a team. They help the young people to contribute to the community and draw on others to assist them.
- **Community Links and Associations:** A network of community leaders is important to facilitate the resources that provide a foundation for the young people to work in supportive teams. This network assists in recruiting and supporting adults and enables positive connections between the youth and other individuals and community groups.
- **Youth Development Training Organization:** There is an important training role for a youth development training organization in terms of helping youth, adults and community associations to understand and effectively use the educational tools, particularly to establish the initial culture that embraces them. Some or all of this expertise may be found within an organization in the community or can be drawn from outside the community on an intermittent basis.

To learn more about how to use a Community Youth Development approach in your work, please contact HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development at:

5663 Cornwallis St., Suite 100
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3K 1B6
Phone: (902) 444-5885
Fax: (902) 444 - 3140
www.heartwood.ns.ca

Appendix B: Youth Engagement Spectrum

Youth Engagement Spectrum

- **Participation in Programs & Services:** Youth participate in programs offered on their behalf by adult-led organizations, for example services to improve their life conditions, to upgrade their skills, have fun, or to gain self-confidence. Examples: Computer class held at Library, participants on a youth exchange program, youth who access an employment or learning resource centre, participants in a recreation program.
- **Program or Organizational Assistance:** Youth volunteers take on specific tasks in the organization in areas such as research, programming, publicity, or fundraising. They are not involved in the core planning processes of the organization but may contribute their ideas informally. Examples: Youth volunteers in Leading Readers Program, fundraising, setting up for an event, photocopying resources, input via suggestion boxes
- **Informal Influence in Organizations & Program Development:** Youth volunteers informally help plan and implement programs and are involved in a range of organizational activities. They have influence as advisors and advocates on various issues. They are not included in the core planning processes of the organization, but they may contribute their ideas via informal discussions, or even impromptu conversations. Examples: youth involved in public education initiatives, young

They may also be consulted by adults in more structured ways (i.e., more formally) to give their input in identifying community problems and potential solutions. As well, they may be asked to participate in the development of policies, programs, and strategies. Examples: youth being consulted - by participating in focus groups, surveys, and forums - regarding youth employment programs, recreation services, and library collections.
- **Formal Roles in Policy-Making Involvement:** Youth participation in core planning processes is viewed not just as an opportunity for their own development, but as a valued contribution to the whole organization. Their input – including their right to vote - is respected on formal decision-making bodies such as Boards and committees. As well, young people may be in staff positions with a high level of authority. Examples: Youth as members of a Board of Directors, young people in senior-level staff positions, youth town councils, an advisory committee at a youth health centre.
- **Youth-Adult Partnership:** Youth are fully integrated into the existing structures of the organization and have an equal share in decision-making. Adults recognize youth volunteers as full partners that share responsibility, authority and accountability in the organization. Examples: An organization in which half of the board members are youth, a community youth centre designed and implemented by adults and youth working as partners
- **Youth-Led:** Young people control the governance and decision-making, and adults, if present, serve only as resource people or advisors. All of the organizational responsibilities—from program creation to finances—are carried out by youth. Examples: Youth-governed drop-in centre, university student union with full student governance

To access more information on the youth engagement spectrum and other HeartWood resources visit:

<http://www.heartwood.ns.ca/toolkit/>

Appendix C: Youth Inclusion Assessment Tool

Youth Inclusion Assessment Tool

Is your organization ready to engage youth as volunteers? These questions will help you assess the organization's openness to the various options for youth inclusion. Evaluate each question below on a scale with a "1" representing "no" and "5" representing "yes". A "3" represents "somewhat". Few organizations will achieve a 90 or more. A score below 50 indicates that there are large challenges for youth inclusion for the organization.

To what extent...

Adventuresome Learning

- Does the organization incorporate youth friendly forms of expression (e.g. music, drama)?
- How informal and youth friendly are meeting structures and processes (e.g. timing, location)?
- Are roles flexible enough to adapt to youth's unique skills and interests?
- Does the organization encourage youth volunteers to take risks and try new things?

