



A YEAR OF PROGRAMS FOR

MILLENNIALS

AND MORE

AMY J. ALESSIO \ KATIE LAMANTIA \ EMILY VINCI



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DEDICATION

*For my family and the library patrons and staff
who continue to inspire us.*

-AA-

*For my family and friends who have always
been there for me, and the library community
and patrons—it is an honor to work with you.*

-KL-

*For my family for their unending support
and encouragement and my patrons for their
enthusiasm and helpful feedback.*

-EV-

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We thank the staff and patrons of the Schaumburg Township (Illinois) District Library for being so supportive of our programming and library.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *A Year of Programs for Millennials and More*. The programs in this manual are designed for young adults in their late teens, 20s, 30s, and 40s. It also suggests ways to reach out to these groups, market the programs, and bring these patrons into your library. Some programming, such as programs on job searches, will always draw people from all of these groups, but each of these groups will have specific frames of reference, needs, desires, and takeaway goals for the program. For example, people in their 30s with young children will have different information needs than those who are single in their 30s. Let's think more about each of these groups and the events typically happening in their lives.

Not Quite Teens, Not Quite Adults

The tumultuous high school years and late teen years are a busy time: school, sports, friends, social media, getting a driver's license, boyfriends, girlfriends, college, first jobs, and generally discovering who you are. It is the beginning stage of independence for many in this age group whether they are still in high school or recent graduates. Although libraries have traditionally offered teen programs, they have often been more successful at capturing the interests of the middle-school crowd. Capturing the 15–20 demographic is a challenge that goes beyond offering study spaces, booktalks, and craft programs; it's about capitalizing on their interests and making them see that the library goes beyond academics.

Changing the way teens view the library is no easy feat. But you can use programming topics teens are already highly engaged with that will offer teens a chance to socialize with their friends. Pop culture and nostalgia programs such as Throwback Halloween Night and Karaoke Night are easily adaptable and will engage older teens and create fun memories with friends. By associating more social and engaging events with the library, teens will keep coming back to the library as adults.

Many high school students are also looking for ways to positively change the world, and others simply need to fulfill volunteer hours. The Service Club, LGBT Pride Month, Memorial Day Service Fair, and Social Justice and Activism programs all provide service and volunteer options, plus they highlight great causes in the community that people may not be aware of. Create opportunities and a learning environment that expand teens' worldviews; you never know what issue or organization will spark an interest.

The majority of older teenagers are still enrolled in high school or college and spend most of their time at school. Stay connected with counselors, teachers, and the school board to share information and learn about the interests of teens in your community. If there is a community college within the library's service borders, coordinate with the librarian(s) to provide on-campus programming. The Community College Connections Club, presented later in this book, has a year of ideas for programming, and many can be adapted to suit high school students' needs. Visiting the high school and college campuses is critical to making library connections for both the students and librarians.

Totally 20s

The years between the ages of 20 and 29 are full of excitement and immense change. Any group of people in their 20s are likely to be in wildly different places in their lives—somewhere amid graduating from college and possibly graduate school, establishing careers, getting married, having babies, relocating, and, generally, figuring out how to be adults. Chances are a place they are *not* is at the library. That's not to say that people in their 20s don't use the public library at all. However, it's not typically the first place they look for relevant programs and events. Most people in their 20s are plenty comfortable with technology and its various uses, they have a social scene and have developed means for exploring their interests, and they consume culture in myriad ways. All of which is to say, you cannot necessarily expect those in the 20s demographic to come to you. You must go to them.

A huge part of meeting the social, informational, and entertainment needs of your 20s patrons is to meet them where they are. In terms of disseminating information, this means creating and making use of a presence on social media. Websites are great, but they are for people who already know about the programming in your library and are just looking for the facts. Using sites like Facebook and Twitter will allow the patrons you're already reaching to share the information with their friends and spread the word so others can discover your programming.

