

APL President's Day Planning Retreat
February 19, 2007

Individual Exercise #2
Volunteers – Short Answer

Attendees were asked to list three (3) ideas for how the library could use volunteers to increase productivity and/or get more things done. Responses are compiled below:

- Atrium maintenance – 2
 - Free volunteers for other tasks
 - Watering and trimming
- Book displays
 - Have volunteers generate ideas
 - Stock displays
- Book drop – 5
 - Help check-in
 - Sort and put on carts, particularly in the mornings – 3
- Book sale
- Cat – 2
 - Keep in atrium due to allergies
 - To catch mice on weekends
 - Volunteers can care for cat
- Circulation
 - Person to circ only videos
- Cleaning – 8
 - Cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, etc. – 5
 - Walk around picking up and straightening
- Dusting materials – 3
 - Early morning
 - Non-circulating reference books
 - Stacks/shelves
- FOAL board members
- Fundraising – 2
 - Kid's fun-raiser
 - Small amounts
- Greeters – 6
 - Directing patrons to what they need – 3
- Help parents with children
 - Keep track of them
- Holds – 6
 - Help people find holds when out for public
 - Pull holds – 2
 - Put holds in order
 - Shelve reserves when they go on the floor –2

- Interns – 2
 - College or high school aged
 - Do higher skilled volunteer jobs
 - Lead book discussions
 - Positions for students thinking about library school
 - They get experience for their resumes
 - We get help with higher level tasks
 - Teach computer classes
- Inventory
 - Scanning barcodes into a computer
- Make building more user friendly
 - More plants
- Media
 - Clean CDs
 - Watch broken media
- Meeting room set-up
- Monitor computers/staff computer lab – 2
- Programming assistance – 13
 - Adult – 2
 - Bi-lingual volunteers to aid and assist with programs done in English
 - Children's – 2
 - Make greater use of ethnic populations
 - Organize book discussion groups in the community
 - Spanish speaker to provide story times
 - Story time readers
- Processing materials – 2
- Promote the library in the community – 6
 - Advocacy – 2
 - Advocate for more money from city
 - Booth at farmers' market to tell people about library programs
 - Utter positive public sentiments about staff and library on a weekly basis
- Pull items for Tech Services that need work done on them (as they drop off the holds lists).
- Recruit other volunteers
- Screen telephone calls
 - Provide hours, policies, etc.
- Security – 9
 - Front gate security – 5
 - Have a trained person walk around to stop/prevent problems
 - Use students from technical colleges that are in criminal justice program
- Self-check – 7
 - Have volunteers at self-checks on busy days to encourage use
 - Help patrons with self-check – 6
- Shelf Reading – 11
 - Adopt a shelf program
 - With training

- Shelving – 21
 - Alphabetize magazines old magazines to prepare for shelving
 - Alphabetize adult DVD cart in circ workroom
 - Carts in children's
 - Early morning
 - Media – 3
 - Needs to be more accurate – 2
 - Put carts in order – 3
 - Put new books out and continually straighten them
- Tap retired library workers (from APL or other public/private libraries) to help out

Notes and Comments

As someone who works a lot with volunteers, they can also take up a large amount of staff time, especially the teen volunteers.

My work with volunteers takes up a HUGE amount of my time during summer, and I have SERIOUS reservations about whether it's worth it.

Overall, not sure I'm a fan of using volunteers. I think they take away from our cause to keep/hire more full-time staff.

Shelf-reading – items found quicker makes less staff time spent searching for items.
Straightened shelves look better – maybe more items are then checked-out.

Volunteers should lead adult programs since we don't have much staff for that and it's a lower priority. Volunteers should be trained/checked-on by adult programming librarian. Volunteers can be advocates for library use. They could do mini-fundraisers, bring collections to preschools where their kids are, mention to Cub Scout groups, book clubs, etc.