Meaningful Contribution

- Are youth volunteers involved in all issues, not just those affecting youth or youth programs?
- Are youth given the support to develop informed opinions on issues outside their experience?
- Does the organization ensure that youth volunteers know they are making a difference?
- Has the organization created policies or amended bylaws to recognize youth volunteers as permanent contributors to the core processes the organization?

Youth Adult Partnerships

- Is a support/mentoring system in place that creates successful youth-adult partnerships?
- Is equal weight given to youth opinions?
- Is there training for adults on understanding young people and being strong allies?
- Is there practical transportation and financial support for youth volunteers?
- Are adult and youth volunteers considered equally important in core processes?

Empowering Culture

- Do young people have equal voting status if volunteering on boards and committees?
- Is the organization willing to develop and invest in the necessary structures and strategies to effectively engage youth as volunteers?
- Are young people included in visible voluntary leadership positions?
- Are youth volunteers seen as essential resources in the governance of this organization?
- Is there an effective replacement process to handle youth turnover while maintaining a strong youth contribution?
- Are youth volunteers asked how the organization can better assist them?
- Are youth volunteers' recommendations taken seriously?

Peer Support

- Is there informal time for networking with other youth volunteers?
- Are youth actively included in informal chats, social gatherings, and conversations?
- Is a youth friendly orientation system in place?
- Is there training and support for young people on speaking up in adult groups?
- Is there understanding that youth volunteers do not represent the voices of all young people?
- Does the organization recruit volunteers in ways that attract a diverse group of young people?

TOTAL SCORE

Appendix C: Continued

The following questions are more open-ended, and will provide a “snapshot” into current methods of engaging youth. Please provide as much detail as you can and use further space if you like.

1. In what ways does your organization incorporate youth-friendly forms of expression (e.g., music, drama, etc)?
2. In what ways does your organization encourage youth volunteers to take healthy risks and try new things?
3. How does the organization ensure that youth volunteers know they are making a difference?
4. What training is done for adults on understanding young people and being strong youth allies?
5. What structures and strategies exist to effectively engage youth as volunteers?
6. How does the organization serve the social development needs of its youth volunteers?

This material is adapted from:

The Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development & The Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat (Youth Services Division, Skills and Learning Branch, Department of Education, Nova Scotia). (2002). *Youth Making A Difference: Including Youth in Organizations and Communities* [Brochure] Halifax: Siegbahn C, Warner A, Gilbert R. And is primarily drawn from HeartWood’s experience and these sources: Norah McClintock (1998). *Youth on Board*, Front & Centre. Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, vol. 5, no. 6., p. 15-17; Susan Wright (2001). *Youth as Decision-Makers: Strategies for Youth Engagement in Governance and Decision-Making in Recreation* (full report). Toronto, Ontario: Laidlaw Foundation and Parks and Recreation Ontario.; Donalee Moulton, Barbara Cottrell & the Mainland South Tenn Health Centre (1999). *The Works: Assessing Youth Involvement in Youth Health Organizations*, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Health Promotions and Programs Branch, Atlantic Region, Health Canada.

Appendix D: Success Stories From Leading Readers

Below are observations made by the manager of the Sheet Harbour Library. She used these “stories” as indicators to evaluate the impact of the Leading Readers program:

- One 5-year-old child who was very shy at the beginning of the program sat with her reading partner during the closing celebration party of Leading Readers and read a “Clifford” beginning reader from start to finish in front of 45 people.
- One boy took pictures of himself and his partner (taken during Leading Readers) to school to show his teacher. He then invited his teacher to the closing party.
- A teacher in attendance at the closing party indicated that one of her students was really excited about the program. She said she had noticed a difference in him since he came to the program. The teacher then took the time to speak to each of the teen volunteers (she had taught most of them in elementary school) and told them what a great thing they are doing and what a great program Leading Readers is.
- Three children performed a puppet show at the closing party. They read from a script and did a great job with voices and actions. It was wonderful for the parents to see how reading can be fun.
- One teen volunteer came to the library on a day when there was no Leading Readers to help with another children’s program. Other volunteers have begun to come to the library more regularly to borrow materials.
- One young girl was excited early in the program just because her teen partner remembered her name. To her, this was just amazing!
- One Leading Reader participant returned to the library outside of the meeting time to locate a book she had read with her reading partner. All the children enjoyed choosing their own materials and learning to use the library with their partners.
- Staff have even begun to think of youth in new ways. The idea of creating a space in the branch for youth as part a new renovation project was proposed by staff at a staff meeting.
- The youth volunteers and the participants planned the closing party with minimal assistance from the staff. The feeling in the room was phenomenal and all I could think was “This is what children’s programs in the library should be like. It doesn’t get any better than this!”
- The second session of Leading Readers is potentially going to being cancelled because upcoming renovations will only allow a shortened time frame. The youth volunteers, however, feel very strongly that they want to do another session even if it is really short. Nothing could better illustrate their dedication to this program than that.