Several of the programs outlined in this book are great for off-site settings (Trivia Nights, Winery Tour and Tasting, and the Young Adult Books for Youngish Adults Club). Creating partnerships with local establishments is a great way not only to strengthen your library's ties to the community but also to reach potential patrons who may never set foot in the library. Instead of waiting for these people to come to the library, bring the library to them through off-site programming.

Programs geared toward people in their 20s need to have a social element as well. It can be difficult for a lot of people to make friends once out of the college environment, so a key element of creating successful library programs is making sure that the programs fill that need. The library can be a space to meet like-minded people, and programming should provide an opportunity for people to meet and get to know each other. The opportunities for socializing are obvious in programs like '90s Night and the Trivia Night series, but less obvious is something straightforward like Clutter Doctor. Still, creating a comfortable environment that encourages socializing is possible no matter what the program.

Trending for 30s

Folks in their 30s can be part of a few different groups: single professionals, married professionals, and parents (married or single). All have different needs, but few 30s have a lot of time to spare. They are used to downloading and accessing what they need online quickly. Many single 30s use online dating as a resource to meet people. Many have, or need to change, jobs and careers. Because people in their 30s are in such different places in their lives, each person will have unique library needs.

Online or frequent live demonstrations from the library that will easily fit into busy schedules will appeal to patrons in their 30s. Because of scheduling conflicts, the dad of two young children may not attend a program on how to download audiobooks onto his phone, but a handout and a quick demonstration that he can access while he's waiting in line to check out will help him.

All library resources save patrons money, but folks in their 30s will enjoy some services in particular. Those with children will enjoy free movies at night or on weekends, though they might not be able to attend regularly. Singles and married folks will enjoy free classes on things they have been meaning to try, but may not want to spend money on until they know they like it. It is important that these programs also have a social aspect because attendees will appreciate meeting others in their own age category and, especially, in a similar place in their life.

Many people in this age group may be new to the community. They might have moved to the area for a job or are buying their first home in the library community. These folks may not have a strong history with the area and do not know where to go for information on local preschools, 5K races, or volunteer opportunities. Several programs in this book help connect new community members in this age group to groups they will enjoy.

Juggling and Happy in the 40s

It can be a mistake to assume that all adults over a certain age enjoy the same topics at the library. Folks in their 40s could be parents of young children or tweens and teens. They could have college-age children. They could be caring for elderly parents. They could be struggling with divorce, layoffs, and more. They could be single and looking for ways to travel or invest. Many may have a bucket list of things they want to do before they turn 50 or before they retire. The library can make their life easier.

For example, searching on the Internet may not help connect these folks to healthy living. People in this group may also be self-conscious and need a comfortable environment in which to find the information they need. For example, the Fit Fair, 5K Club, and other programs in this book might not work well for people in their 40s who want to get into running if the program is filled with 20-somethings who run several marathons each year. But a Fit Fair or 5K Club just for people in their 40s can provide a good support group and a place to gather nonjudgmental information on health and running.

Even if people in their 40s are well informed about their own health, they may need to access information for other age groups. Someone in her 40s may do Iron

Man races each year yet need to know the latest research on health care or elder care for her parents. Making health resources and information on local senior living choices readily available for the person who is running in to get DVDs or looking on the website will help those in this age group.

Parenting doesn't get easier with age, and often new parents in their 40s may be older than other parents at school, and the library can be a place to meet other parents their age. People in their 40s with both young and older children will need to find programs for both age groups. Are all youth programs grouped together? Consider breaking them down by age in brochures and making them searchable by age on websites. The Parent Nights Club in this manual also discusses ways to introduce parents of young children to the library. Programs for entire families or service opportunities for the entire family may appeal to this age group.

Regardless of technology, the library is always a community center. People in their 40s may have fewer opportunities to make friends than other groups because of their many responsibilities. Programs targeted to 40s and advertised for people in their 30s and 40s will help provide opportunities for people in their 40s to meet new people and keep their social life active, while encouraging them to keep coming to the library for themselves as well as their families.

