Summer Volunteens: The Experience

REPORT CONCERNING THE REORGANIZATION OF THE SUMMER VOLUNTEEN PROGRAM AT THE CROOKED LAKE LIBRARY
UTILIZING THE BELIEVE-IT, BUILD-IT AND YOUTH PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS
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Introduction

Anoka County has a longstanding tradition of providing opportunities for teens to volunteer in the public library during the summer and school year. VolunTeens, as they are called, are viewed as an important component of the summer reading program as they provide assistance to staff at a time when the children’s department is its most active.

In the past, the VolunTeen program, like the library’s adult volunteer program, was viewed as a primarily one-way relationship with the volunteer contributing time and some skill by serving in whatever way the library needed. Not much attention was paid to what teen volunteers derived from the experience. In 2016, the Crooked Lake Library sought to find ways to increase the capacity of staff to build 21st Century skills and job skills in teens by utilizing training and tools. Katlin Heidgerken-Greene completed training on Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) from the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development, and Stacey Hendren completed training on Believe It. Build It. Minnesota’s Guide to Effective Afterschool Practices from Ignite Afterschool. The training undertaken by library staff, as well as a shift in philosophy from management, was the impetus to move to this new way of looking at the VolunTeen program as distinct from the adult volunteer program. The VolunTeen program now focuses significantly on youth development outcomes that stem from service to the library.

Heidgerken-Greene and Hendren reviewed the training materials, reflected on the current VolunTeen program, and together redesigned the program to foster creativity, recognize the individual talents and interests of teens, and to allow VolunTeens to make a greater impact through their service.

The following pages give an in-depth review of the 2016 summer VolunTeen experience at the Crooked Lake Library including program procedures, planning methods, and reflection on successes and areas for growth. While the initial investment of staff time was greater, the overall retention, engagement, and growth of teens went well beyond the expectations of staff. We believe the strong positive outcomes of the changes more than justify the staff time and training required to achieve them.
Program
Interviews

*VolunTeen interviews are designed to be similar to an interview for a paid position and are conducted one-on-one with the VolunTeen supervisor. VolunTeens gain interviewing skills and library staff have the opportunity to learn about the teen.*

Process: (see next page for interview questions and statements)

- Welcome & Introductions
- Go through Interview statement and questions
- Provide documents
  - Orientation schedule (a handout with orientation times, see “Orientation” section)
  - Parent/Guardian permission form (a required library document)
- Take Picture of volunteer
  - Head shot of teen for use on a poster for the staff lounge.

Benefits:

- Helped supervisors get to know the teens and the types of projects they might be interested in working on.
- Provided a foundation for a collaborative relationship between the supervisor and teen.
- Contributed to building job skills for the teen.
- Set the tone for summer-long accountability and showed teens staff was serious about their role and cared that they were here (belonging).
VolunTeen Interview Questions

This interview is similar to one you might have for a paid job. I am interested in your answers because we want to know what it would be like to work with you, and whether this is a job that suits you well.

I want to start out by asking you a few questions to help us get more comfortable and for me to get to know you and your personality a little bit.

1. Tell me about your favorite and least favorite class in school.
2. What do you like to do for fun?
3. Tell me about some activities you have been involved in outside of school.
4. Give me three words you would use to describe yourself.
5. Are you familiar with how books are arranged in the library? Please describe this for us.

I would like to talk a little bit about what it is like to be a volunteer here at the library. This year at the Crooked Lake Library, we want our teen volunteers to work on projects that you help choose and that will make a difference in improving our library. We also want our VolunTeens to work as a group and be able to get to know each other, so we will be having a weekly group meeting along with you working one regular volunteer shift per week. You might be helping make displays in the library, organizing a scavenger hunt, filming a video about the library, setting up craft projects for kids, teaching about the summer reading program, etc.