Appendix E: Halifax Public Library Programs

Advertised Teen Programs in HPL

Halifax Public Libraries

Teen Programs

Since September 2005

On Going General Programs

Open Mic

All Ages

Calling all performers! Open Mic is here and WE WANT YOU! Sign up for Open Mic and share a song, a skit, a poem, a dance move, or just come and listen. All performers and non-performers are welcome! A good time is guaranteed! Call the branch for more information or to sign up.

Second Tuesday of the Month @ Sackville

First Wednesday of the Month @ Keshen Goodman

Teen Zone - Computer Drop in Program

Ages 14-18

The ultimate place to be. Join others in our IT Lab, play on the computers, gab with your friends and just relax! Computers are fully equipped for chat, web surf, word processing, email, and more.

Once a Month @ Sackville

Board Game Night

Ages 13-18

Love to play board games? Come join us for an evening full of fun and laughter as we play the night away. Board games, etc will be supplied all you need to do is show up!

Once a Month @ Sackville and CWS

YAK Club (Young Adults Knitting)

Ages 10-18

Need a creative outlet? The YAK Club is in opportunity to hang out with friends, meet new people, and create really cool things. Come join us as we make our way through the world of knitting with good times and good friends!

Every Second Wednesday starting January 25 / 7pm - 8:30pm @ Sackville

Youth in Action

Ages 12-16

Drop by for filmmaking, cooking, dancing, theatre, spoken word, open gym, swimming, babysitter,s training course, and much more! All are welcome! In partnership with Recreation, Tourism & Culture and HeartWood.

Mondays/ 6:30pm-8:20pm @ Dartmouth North

Squaretown Girls, Book Club

Ages 8+

Join us as we discover the joys of reading on every second Friday at 3pm.

Bring your friends and experience the fun of reading together.

Friday Afternoons @ HALIFAX NORTH

Appendix E: Continued

Gamerz Night

Ages 11-18

Calling all computer gamerz! Come in, download all the latest demos, learn new tricks, and teach others. Computers are also fully equipped for chat, web surf, word processing, email, and more.

Every Two weeks @ HN & KG; Once a Month @ SACKVILLE

Leading Readers

Grades P-6 Readers & Grades 9-12 Teen Volunteers

Leading Readers supports the reading development of elementary aged children. It builds their confidence and encourages a love of reading. The program also provides volunteer opportunities for youth in grades 9-12. Above all Leading Readers is about having fun with books!!

Study Hall

All Grades

Do you need a quiet place to do your homework? Would you like help using the library resources? Space and support is available each weekday afternoon. We can help you achieve great things in the classroom, so come on in!

Tuesdays - Fridays / 3pm @ HALIFAX NORTH

On Going Seasonal and Heritage Programs

African Heritage Month Youth Quiz

In an annual tradition that spans twenty years, students from local junior high schools compete in a „Reach for the Top% style quiz that tests each team,s knowledge of Black history and culture in a tournament format. The winning team from the Halifax North Branch quiz challenges the winning team from the Cole Harbour Branch quiz in this battle of intellect and knowledge. Come on out and cheer on your favorite team!