All the groups have library needs in common. The Youth Services group in your library likely already offers programs targeted for particular grades or ages. In the same way, adults have different issues and will benefit from targeted events when possible.

Why Should You Offer Programs for These Groups?

The Schaumburg Township (Illinois) District Library has had an active Teen Advisory Board (TAB) for sixteen years, started and run by Amy Alessio with other staff. In fact, Katie LaMantia was a teen member of the Teen Advisory Board at the library from the ages of 12 to 18. As a former TAB member, she fondly remembers participating in many of the fun social and volunteer activities at the library. However, after graduating from high school she did not come back to the public library until after graduating from college. When she became the teen librarian at the library, she began to notice this same trend among graduating teens.

A team of three librarians and a manager, including Katie LaMantia and Emily Vinci, met to address this growing issue. One of the biggest problems the group identified was the lack of programming to engage people in their 20s and 30s. As a result of this series of meetings, the NextGen group was formed to create a brand and a series of programs to target people in their 20s and 30s at the Schaumburg Township District Library. In October 2013, NextGen—"a social group for people in their 20s and 30s"—officially launched with a Throwback Halloween program quite similar to the one described in this book. Turnout for the program exceeded expectations, and the group continued to take form with a logo, a Facebook group, an e-newsletter, and a website.

NextGen now holds two to three programs a month, including a bimonthly book club and a monthly trivia night. Peppered among those are stand-alone programs designed to fit into the themes identified by the NextGen team as important and relevant to this demographic, such as pop culture/entertainment, education/information, hobby/DIY, and personal growth. Throughout all NextGen programs, the team strives to create a social, participatory experience.

The Schaumburg Township District Library has benefited from the NextGen program and from engaging these groups in several ways. Several programs are offered out in the community at coffee shops, community and college campuses, craft stores, or restaurants. These locations attract new people, who then come to the library to attend more events and to register. NextGen patrons often use social media and make posts or publish photos to their friends, further promoting the library. The NextGen collection has increased fiction circulation as well as popular nonfiction in the featured categories. The collection and displayed titles have materials on events nearby, which promotes programs again. We often hear from this group that they “had no idea the library had events for people in their age group.”

This book will offer ideas for monthly themed clubs as well as individual program ideas for each month. The ideas for monthly clubs are designed for short sessions, while the individual programs include details from shopping lists to setup steps and marketing. Some programs are targeted to a specific age subgroup and will specify who may get the most out of the event.

How can a public library specify age groups for a program? The authors of this book all have experience working with designated ages within the library. Although a few patrons may not be happy that they are not invited to attend a particular event, those who are will get much more out of the experience from interacting with others in the appropriate age range. People in their 20s and 30s may be turned off by events that draw mostly folks in their 60s and 80s and vice versa. Older teens may find little in common with people in their 40s. It is always possible to offer a program more than once, making changes to accommodate more of the public if desired. Under the Variations heading in each program, we suggest options to make that program relevant to other age groups.

How to Use This Book

Each chapter begins with an introduction to the month and an overview of the programs, including a brief discussion of why those programs work well at that time of year. Under each month, programming ideas are listed. Details for these stand-alone events are provided under the following headings.

PREPARATION TIME ~~~~~

The preparation time estimate incorporates marketing, shopping, and setting up. It does not indicate just the time that will be spent preparing on the day of the event;

rather, it includes the entire time that will likely be spent planning. This will vary depending on the size of the library and the number of attendees and on whether marketing is handled by other staff in the library.

LENGTH OF PROGRAM ~~~~~

Program length is an estimate of how much time will be needed to complete the listed activities.

NUMBER OF PATRONS ~~~~~

This is intended to be an optimal number for the event. Each situation is different, and activities can be adjusted. Everyone has experienced both the program with unexpectedly huge attendance and the event with only a few participants, but the anticipated number is roughly targeted and can allow for some flexibility.