6. Some tasks require volunteers to be outgoing and speaking directly with parents and children, while others are more focused on “backroom” or behind-the-scenes work. Which type of work would you prefer and why?
7. I mentioned a few possibilities for projects you might do as a VolunTeen this summer. Which of these sounds most interesting to you? Which sounds most boring or tiresome?
8. There can sometimes be a lot of interaction with kids and parents in this position.
   a. Do you like to work with children?
   b. What experience(s) have you had doing so?
   c. Are you willing/able to try doing so?
9. If you have any previous experience as a volunteer, please tell us a little bit about it: What you did, what you enjoyed and what you did not enjoy.
10. These are the days/times that you selected as being the best fit for you on your application. Is this still true? Any changes/updates to be made?
11. Are there dates/times you will not be able to work that you didn't mention on your application?
12. While this is an unpaid position, it mirrors a job experience which means showing up on time, taking direction, asking questions, and other work related behaviors. Are you comfortable with that?
13. In order to volunteer, a parent or caregiver must sign the permission form, and you must return it before your first day of work. Will you be able to get this form signed?
14. Our VolunTeen orientation sessions are scheduled for Monday, June 20 at 11:00 am and Tuesday, June 21st at 5:00 pm. Do you think you will be able to attend one of those orientation sessions?
15. Do you have any questions for us?
Orientation

VolunTeen orientation is required prior to the first VolunTeen session and is necessary to impart library policies, expectations, and procedures for the summer.

- Two orientations were scheduled at varying times
- Teens received an orientation invitation at their interview and were instructed to attend one session.
- Orientation goals
  - Teens develop relationships with staff and each other
  - Teens understand the Bookawocky program
  - Teens are introduced to the VolunTeen expectations and procedures
  - Teens are introduced to the project notebook and how they choose/develop tasks for their volunteering session
  - Teens work together to choose shifts
  - Teens create display board that includes their picture, name, and the three words they used to describe themselves at the interview. Teens choose a section of the board to design as they choose.

**Story:** The teens didn’t have to sign up for orientation, but somehow they ended up dividing perfectly so that each session had the same number of teens. While creating the teen display board, teens showed their individuality in how they chose to complete their section of the presentation.
Crooked Lake Library
VolunTeen Orientation Agenda
Monday June 20th
11:00-12:00
&
Tuesday June 21st
5:00-6:00

1. Ice breaker
   a. 10 Things in Common –
      i. Divide into groups with paper on a clipboard and markers.
      ii. Designate one person as recorder and one person to share.
      iii. As a group come up with 10 things that you have in common.
      iv. Share those 10 things with the whole group.

2. VolunTeen Handbook and Timesheets

3. Summer Reading PowerPoint

4. Project Notebook
   a. Calendar
      i. Weekly scheduled shifts
      ii. Monthly calendar with absences
   b. Potential Tasks
   c. Project sheets
   d. Volunteer handbook
   e. Summer Reading handbook

5. Choose shifts

6. Library Tour

7. Picture bulletin board creation
Weekly Meetings

Every Monday we gathered with as many teens as were available for a meeting. The meeting was scheduled from 11:00-12:00, prior to library opening. The purpose of the meeting was to give the teens the opportunity to work together on larger projects, to get to know each other, to learn about the library, and for teens to share project progress and gain feedback from peers. Every week’s agenda included sharing one positive and one negative from your week (Highs & Lows), a review of projects in the notebook, and then tasks or projects.

Positives:
- Teens worked on the website pictures, set-up storywalks, set-up crafts
- Teens had the opportunity to speak and be heard
- Standard agenda format allowed for easier planning

Areas for growth:
- Attendance at the meetings varied greatly
- More planning for projects and tasks could have led to a greater cumulative project
- Would like to see mandatory participation at group meetings unless specific schedule conflict
- Teens could take turns leading the meeting for greater group leadership opportunities
- Teens could take turns keeping track of the meeting minutes for a reflection opportunity each week
Two Hour Work Sessions

*Each VolunTeen committed to 1-2, two-hour work sessions every week. Conflicts were submitted early to assist with scheduling and planning.*