The contenders:

Halifax: Highland Park, Oxford, Rockingstone, St. Patrick,s-Alexandra

Dartmouth: Graham Creighton, John Martin, Ross Road, Sir Robert Borden

Make Yourself Famous

Grades 4-9

Let your imagination soar! Enter your greatest story, best poem, most original song, finest painting, drawing or inventive video camera work, in this annual contest! The deadline for entries is Saturday, January 28, 2006.

HALIFAX NORTH

One Time General Programs

Youth Group

Ages 13 - 18

We need your help! Want to meet other teens and be apart of the library's services and programs? Join us and have your say on our teen programs and special events.

Wednesday, September 21 /7 pm @ Sackville

Animanga Night

Ages 13 - 18

Are you an anime or manga fan? If so, join others who love Japanese entertainment. Chat about your favorites or showcase your own creations while munching on snacks!

Wednesday, October 12 / 7pm @ Sackville

Will2Win

Here,s your chance to meet Will Nijoku and learn about the exciting world of professional basketball!

Thursday, November 17 / 7:30pm @ CWS

Youth Photo Contest

Stop by the Sackville Library for more information about our Youth Photo Contest. Kids 8-12 and 13-18 are invited to send in a favourite photo in a number of different categories. Winners will be chosen by members of the Sackville Photography Club and have their photos displayed during the Library,s Photo Expo in November.

Volunteering...oh the possibilities!

Discover how to seize opportunities, which will help you develop skills and explore your interests and maybe even the world! Join us for an interactive presentation all about VOLUNTEERING!

Tuesday, November 22 / 4-5pm @ Sackville

Snowboarding

Ages 12 - 18

Join Matt Blouin from Proskates (www.proskates.com) as he takes you through the world of snowboarding. Matt will talk about everything from snowboarding gear and safety, to the more extreme sports and competitions. View some videos as Matt answers all your snowboarding questions.

Wednesday, November 30 / 6pm @ Sackville

The Art of Improv

All Ages

Improv is the art of spontaneous acting. It is not only fun and entertaining, but requires quick thinking, problem solving and teamwork. The Sackville High Improv Team has been training and competing in the Canadian Improv Games for the last four years, placing in the top 3 in 2005. Join us as they put on some classic Improv Games as well as an Improv Jam with the audience!

Thursday, January 19 / 7pm @ Sackville

Beautiful Braids!

Ages 12+

„Braid it under, braid it over, braid it upward, braid it down, braid in circles, braid in angles, then you wear it, like a crown% (from Cornrows by Camille Yarborough)

Join two seasoned stylists for a step-by-step introduction to this intricate craft. More experienced braiders will learn tips on advanced design. This program funded by the Community Mobilization Program, Department of Justice

Thursday, January 26/ 7pm @ Halifax North

Word Iz Bond

Ages 12+

Join members of Word Iz Bond for an open stage of poetry and spoken word. Come out and feel the rhythm of the street.

Saturday, February 4/ 2pm @ Halifax North

Appendix E: Continued

Make Films Now!

Ages 12-18

Want to make a film? Make Films Now is a unique program which will introduce you to the world of filmmaking. Participants will get the opportunity to make a short film, learn all about the Super 8 camera and the steps involved in film production. Develop a story, shoot the project, and become a filmmaker all in three hours! A few weeks later, attend your world premiere screening and discussion. This program is co-sponsored by the Halifax Public Libraries and the Atlantic Film-makers Cooperative. To register or for more information please contact the branch.

Tuesday, January 17 / 5-9 pm and Tuesday, February 7 / 6-7 pm @ Spring Garden Road

Let's Get Krump!!

Ages 8+

Krump, a new form of battle-dance originating in the deep south of the United States, is here! Local krump superstars will have the opportunity to show off their moves while teaching step-by-step techniques of this aggressive and visually stunning dance. This workshop is generously funded by the Community Mobilization Project.

Saturday, March 11 / Girls at 1pm; Boys at 3pm @ HALIFAX NORTH

Word Iz Bond Presents...Youth & Adult Poetry SLAM

Rules: Poems need to be original, and can be on any subject and in any style. A poem cannot be longer than 3 minutes or you will get a time penalty. No props, musical instruments or pre-recorded music. Don't bring your book or papers onto the stage. Judges randomly selected from the audience will rate the poets from 0 to 10. You get scores for both content and delivery.

