

Makeover Tips

“What Can I Do Right Now to Improve the Environment for Teens at My Library?”

Points to Consider	Free Ways to Make Your Library More “Teen-Friendly”	Low-Cost Investments for Your Teen Area
<p>Location and Layout Furniture Fixtures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ furniture can be rearranged for a completely new look ✓ unused furniture can be relocated to the teen area from other locations in the library ✓ wall space: add some posters! ✓ signage can dangle from the ceiling ✓ “Gifts In Kind” or “Freecycle.org” — free furniture, etc. available for nonprofits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ reader seats and study tables for group work ✓ comfortable lounge-style seating for socializing ✓ book cases and shelving ✓ spinner racks for paperbacks ✓ table or floor lamps to improve lighting—fun ones add personality to the space! ✓ bulletin board: corkboard tiles or foamboard covered with fabric

Handout developed Kimberly Bolan and Lisa C. Wemett

Presented by Kimberly Bolan, Library Consultant & author of *Teen Spaces: The Step-by-Step Library Makeover* (ALA Editions, 2003)

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<h2>Collection</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ paperback book and comic book exchanges: readers donate books and comics to trade with one another; can be a program event ✓ career and college resources: ask senior high students to donate the college catalogs they receive or email schools to request free catalogs ✓ homework ready-reference resources ✓ collections divided by genres ✓ high-interest materials ✓ student-drawn dust jackets can “refresh” your classic titles (perhaps a contest?) ✓ a book donation drive for new teen titles can be organized by your Teen Council, an older Girl or Boy Scout troop, or a church youth group ✓ donated board games for in-house use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ audiobooks (i.e., books-on-cassette CD) ✓ musical recordings (cassettes, CDs) ✓ videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs ✓ graphic novels and anime collection ✓ magazines just for teens ✓ genre stickers on book spines ✓ dust jackets designed by teens can be reproduced on a color copier; add new Mylar jacket covers to protect the artwork ✓ a public awareness campaign to “adopt a book” could increase monetary donations ✓ items for reluctant or low-literacy readers ✓ popular paperback series and ALA Best Books ✓ college catalog database: send mailing once a year for updated catalogs from state schools
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<p>Displays and Merchandising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ handouts and pamphlets from human services agencies ✓ innovative displays to entice browsers ✓ readers’ advisory lists: post on your web page or recycle a binder filled with collection development articles from <i>Booklist</i>, <i>VOYA</i>, etc. of award-winners, Best Books for Young Adults, booklists from other libraries, ALA lists printed from Internet ✓ identifiable look that says “teens” ✓ face-out merchandising: let the cover art work to your advantage! ✓ materials in attractive condition (collection weeded systematically twice a year) ✓ free posters bound in your magazine subscriptions can be removed to hang for “teen décor” or used as prizes ✓ music promotional posters can be requested from music/entertainment stores and movie posters from the theaters or video stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ rack to hold freebie literature (or get a rack donated) ✓ bookmarks ✓ pathfinders to entire library collection (online or paper versions) ✓ posters of current movie and television stars ✓ posters purchased from ALA or other graphic companies ✓ photos of current music sensations: make a collage; add a display of CDs nearby ✓ readers’ advisory annotated booklists to take ✓ subject divider tabs for readers’ advisory notebook and lists in plastic sleeve protectors will keep it looking new ✓ stackable plastic crates: small, neon colors; will be eye-catching and can feature new paperbacks, CDs, videos, etc. ✓ cardboard book “dumps” can highlight new materials or genre collections
<p>Technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ tech assistants: members of your Teen Council, high school Tech Club, etc. can assist with the library’s web page, computer maintenance, gaming programs, etc. ✓ technology classes e.g., résumé writing, fun web sites, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ computer workstations offering online catalog, research databases, word processing, and Internet access, all on one machine ✓ stereo system or listening station(s): mini music systems are available for \$150 or less ✓ TV, DVD player

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<p>Signage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ signs: computer generated; be creative with color, font, etc.; enlist the creativity and assistance of teens ✓ no jargon: do away with using jargon such as YA, Circ Desk, etc. ✓ “Ask Here” and directional signs not only gives clear idea of where to get help from staff, but also conveys that staff <i>want</i> to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ laminated signs and posters for permanence and a professional look ✓ directional markers ✓ genre collection labels
<p>Staffing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ customer service workshop for staff on working positively with teens ✓ teen/adult committees consisting of adult staff and teenaged employees and/or patrons to address library procedures, policies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ service desk staffed by volunteer “library assistants” (i.e., members of the Teen Council, members of the Junior Friends) ✓ programs designed by teams of teens and adult staff; ask non-youth staff members to offer programs of interest for teen patrons
<p>Youth Involvement</p> <p><i>*See the “Teen Participation” handout for more ideas</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teen Council, Youth Advisory Board, or Junior Friends group ✓ Teen Collection Development Assistants can make suggestions for materials to add to the collections ✓ Building Design Committees should always include teen members ✓ Focus Groups: get teens’ input on how to improve to services, the space, etc. ✓ suggestion box or online suggestion form ✓ artwork from school art department ✓ comment or review sheets in books ✓ teen news bulletin board: volunteer can clip articles from local papers on school sports, youth awards, other articles on teens ✓ school colors used in color scheme ✓ teen reviews of books, videos, etc. on library web page, kept in a notebook, and/or posted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ artwork designed and created by teens ✓ displays and signage designed and made by teens ✓ lighted exhibit cases to feature teens’ collections, hobbies ✓ field trips: take the teen collection development assistants to a bookstore chain to select titles for the collection; take teen Building Design or Focus Group members to bookstores, mall, etc. to get ideas for teen space