*The program was designed to provide choice, recognize the individual, and to build 21st Century skills. The work session was the bulk of the program for the VolunTeens and staff worked hard to align project with the interests, skills, and ideas of teens.*

Teens would:

- Sign-in
- Review the project notebook or continue a previous project
- Seek out training or direction for new projects

**Story**: Sam reviewed the binder and was interested in searching Amazon.com for materials to fill collection gaps. I had no idea what to tell him to do. In the past, I think I might have told him to find a new project, but I really wanted to support what he found interesting. I called the children’s selector and then talked to Sam, and together we developed a procedure for the task. Sam and Mike ended up working on the project and submitting lists for review. – Stacey
Project Notebook

The project notebook was created to gather all materials related to the VolunTeen program in a single location. Teens were trained to take initiative with their volunteering by reviewing the notebook for task ideas, creating projects, project plans and task descriptions, and sharing ideas with fellow teens. The notebook also included necessary information regarding library policy and safety.

Contents:

1. Weekly Schedule –
   a. Allowed an at a glance view of VolunTeen coverage.
   b. Teens used the calendar to choose shifts
   c. No more than two shifts per week, no more than two VolunTeens at a time
2. Emergency Map
   a. Includes Emergency Exits, Fire Extinguishers, and first aid kits
   a. Simplified version of staff handbook to help VolunTeens understand the full summer reading program and prize structure
4. Sample VolunTeen Tasks – general list compiled for all buildings
5. Project Pages: (template and sample on following pages)
   a. Title
   b. Description/ instructions
   c. Progress (date/name/what you did)
   d. Lined paper
   e. Binder sleeves

Positives:

- Single location for library policies, procedures and safety related to the VolunTeen program
- Calendar of shifts helped supervisors be prepared for VolunTeen shifts in advance
- Task lists and project sheets allowed teens to discover tasks of interest and take initiative with planning their VolunTeen session
- Task lists, calendars, and project sheets empowered all staff to assist VolunTeens

Areas for growth:

- Scheduling teens with a regular partner each week and encouraging collaborative ongoing work with that person would create opportunities for collaboration and peer mentorship/coaching
- Offering a choice of reflection tool (take a picture of what you did, journal about your shift or draw a picture showing what you did) and encouraging dedicated reflection time at end of shift would provide more material for teens to share in reflection time at weekly meeting
- Create a page for teens to keep track of what they did and current progress on a project to help them remember from shift to shift
- Update project sheets to remove progress section (mostly unused) and insert area for teens to share tips and notes
- Choosing one summer-long group project and recording progress toward it would be another beneficial shared use to support collaboration
- Create a standardized shift schedule to help teens understand the flow of their shift
Project: Title

Project description: detailed How-to, pictures, and creative prompts.

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<th>NAME</th>
<th>WHAT YOU DID</th>
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Project: Shelf Talkers

Project description: Choose book reviews kids have submitted on the online Bookawockey.org site and share them with patrons in the library building.

Option 1: Log on to bookawockey.org and view reviews created by Anoka County Library kids. Choose some to share (books we have on our shelf, with positive reviews).

Option 2: Create paper flags that can be taped to the shelf where the book is located to draw attention to that book (blank flags in back of binder). Add part or all of the book review to share!

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>WHAT YOU DID</th>
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</thead>
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<td>6/20</td>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>I looked at book reviews, and put flags on the shelf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/13</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>I looked at book reviews and made cards to put next to the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/18</td>
<td>Caitlin</td>
<td>2 shelf talkers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Cinder - Marissa Meyer

"I absolutely loved Cinder. It was the perfect blend of dystopian and Cinderella, which made it perfect for ANY young adult readers. I would strongly recommend this book to anyone ages 10+." "Loved it!"
End of Summer:

End of summer requirements:

1. Make sure that teens completed the VolunTeen Survey
2. Do something to let the teens know how much they were appreciated.
3. Create a method of community recognition for the exceptional work of the VolunTeens

Evaluations
Evaluations are important components of the VolunTeen program, especially since so many changes were made this year. In order to ensure that the majority of VolunTeens completed the evaluation, a link to the survey, along with a guest pass was given to each VolunTeen at the beginning of their final shift.