It is acceptable for a poet to incorporate the words, lyrics, or tune of someone else (a practice called „sampling%) in their own work, but of course plagiarism is not acceptable. This program is co-sponsored by the Community Mobilization Program and Heritage Canada. For more information, please call Annette MacIntyre at 490-5724.

Saturday, March 4 / 2pm @ HALIFAX NORTH

Paper Making

Ages 12+

Make your own special paper for envelopes, cards and art projects. Supplies are provided - all you need to bring is your creativity. Don't miss out - register early.

Thursday, April 13 / 6:30 - 7:30 @ CAPTAIN WILLIAM SPRY

Knitting SOS

Age 12-18

Help is here! When your project needs a jump start or you just want to talk, knit and purl, come to the library for this knitting get-together.

Saturday, April 22 / 2:00 @ SPRING GARDEN

The ViewFinders 5 Open Mic Comedy Night for Youth

Young comedians and improvateurs get ready to hit the stage with an original 3-4 minute routine in stand-up, sketch comedy, improv, musical hilarity or impersonations. Space is limited, so please pre-register through the Library or online: <http://www.atlanticfilm.com/view> in March. This event is co-sponsored by The Halifax Comedy Fest and is bound to be funnier than ever!
Wednesday, April 19 / 7pm @ KESHEN GOODMAN

One Time Seasonal and Heritage Programs

Holiday Party

All Ages

Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays and join us for an evening of seasonal music. Curl up with a cup of warm apple cider and other treats as we share some of our favourite holiday tales.

Wednesday, December 14 / 7 pm @ Sackville

A Kwanzaa Family Celebration

All Ages

Habara Gani? What's the news? This traditional greeting for the African-American celebration called Kwanzaa. Join us for a community gathering that will highlight the seven principals of Kwanzaa and feature local entertainment.

Thursday, December 8/ 7pm @ Halifax North

African Heritage Month Amazing Race

Ages 8-12 & 13-15

Join us for a breath taking adventure as we race to discover the wonders of African Heritage. You will be required to figure out clues, solve puzzles, and complete tasks in teams of two. Find a friend and come up with a name for your team. See you at the starting line!

Friday, February 3/ 1pm-2:30pm (ages 8-12); 2:30pm-4pm (ages 13-15) @ Sackville

A Beautiful Hair Affair

Ages 13+

In some African countries, hair has been used to communicate age, social rank, marital status and other forms of social identity. The care and maintenance of Black hair is a daily part of the health regime of African people. Bring a friend/ model and join Michelle Colley, a Master Hair Dresser, as she shares some insights and tips into care for Black hair. To register for this program, please contact the branch.

Sunday, February 26 2:30 pm @ Cole Harbour

NFB Film Club

„Brother 2 Brother%

Ages 12+

Portrays the emotional journey of young black males before, during, and after their encounter with older black mentors at an intense retreat in a secluded setting, focusing on the story of one young participant. 2004 - 40 mins.

Monday, February 13/ 6:30 pm @ Dartmouth North

Spread the Love

Ages 13-18

Valentine,s Day is around the corner! Make a gift for someone special such as a family member, a friend, or yourself. Design your own card, bookmark, photo-frame or make your own creation! Bring your own photos for a personal touch.

Thursday, February 9/ 3pm - 5pm @ Sackville

Colour Blind NFB Youth Film Series

All Ages

Join us as we celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We will be viewing a film about subtle racism and its daily impact on teenagers in a Surrey, BC high school. After the film we will have a brief discussion on the impact of racism in our community.

Tuesday, March 21 / 7pm @ SACKVILLE

March Break Computer Drop-In Program

Ages 13 +

Join other teens in the library's program room to use our wireless computers. Use the computers, gab with your friends and just relax! Computers are equipped for chatting, web surfing, emailing and more.

Thursday, March 16 / 6:30 - 8:30 @ CAPTAIN WILLIAM SPRY

Please Note: All though this is a thorough list it is not an exhaustive list. If you have programs that are not indicated here please let Lorena Pilgrim know.