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Thank you!
Thank you so much for choosing to volunteer with Cuyahoga County Public Library! Volunteers are a vital part of the success of our program and we are so pleased you will be dedicating your time to the children of our communities.

We hope that you find your experience volunteering with Cuyahoga County Public Library system to be fulfilling, rewarding, and positive. If you have any questions, comments or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

This manual explains our organization, policies, and programs as well as the role you play within them as a volunteer. Additionally, program specific concepts and ideas are incorporated for you to use as a reference tool.

Once again, welcome and thank you!

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” Leo Buscaglia
Cuyahoga County Public Library offers the very best in public library service because you deserve it.

At Cuyahoga County Public Library we are committed to our mission of being at the center of community life by creating an environment where reading, lifelong learning and civic engagement thrive.

Our vision is to be the most convenient public library in the nation, recognized for exceptional customer service. Everything we do is in support of improving the quality of life in Cuyahoga County, and we strive to deliver on three key objectives:

*Fostering a community of enthusiastic readers.
*Strengthening the economic vitality of our region.
*Being recognized as an essential community asset and innovative library industry leader.
As one way of fulfilling its mission, CCPL delivers teen programming and services that inspire curiosity and support growth. The aim is to make student success a community priority. Encore Connected Learning is an innovative program focused on building educational experiences for teens by connecting them with adults in a cross-generational, library learning environment. Encore Connected Learning moves beyond academic basics, and makes learning relevant to today’s digital world and workforce realities.

Cuyahoga County Public Library is comprised of 27 branches, a MetroHealth Service Point, and an Administrative Office Building. The Administrative Office serves as headquarters for all Library divisions. As a system with 27 branches serving 47 communities, CCPL reaches out to partners across these communities. Each branch serves a slightly different clientele. The branches work with local organizations to connect their community with educational, cultural and entertainment assets in Cuyahoga County. There is some system-wide programming, but each branch designs and delivers programs to meet community needs, and teen programming is designed and presented by the teen librarian.
Connected Learning

Connected Learning is a research-based approach to facilitate youth learning. It is based on the principle that learning happens best when it is interest-driven, peer-supported, and academically oriented. Connected Learning asks students to explore, to experiment, to be hands on and active, and to take an entrepreneurial approach to learning. Connected Learning environments require access to digital tools and media-rich resources that help students:

- Create knowledge and skills using new technologies to communicate ideas and stories
- Learn principles of science, technology, engineering, art and math through hands-on integrative experiments and activities
- Offer intergenerational experiences in which youth and adults come together to learn, share, create and achieve
- Prepare teens to be employed in the world they will inherit

Library staff at each Connected Learning branch planned and created initial course offerings to support 21st Century Learning and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) knowledge. Courses include animation, coding and game creation. Courses are based on popular topics and are in alignment with the Library’s Connected Learning expected outcomes. We anticipate teens will:

- Use new media to grow academic achievement or investigate future opportunity
- Easily access information to support self-directed and interest-driven learning
- Develop supportive relationships with caring adults and peers
- Demonstrate a desire to know and a desire to share
The connected learning program focuses primarily in the area of STEAM. STEAM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, arts and math. There is a focus on these areas with students because the jobs of the future will require strong skills in these areas. Volunteers have been recruited because of their skills and interests in one or more of these areas. CCPL will work with volunteers to match them with a program where they will be able to make a meaningful contribution to teens. The STEAM volunteer program is less structured than many traditional volunteer opportunities. This program requires significant flexibility and a willingness to quickly adapt to a variety of subject and situations.
Several STEAM pilot programs have been created by teen librarians. A synopsis of the four programs that are currently being piloted follows. Connected learning is not limited to these four programs. Teen librarians create programs and accompanying program guides. Librarians will provide the volunteer with a copy of the guide before the program. Arrive a half-hour before the program starts to review the guide and discuss any questions.

Volunteers will find that each librarian will interpret the program and enhance it based on his/her knowledge and experience. Volunteers may find they have more expertise in the subject area than the librarian. The program subject areas have been selected to meet the interest of teens and may be a new area for the librarian. Volunteers should work with the librarian to determine how their expertise can best contribute to the program. The librarian must lead the program but he/she may ask a volunteer for technical assistance in the planning stage or to share their knowledge as part of the program. Volunteers should look for participants who are not able to keep up with the group. Volunteers should step in to see if they can help the teen or make the librarian aware of the situation so the librarian can assess what action to take.
Pilot Connected Learning Programs

The first connected learning pilot programs include:

**Coding 101:** This is a beginning class that introduces teens to various applications and websites available for coding including Hopscotch, CodeAcademy and more. Teens delve into coding language and learn the building blocks of coding.

**Scratch Digital Animation 101:** This free website, developed by MIT, allows teens to learn how to create their own digital animation from SCRATCH. Young people entering 5th-8th grade are invited to join the class to explore, create and share their own stories, games, music and art. Participants should have an email address to register and will then create a user name on the online SCRATCH platform that can later be accessed at home or elsewhere.