Gift:
A small gift and words of thanks were given to each teen on their final shift. The teens were very appreciative.

a. Gift: A star card with their total hours, a button we made that says ACL VolunTeen, a coupon for a free DVD rental, a bag of chips and a candy bar.

VolunTeen Display:
The display case for Crooked Lake was reserved through the month of August to showcase the work of the VolunTeens. Pictures of the teens, letters written by teens and examples of their work were placed in the display case. The VolunTeens came up with the slogan and design, and were each asked to contribute something that related to their experience.

Positives
- Crooked Lake Library had a high completion rate for VolunTeen surveys
- The teens really liked the gift and were excited.
- The VolunTeen display received a lot of positive comments. Parents and friends of VolunTeens were pleased to see the pictures

Areas for growth:
- Recognition ceremony/party for students and families— schedule early and announce at orientation
- VolunTeens recognized at County Board Meeting or other method of community recognition
Statistics
Total number of VolunTeens:
2015: 16
2016: 19

VolunTeen retention:
(number of VolunTeens who worked through the entire summer)
2015: 4 (25%)
2016: 17 (90%)
• We saw a 65% increase in VolunTeen retention over the previous year.

Total number of VolunTeen hours:
2015: 192.25
2016: 337.25
• We saw an increase of 145 hours, or a 75.4% increase over the previous year.
Planning

Reflection on 2015:
The program focus in 2015 was on VolunTeen teens helping with the Bookawocky program. Teens sat as a desk with the Bookawocky information and talked to families and kids. In addition, they helped with a variety of projects as directed by library staff.

Benefits:

- VolunTeens help with a variety of tasks
- Orientation helps prepare teens to help
- Teens connect with kids and families
- Teens shared information about Bookawocky

Areas for improvement

- Low retention – 4 of 16 VolunTeens continued through summer
- Limited personal connection
  - Staff unable to recall names of volunteers
  - Staff unable to recall teen schedules – limits accountability
- Difficulty assigning tasks
  - Projects mostly busy work
  - Low intrinsic value
  - Staff ran out of projects to give teens – limited staff time to train teens on new projects
  - Teens have no group interaction and never see each other after orientation except in passing

Believe It Built It is a product of Ignite Afterschool and is freely available at http://igniteafterschool.org/bibi/

After reviewing the building blocks, specific aspects were chosen to focus on during the pilot year. Possible activities that align with the blocks and enhance the current program were identified.

**Building Block 1 – Intentional program design**
- a) Have clear, focused goals
- b) Build in flexibility to meet individual needs
- c) Provide regular, ongoing sessions
- **Goals** – general goals were chosen for year one
  - Teens will develop ownership, share ideas, and give input into the program
    - Teens created scavenger hunt, diorama, chose tasks based on interests
  - Teens will make new friends
    - Teens scheduled as partners for regular shifts became friends
  - Teens will build 21st Century skills
    - Project management
- • Create consistent schedule and opportunities for bonus volunteering sessions
- • Teen choice in projects provided flexibility based on interests and skills.
- • Weekly meetings to discuss progress, ideas and activity planning

**Building Block 2 – Supportive Relationships & Environment**
- a) Create trusting relationships
- b) Provide a welcoming environment, build community
- c) Engage youth as individuals
- • Interviews before the start of the program allowed a supervisor to get to know the teens better.
- • CRL staff is good at creating a supportive, welcoming environment
- • Increase community by having pictures of teens, along with words about themselves and their names in the staff break area. After the first few weeks a poster of the staff was added. The posters helped serve as a reference for staff and VolunTeens to learn each other’s names.
- • Collaborative task development – supervisors supported teens individuality and preferences by helping them decide on tasks. Choice replaced dictation of tasks.
- • Continuous training and support for all ideas
  - a) “I don’t know how to do that, but let’s figure it out and write a procedure.”