SUGGESTED AGE RANGE ~~~~~

Designated ages may seem oddly specific in some cases, but we are drawing on experience to indicate who may get the most out of a particular event. This book is designed to target programs to four different age categories, but the variations offered in each section will help you get the most out of library program resources and time.

SHOPPING LIST ~~~~~

The program descriptions are designed for you to use as blueprints, including lists of specific supplies. Items in the list do not always need purchasing, such as a laptop and projector. The shopping list is meant to ensure that everything essential to run that program is at hand.

SETUP ~~~~~

Activities listed in this section specify marketing tips (sometimes months ahead), time spent contacting speakers in some cases, and room setup the day of the event. Shopping time is not listed, but should be assumed necessary for each event.

MAKE IT HAPPEN ~~~~~

Specific actions required on the day of the event are listed in this section.

VARIATIONS

Look at this section for ways to make programs appeal to different ages or for ways to take the topic covered to online media for virtual participation.

POWER PROMOTION

Marketing the Oscar Night program may be very different from marketing the Microwave Magic and Easy-Bake Oven Adventures program. This section gives tips on subject-inspired marketing where applicable. Simpler versions of the individual events could be used for the monthly clubs. For example, the Smart Tips for Self-Publishing program in December would appeal to members of the Writers' Workshop, and some of the self-publishing information could be distilled into a handout or a brief discussion for the club members. Another way to market programs that cross the interest levels of different age groups is to schedule them directly after a club meeting. Members could stay for the event, which could draw in more people as well. Yet another way to cross-market is to advertise the program instead of the club meeting that month. The program can be expanded to fill more time than the usual meeting, and members can be encouraged to attend along with other interested patrons.

CLUBS

After the individual programs have been introduced, we offer an additional chapter on clubs. The clubs can be used in a few different ways. The activities in that chapter are grouped by theme and are designed to fill shorter monthly or recurring meetings. The ideas listed for each club are not designed by themselves to fill a stand-alone program. However, some of the activities could be combined to make larger events or to gauge interest in a topic for a possible club. For example, suggested topics for meetings of the Writers' Workshop include queries, contests, and the business of writing. Those topics could easily fill a 60- to 90-minute, one-night information program for interested patrons. Additionally, many of the stand-alone programs from the monthly chapters can be adapted for use as shorter programs for the clubs.

Few programs run the same way twice in public libraries, and knowing the needs and desires of patrons in the community may change how programs are handled. This book is meant as a guide to inspire.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

AMY J. ALESSIO is an award-winning, part-time teen librarian at the Schaumburg Township District Library in Schaumburg, Illinois. She recently wrote *Mind-Bending Mysteries and Thrillers for Teens: A Programming and Readers' Advisory Guide* for ALA Editions. Her first young adult mystery, *Taking the High Ground*, was published in 2013. She has enjoyed teaching online courses for YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) and webinars for ALA along with many live presentations. She has given many talks on vintage cookbooks based on her passion, featured at www.amyalessio.com. To feed her book addiction, she reviews teen and adult books for *Crimespree Magazine* and *Booklist* magazine.

KATIE LaMANTIA is an award-winning teen librarian at the Schaumburg Township District Library in Schaumburg, Illinois. A former Teen Advisory Board member and current teen librarian and 20–30-something, she has a personal as well as a professional interest in serving the needs of this demographic. She has presented at multiple state and national library conferences about libraries, teens, and technology. When not running teen programs, tinkering with technology, and finding amazing books for young adults, she enjoys reading, writing, traveling, and extreme adventure activities.

EMILY VINCI is a popular services librarian specializing in adult readers' advisory at the Schaumburg Township District Library in Schaumburg, Illinois. She has interests in expanding library appreciation and knowledge of comics and graphic novels, as well as catering to hard-to-reach demographics such as the 20s and 30s crowd. A pop culture fiend, she is always looking for new ways to incorporate popular culture into the public library.

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