**Stop Motion Animation:** In this iPad application, Lego® and other small characters are used to create a story that is recorded frame by frame. Dialogue and sound can be added to complete a short video. With a signed parent release, we'll share your masterpieces online!

**Toontastic™ Animation:** This application allows teens who may love animation, but lack artistic skill, to easily animate stories using Toontastic™ on the library iPads. This program is appropriate for students in grades 4-8.
Pilot Connected Learning Programs

These programs are carried out either in a computer lab or with a touchlab. A touchlab is comprised of a dozen iPads that have been loaded with special applications related to the connected learning programming. Volunteers who are not familiar with tablets or iPads may have an opportunity to explore the technology on their own.

In branches where a large group of teens regularly frequent the library, the librarian may bring out the touchlab and recruit teens on the spot. Some libraries schedule a time bi-weekly or monthly to hold these spontaneous programs. Volunteers who are willing to be very flexible will be well suited to this activity.

The first time a volunteer attends a program he/she will likely be learning the application along with the teens. This is a common occurrence and adults will find that the teens can teach them a great deal. In fact, connected learning is intended to be an exchange between adults and teens where they learn from each other. On occasion, a teen may have a question that the volunteer cannot answer. This is where facilitated learning is especially helpful. Volunteers will learn that another teen may be able to help or simply go to the “Help” link in the app to look for an answer. There are also situations where it is best to Google the topic to find a solution. Volunteers are not expected to know all the answers; rather the expectation is that they will help the teen find the answer.
The CCPL volunteer coordinator manages the STEAM volunteers. In turn, STEAM volunteers directly support the teen librarian. There are some third-party presenters, however, the teen librarian oversees these programs. Volunteers will not be program presenters but will assist the teen librarian as he/she presents the program. A volunteer will be given tasks based on his/her skills and interests. Any questions related to programming will be directed to the teen librarian.

One of the primary responsibilities of the STEAM volunteers will be to help facilitate learning among teens and guide them as they search for new ideas and creative solutions. In facilitating learning, one does not give a teen an answer, but rather poses questions to guide teens to discover the answer. For example, if the teen asks, “How do I do this?” A good response might be:

- What have you tried so far?
- Do you think another teen in the program may have an answer for you? Maybe he/she would be willing to help you.
- Have you checked the help section of the application?
- Have you tried Google looking for an answer?

Facilitation may sound like a new approach; however you have probably used it with children in the past. There is also significant research online about facilitated learning, problem or project-based learning, or new teaching techniques. The teen librarians will provide a volunteer task sheet to assist you as you interact with teens.
Volunteer Agreement

AS AN APPLICANT FOR VOLUNTEER WITH CUYAHOGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY, I UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOWING:
I voluntarily agree to submit to a criminal background check if offered a volunteer position.

I further understand that nothing contained in the application or conveyed to me during any interview, which may be granted, is intended to create an employment contract, implied or explicit, between the Library and me.

Submitting a volunteer application does not guarantee placement or engagement as a Library volunteer. Once accepted as a volunteer, an assignment can end at any time at the discretion of the volunteer coordinator/local Library supervisor.

Qualified volunteer applicants are considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, non-job related medical condition or disability.

I have not knowingly withheld any information that might adversely affect my chances for volunteering and the answers given by me are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I have personally completed this application. I understand that any omission or misstatement on this application or on any documents used to secure a volunteer position shall be grounds for rejection of this application or termination of my volunteer assignment.

I grant the Library full permission to use my name, any photographs, videos, motion pictures or recordings obtained through the volunteer program for any publicity and promotional purposes without obligation or liability to me. I acknowledge that there is no salary or other compensation for my services as a volunteer.

I understand that Cuyahoga County Public Library shall not be responsible for the loss or damage of personal property and possessions of the volunteer.

I agree to abide by and comply with the policies, the safety and health rules and regulations and the rules of conduct of Cuyahoga County Public Library. I understand that my failure to do so may result in dismissal from the volunteer program.
PURPOSE OF THIS POSITION: This position will support teen librarians as they work to engage teens (ages 10 - 18) in connected learning activities. Projects may involve short or longer term volunteer commitments to help young people connect to a personal interest related to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and/or Math).

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator
Responsibilities:
- Engage with the teen to fully understand their STEAM interest
- Work with teen librarian to help facilitate learning and to meet the objectives of the connected learning activities
- Encourage teen to actively design the project and determine what research needs to be done to accomplish the project
- Facilitate learning activities
- Model and reinforce the learning in the project
- Collaborate with the teen librarian to ensure the teen is able to move forward with his/her project toward their desired goal
- Other duties as requested by the teen librarian

Position Requirements:
- Experience in one or more STEAM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and/or Math)
- Willingness to work with teens ages 10 to 18
- Comfortable supporting the teen as he/she implements his/her connected learning project
- Willingness to coach and mentor teens in STEAM fields and help them see connections between their interests and potential education and/or career opportunities
- Commitment to staying with the teen until project is completed

Special Requirements:
- Volunteers need to be excellent role models and communicators, be comfortable working with teens, and demonstrate patience and concern for the teen's educational needs. Volunteer must guide and facilitate rather than complete the project for the teen.