**Building Block 3 – Youth Voice and Leadership**
- a) Encourage youth voice and give choices
- b) Build youth leadership skills
- c) Ask for youth contributions to activity planning
- d) Ensure youth can showcase their work
- • Allow for task choice: provide ideas and options
- • Project notebook listed various tasks and allowed teens to share ideas
- • Group project – photos for the library website- teens designed photo style to align with webpage links.
• Design tasks/projects to take advantage of the teens interests & skills
• Youth that proposed a special project or new task were asked to create a project proposal, or write out instructions
  o One teen decided to make a diorama of a construction scene for the children’s department. He was asked to write a description of the project and create a list of required supplies
  o Several teens came up with project ideas and wrote instructions for other teens to follow
• End of summer VolunTeen display of projects in the library display case

Building Block 4 – Responsiveness to Culture and Identity
  a) Cultivate an inclusive environment for youth and families
  b) Encourage youth to be their whole selves
• Volunteer recommends display – teens favorite books show identity

Building Block 5 – Community & Family Engagement
  a) Foster regular communication between program and families
  b) Encourage and acknowledge youth contributions to the community
• Volunteer Recognition
• VolunTeen recommends display with name tent and recommended materials (CD, Book, Movie)
• Periodic emails to parents regarding specific requests or updates
• End of summer VolunTeen display of projects in the library display case

Building Block 6 – Organizational Management, Staff Support & Youth Safety
  a) Ensure mission is understood by all
  b) Have written policies that ensure safety
  c) Ensure solid oversight of the program
  d) Provide staff professional development
  e) Collect and evaluate data for growth and improvement
• Provide effective training and supervision
• Update safety map and purchase first aid kit for meeting room
• VolunTeen handbook added to project handbook
• Review additional trainings (Previous trainings provided on BIBI and YPQA)
• Evaluation
  o Have teens develop a regular evaluation
  o Official ACL evaluation at end of summer
• Develop an infrastructure and foundation during the pilot program; Present program to share results and learning
• Create measurement and benchmark tools
Review of Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)
YPQA is a product of the Center for Youth Program Quality and is freely available at http://www.cypq.org/downloadpqa

After completing training on youth program self-assessment and reviewing each of the scales within the four domains of the tool, specific aspects were chosen to focus on during the pilot year. Environmental requirements, behavioral expectations, and possible activities that align with the scales and enhance the current program were identified.

Domain I. Safe Environment

  Emotional Safety
  b) Positive emotional climate
  c) No evidence of bias
  • Be inclusive of diverse teens and encourage mutual respect
  • Include highs and lows/icebreakers and small group or partner activities in meetings so teens get to know each other

  Healthy Environment
  a) Program space free of health and safety hazards
  b) Program space is clean and sanitary
  c) Adequate ventilation and lighting
  d) Temperature is comfortable
  • Crooked Lake Library meeting room meets all these requirements and served as main gathering space for weekly meetings, interviews and orientations
  • Main library space also satisfies requirements

  Emergency Preparedness
  a) Written emergency procedures posted in plain view
  b) Charged fire extinguisher is visible and accessible
  c) Complete first aid kit is visible and accessible
  d) Entrances to indoor program space are supervised for security during program hours
  • Fire extinguisher and emergency exit procedure map updated by staff, shared with VolunTeens in orientation and posted in VolunTeen binder for reference
  • Fire extinguisher in main library (*next year include on tour and ask follow-up review question)
  • First aid kit compiled, accessible in meeting room
  • VolunTeens sign in and out for shift, wear badge while working, are supervised by staff, store personal belongings in lockers in staff area

  Accommodating Environment
  a) Program space is sufficient
  b) Program space is suitable for activities
  c) Furniture is comfortable and of sufficient quantity
  d) Physical environment can be modified to meet needs of program
  • Large meeting room, capacity 30
  • Plenty of space, and enough chairs and tables for meetings
• Can be left open for group activities requiring movement or can be set for group conversation or workspace areas
• Library provides variety of soft seating, work surface areas, technology and supplies for a variety of tasks and for collaboration among VolunTeens to occur

