

A UNIQUE TEEN VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



COMPUTER SQUAD
@ PALM HARBOR
LIBRARY

A RECOGNIZED NEED

- Increased Internet use
- Librarians are inundated with computer related questions
- Often times questions are simple with repetitive answers
- Sometimes the questions require more attention!
- Most libraries are under-staffed these days!



EXISTING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AND BIRTH OF A NEW PROGRAM

- Palm Harbor Library has a large and active volunteer program. We rely on our volunteers for many day to day tasks
- We are always looking for ways to better manage staff time
- Teens are very active in our library!



**Need for patron computer instruction + Teens' need for community service
= Computer Squad**



What exactly is Computer Squad?

- Teen volunteers are available to computer users who require basic or intermediate assistance
- The Squad-ers are stationed in our computer lab on a daily basis
- Some of their tasks include:
 - Help with logging on
 - Help with printing
 - Instruction in basic navigation of Internet
 - Instruction in setting up email accounts and basic email functions



Scheduling



- Teens are scheduled in two hour shifts, Monday – Saturday
 - Libraries can adopt schedule as they see fit
 - Summers, school breaks and weekend hours may vary
 - In the summer we have teens from 9am to closing!
- Daily schedule remains the same throughout the semester. (Make it out in pencil to accommodate schedule changes!)
- If you do not have enough teens to cover each shift, make sure you at least cover your busiest hours. (Ours are 3PM-5:30PM)
- We keep a binder handy with sign-in sheets, f.y.i. notices, and Bright Futures papers



POLICES AND GUIDELINES

- Responsibilities
 - You will assist any computer lab user that requests help with the following : (This list is not exhaustive, however these are the most prevalent issues)
 - Printing documents
 - Creating an email account ; general email problems
 - Microsoft Office queries (saving, formats, attaching etc.)
 - Website malfunctions/capabilities
 - Digital photo downloads
 - Thumb-drive/USB questions
 - You will NOT assist computer lab users with the following :
 - Anything dealing with a credit card number or account i.e. online billing/credit accounts, airline reservations, bank accounts
 - **Under no circumstances** are users allowed to download any major software
 - Government documents i.e. unemployment docs, tax forms, government assistance forms
 - Fixing a personal computer or laptop...even if they offer you money...tell them it is against the rules!!!
 - Any library related questions.
 - Please send these above issues to the library staff



GUIDELINES CON'T

- Miscellaneous issues
 - Use your judgment as to whether or not a user needs you to *show* or *do*. We prefer that you show the user so they are able to be independent the next time. However, some users simply need the task done for them
 - You do not have to deal with complaints. If there is a problem user please send them to the reference desk and we will deal with the issue
 - Please wear your volunteer name badge during all shifts
 - Please stay in the computer area during your shift
 - Make yourself visibly available to the computer users. This means no texting/cell phones, no socializing. IF and ONLY IF there are no computer lab users you may do homework
- Attendance and Absences
 - As Computer Squad volunteers, you represent the Palm Harbor Library and are expected to be available at the designated times. If you are unable to cover your shift, please call the Adult Reference Desk as soon as possible (784-3332 ext. 3006).
- If you are absent more than two times without calling, we will remove you from the Computer Squad rotation



TIPS

- Computer Squad-ers at Palm Harbor must be at least 14 years of age.
 - Teens must be reliable. To make this a smooth program you must have consistency
- We promote peer training! Any new Squad-ers get trained by veteran computer Squad-ers
- Try and enforce “visibility” and “predictably”
 - We try and make sure our teens are pro-active in helping. If they see a computer user struggling, have the teen jump up and ask if they would like help!
 - Make sure your computer lab users know about the program and make the teens visible to them
 - Train the teens to intercept any computer users asking for help before they get to the reference desk
 - No patron sign up necessary! The Squad-ers are there for “as-needed” instruction
 - Try to limit volunteer/patron interactions to max of 15 mins (most take less time!)
- Have a tub of antibacterial wipes handy! When lab is slow Squad-ers can clean keyboards, mice, etc.



Fun Facts!

- Computer Squad is a great way to earn Bright Futures Scholarship hours!
- Palm Harbor Library has 17 Computer Squad Volunteers
- From March 2009-March 2010 the Squad put in 1,200 volunteer hours!
- Many of our senior citizens have established a good rapport with our Squad-ers and ask for them by name!