

## WELCOMING NEW TEEN FOLK

Welcoming NEW teens into your library can be challenging considering they usually tend to AVOID us. Good news if they have walked into your library you already have an IN with them. They are there because they either need or want something, heard about a service you provide of interest to them, or against their free will. No matter what the reason this is your CHANCE to hook them. Here are my suggestions that have worked for me.

1. Warm welcome by introducing yourself, who you are at the library, your pronoun, how you can help them. Some will tell you what they like and don't like. That gives you a great spring board. If not you do the work. Offer services that you think might them. Some will even admit if they are new, then show them around. That extra mile is vital with teen. Once you get talking it is a lot easier.  
We are fortunate that we have classes visit monthly. So, they don't have a choice to be there or not. When they visit the first time with their class I like to ask them what subject/genres/authors they want to learn more about this school. Some really like they get to have input. Others who are not really sure like to be surprised.
2. Don't be afraid to kill them with your charm. Tell them what you like in your collection. Many teens are looking for something different to try. Be diverse. We try to have unique display that catch their eye. For example: Right now we have Big foot prints all over the Teen room with Big foot hanging out there. Then, a collection of books about CRYPTID (animals believed to exist, but never proven like Big Foot.) This display has generate lots of interest.
3. Be sure to tell them about your Teen Club or TAB. They might be looking for a way to connect with other teens. I tell them all about how the teens can earn volunteer hours and/or help with family programs. They love to help with Trick or treat or anything they allows them to dress up. I just remind them they must be friendly costumes. Lol They also love to be included in decided what programs they can attend with other teens. This year many are excited about our upcoming Zombie prom.
4. SAFE! They want to feel safe in your library. Some teens come to us because they want excepted. They all want to have fun! From teens being bullied to those doing the bullying. Our library has seen them all. Be FIRM no matter what. Newbies need to know you don't tolerate disrespect to others.
5. Offer passive activities like scavenger hunts, trivia contest, name that tune, theme related graffiti boards, jokes of the week, word of the week. Anything to engage them. Scavenger hunts have been very popular in our libraries for all ages. They all love to find stuff hidden around the library to get whatever little treasure we have for them. Teens enjoy tattoos and small buttons.

Most important NEW teens need to connect with you! Be friendly, helpful, positive to their needs, and develop a respectful rapport.