**Nourishment**

a) Drinking water is available/accessible
b) Food and drink is plentiful and available at appropriate times or not necessary due to program structure
c) Available food and drink is healthy

• Drinking fountain available at building entrance; teens encouraged to bring water bottles
• VolunTeens limited to two hour shifts so snack food not necessary, some teens did bring food and take a short break to eat during shift
• Intended to offer healthy food as part of end of summer celebration (*goal for next year)

**Domain II. Supportive Environment**

**Warm Welcome**

a) All youth are greeted by staff
b) Staff uses warm tone of voice and respectful language
c) Staff smiles, uses friendly gestures and makes eye contact

• Bulletin board recognizing teens in staff work area encourages staff to get to know VolunTeens (took photos at VolunTeen interviews, assembled board at orientation)
• Bulletin board identifying staff in work area encourages VolunTeens to get to know staff
• VolunTeens have a “VolunTeen picks” book display to recognize their individual taste and recommendations
• Each VolunTeen has a regular weekly shift so they are accountable for coming in and staff learns to anticipate their arrival
• VolunTeens make name badges to wear and name magnets to use for lockers to store personal items while they are working; helps create sense of individual belonging

**Session Flow**

a) Staff starts and ends session within 10 minutes of scheduled time
b) Staff has all materials and supplies ready to begin all activities
c) There are enough materials and supplies prepared for all youth to begin activities
d) Staff explains all activities clearly
e) There is an appropriate amount of time for all of the activities

• Meetings start on time, end on time because held outside of library open hours
• Staff created agenda template for meetings and collected materials in advance
• Supplies (VolunTeen project notebook) kept at a station so teens know where to find them
• List of tasks to do in case of extra time
• Teens note their progress on a project on a log sheet in VolunTeen project binder so others can pick up the project
• VolunTeens note projects on timesheet so staff knows who has done what before
**Active Engagement**

a) The activities involve youth in engaging with materials or ideas or improving a skill through guided practice for at least half the time

b) During activities, staff provides all youth a structured opportunity to communicate what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others

c) The activities balance concrete experiences involving materials, people and projects with abstract learning or concepts

d) The program activities lead to tangible products or performances that reflect ideas or designs of youth

- VolunTeens report back to group at weekly meetings to share their work
- VolunTeens create their own how-to VolunTeen resource in the VolunTeen project binder, staff use the binder as a discussion starter at meetings
- VolunTeens choose and even come up with project ideas for their individual work in the library

**Skill-building**

a) Staff tells youth a specific learning or skill-building focus for the session or activity and the focus is clearly linked to the activity

b) Staff encourages all youth to try out skills or attempt higher levels of performance

c) Staff models skills for youth

d) Staff breaks difficult tasks into smaller, simpler steps for all youth

e) When youth struggle staff always provides learning supports or encouragement

- Staff models and explains all new projects to VolunTeens and talks through steps needed with VolunTeen before starting task
- Staff breaks tasks down into manageable steps that VolunTeens complete and then record/reflect in VolunTeen project binder

**Encouragement**

a) Staff supports at least some contributions or accomplishments of youth by acknowledging what they’ve said or done with specific, non-evaluative language

b) Staff makes frequent use of open-ended questions

c) Staff is almost always actively involved with youth (providing directions, answering questions, working as partners or team members, checking in with individuals or small groups)

- Examples of open ended questions we used: What do you think you could do? What are you interested in? How did that go? What do we need to do next? What is your vision? What supplies and steps should we use? How can you tell other VolunTeens what you did?
- Staff was highly available to VolunTeens, to bounce ideas off, talk through next steps, offer feedback and answer questions

**Reframing Conflict**

a) Staff always approaches conflicts or negative behavior calmly

b) Staff seeks input from youth in order to determine both the cause and solution of conflicts and negative behavior

c) To help youth understand and resolve conflicts and negative behavior, staff encourages youth to examine the relationship between their actions and consequences
Staff acknowledges conflicts and negative behavior and follows up with those involved afterward
- In our planning, library staff decided to keep these strategies in mind for if/when conflict or negative behavior arose.
- We reflected on our ability to approach conflicts calmly and felt confident we were able to do so.
- No real conflicts or negative came up during the summer with our VolunTeens.