Time Commitment: TBD

All volunteers will undergo a background check before being assigned to a branch or program. Any individual who poses a direct threat to the health and safety of himself/herself or others in the workplace will be deemed not qualified for this position.
The Continuing Evolution of the STEAM Volunteer Program

CCPL employs a volunteer coordinator who will work with volunteers to match their skills and interests to current programs. CCPL wants to ensure that every volunteer has a positive experience. Volunteers should communicate suggestions or concerns about any aspect of the STEAM volunteer program to the volunteer coordinator. It is the job of the volunteer coordinator to ensure that the volunteer program runs smoothly. Also, remember that this is a new initiative. Please be patient and communicate with staff if you have any questions or concerns.

**Contact Information**

Volunteer Coordinator
Nicole Beleske
Telephone: 216-749-9400
Email: nbeleske@cuyahogalibrary.org
Steps

Submit Volunteer Application indicating an interest in STEAM
Submit the release for a Background Check
Complete the Advanced Questionnaire
Attend a Volunteer/CCPL Specific Training
Identify scheduled program that is a good fit for volunteer knowledge and experience
The branch librarian will contact you to set an arrival time for the day of the program to acclimate you to the library and review the program.

Attend the Program
Complete the STEAM Volunteer Connected Learning Program Survey
Diversity among the Library Branches

If a volunteer travels to different branches to work on programs he/she will find great diversity among the communities that the library serves. Each library looks to fill the needs of that particular community. Some branches have a significant number of teens who regularly come after school and in the summertime. For many, the library is the only safe place they have to hang out with friends. Some branches do not have an afterschool crowd and hold their programs primarily on Saturdays and in the evening. The librarian often knows teens that come regularly and will make volunteers aware of issues on a need-to-know basis.

While the library is generally a safe environment, occasionally there may be an incident where a teen’s behavior is in violation of the library’s code of conduct. Volunteers are not expected to intervene with any disciplinary issues, but they must advise the librarian of any situations they observe. In addition to the regular library staff, some of the branches also have afterschool and summer monitors who can help with discipline issues.
Behavior of participants will be guided by the Cuyahoga County Public Library Code of Conduct. Students who cannot adhere to this policy will not be permitted to participate in the program.

The following actions and disruptive behaviors interfere with the ability of customers to effectively use library materials and services and will not be tolerated. Repeated violations may result in expulsion from the library or loss of library privileges:

- Violating local ordinances, state, and/or federal law.
- Violating library policies and/or guidelines.
- Creating noise or talking which interferes with the rights of others.
- Using abusive or threatening language or behavior.
- Harassing others.
- Misusing library furnishings, materials, equipment, or computers.
- Congregating in or around entrances, exits, stairways, or otherwise blocking access.
- Fighting and physical abuse.
- Running in the building.
Closings Due to Unforeseen Circumstances

If the library system and/or library branch is closing (weather emergency, power outage, etc.), every attempt will be made to contact volunteers. If you have any question about whether or not your program is running, please call your library location to verify.

Weather Emergency Closing Hotline: (216) 749-9549
We appreciate you!

Please know that we welcome you and are happy that you’re here!

You are making an incredible difference in the lives of the children you work with and that you are a role model for them.

Make Eye Contact with the children.
When praising and encouraging, cite specifics. I.e. “I like how you...”

Please keep an open mind and remember that all teens are individuals who can benefit from positive adult role models. Engage with teens by listening and asking questions rather than giving them the answers or telling them what to do.

Cuyahoga County Public Library will provide all materials needed for the STEAM programs. While we appreciate the kind offers of volunteers to supply items, we cannot accept donations.

Please remember that the coordinator and the children depend on you being there. Call your host library/coordinator as early as possible when you need to call off.

Become familiar with your host library. Ask questions if you’re not sure about anything.

Please be on time and do not bring guests. Everyone in the room needs to have passed a background check.

Please wear your Cuyahoga County Public Library Volunteer Badge at all times you are working in the library.

Please plan to use the internet or your cell phone for personal use either before or after the program when there are no students.

Please plan to eat your meals and snacks either before or after coming to the program.

We couldn’t do this without you- THANK YOU!
Thank you for being a part of the volunteer program at Cuyahoga County Public Library. Thanks to the wonderful efforts of our volunteers, we are helping hundreds of students build the foundation skills needed for future success!

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.” Sherry Anderson