Domain III. Interaction

Belonging
- Staff provides structured opportunities with the purpose of helping youth get to know each other.
- Youth do not exhibit any exclusion or staff successfully intervenes if exclusive behavior occurs.
- Youth strongly identify with the program offering.
- Staff provides structured opportunities to publicly acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of at least some youth.
- Weekly meetings, bulletin board, orientations, notebook to share with other teen volunteers helped youth get to know each other.
- Staff intervened to pair up VolunTeens differently or mix up groups where necessary (this arose over Pokemon Go at a weekly VolunTeen meeting, where some students had access to the game and others didn’t and were left out of the conversation until the group was redirected by staff).
- Staff gifted VolunTeens with VolunTeen buttons for group identification and teens were excited to receive these, VolunTeens created display case of their work at the end of the summer and named it: VolunTeens: the Experience!
- Weekly meetings/sharing, teen picks book displays, display case and photos of VolunTeens on library website provided public acknowledgement of VolunTeen work.

Collaboration
- Staff provides opportunities for all youth to work cooperatively as a team or in a group
- Staff provides all youth opportunities to participate in activities with interdependent roles.
- Staff provides opportunities for all youth to work toward shared goals.
- We initially envisioned a shared group project that would take much of the summer to complete, but VolunTeens were more interested in working independently or in small collaborative groups to achieve their own goals according to their interests.
- Youth worked cooperatively as a large group at weekly group meetings, for example to set up the library for storywalks and crafts, to display submitted book reviews in the library, and to create photos to be used on the library website, but these were short-term projects, not overarching ones.
- *This could be a goal for future summers.

Leadership
- Staff provides all youth multiple or extended opportunities to practice group-process skills.
b) Staff provides opportunities for all youth to mentor an individual
c) Staff provides all youth one or more opportunities to lead a group

- Youth practiced group process skills as part of planning/collaborating on group projects and working together at meetings and when completing shared tasks (if two VolunTeens scheduled at one time), but not all VolunTeens got to practice this
- Planned to schedule youth in pairs or overlapping shifts so that coaching could happen. *A goal for next summer would be to partner every teen with someone else so they develop a relationship working together over the summer.
- Some youth took advantage of opportunities to lead a group: one VolunTeen led weekly STEAM activities for kids, another helped lead a back to school open house craft activity. *A goal for next summer would be to have each VolunTeen take responsibility for leading a weekly meeting.

Adult Partners

a) Staff shares control of most activities with youth, providing guidance and facilitation while retaining overall responsibility
b) Staff provides an explanation or reason for every behavioral expectation, guideline or direction given to youth

- Staff offered suggestions and helped guide youth but let VolunTeens make their own choices as to group and individual projects
- All rules and expectations explained at orientation in detail

Domain IV. Engagement

Planning

a) Staff provides multiple opportunities for youth to make plans for projects and activities
b) In the course of planning the projects or activities, two or more planning strategies are used (i.e. brainstorming, idea webbing, backwards planning)

- Group project planning was intended to include these activities. Youth did have the opportunity to plan their shift (choose which task to work on, how long to spend before switching to something else, etc)
- *Goal for next summer: include more deliberate planning strategies and activity as part of larger group project

Choice

a) Staff provides opportunities for all youth to make at least one open-ended content choice within the content framework of the activities (topics, subtopics, or aspects of a given topic)

b) Staff provides opportunities for all youth to make at least one open-ended process choice (roles, order of activities, tools or materials, how to present results)

- What will you do? How will you do it? What strategies/approach will you use? These were choices made by the VolunTeens every day.

Reflection

a) Staff engages all youth in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done (journaling, reviewing minutes, sharing progress, accomplishments or feelings about the experience)
b) Staff uses two or more strategies to encourage youth to share what they have done and reflect on their experiences
c) Staff initiates structured opportunities for youth to give feedback on the activities
d) In the course of the program offering, staff provides all youth opportunities to make presentations to the whole group

- Task reflection/documentation was done in the VolunTeen project notebook to share with others, also sharing of projects worked on in weekly meeting
- Journal prompts in VolunTeen notebook were intended to prompt reflection. VolunTeens did not journal so much as record what they did and how they did it for documentation to help other VolunTeens.
- VolunTeens gave feedback in entrance/exit interviews with staff and also during sharing in weekly meetings.
Project ideas

- Robots – build for displays
- Teen Steam Programs- help lead and design
- Cardboard box ideas – build items with large cardboard boxes for play area
- Make and take crafts – help design
- Letterboxing – teens help write clues and set-up letter box
- Writing boxes/activity boxes – come up with ideas and put together kits
- Letterbox project – write clues, create letterbox book and stamp
- Book review project – curate submitted bookawocky reviews by displaying on walls and in review binder, adding reviews to the online library catalog and choosing which to share on social media
- Decorating the library space and designing the display case for summer reading
- A reflection journal- add writing and reflection/journaling in response to prompts
- A VolunTeen how-to book- create instruction manual for future VolunTeens
- Video documenting the library over the summer-plan and film
- Collage or other artwork about the library -create
- Curating DVD bundles and bin book topics
- STEM kit project-- making instructions for different projects/activities with the STEM kits for pop up STEAM
- Adopt a Shelf – VolunTeens take responsibility for shelf maintenance of a particular section
- Individual Learning Topics/Independent Study – VolunTeens create own projects of their choosing
- Read to a Dog or Storytime helpers – enlist VolunTeen help in running programs for young children
- Reviews/Shelf-talkers – transcribe submitted bookawocky reviews onto cards to be posted in stacks to advertise the physical books they describe
- Magnets/cookie sheets for children’s area – create, come up with ideas
- Felt pieces for flannel boards in children’s area –create, come up with ideas
Conclusion

19 teen volunteers contributed a total of 337 hours to the library, doing amazing projects and helping staff with day-to-day things for 3 exciting Bookawocky months. VolunTeens created scavenger hunts, built book-themed dioramas, set up Storywalks and crafts, made shelf talkers from Bookawocky reviews, did STEM activities with kids and STEAM activities with teens, created booklists, searched Amazon for items to fill collection gaps, inventoried our storytime closet, and much more.

One VolunTeen wrote, "During my time working here, I have learned a lot about libraries and how they work. My favorite project has been helping in a henna class that was hosted here and I even got some henna myself! A common task for me is to work in the children’s section. I clean up toys, organize the books and once was even asked to play with a little girl. Another duty for me is shelving and unshelving books which has taught me a little bit about the Dewey Decimal system. Working at the library this summer has been an amazing experience and I have enjoyed getting to know Katlin and Stacey throughout my time here!"

The 2016 Crooked Lake Library VolunTeen program, due to revisions based on the training received by Heidgerken-Greene and Hendren, was successful beyond expectations. Teens were more engaged, staff got to know the teens better, and the teens gained interviewing, problem solving, project management, and other skills to help them succeed. Teens shared ideas with library staff and made the summer reading program for youth stronger.

Because of new ways of thinking, the Crooked Lake Library staff are now working to develop the 21st century skills and job skills of VolunTeens and looking at this program as a mutually beneficial partnership between youth and the library. Their personal outcomes are now as important as the outcomes the library sees from their direct work. Heidgerken-Greene and Hendren will continue to reflect and improve on the experience, utilizing additional aspects of the Believe It Build It and YPQA trainings as well as their experience gained during the summer of 2016. Currently, the VolunTeen program is the largest teen program offered by Anoka County Libraries.