

Teen Council: Getting teens involved at the library

By JENNIFER COSTLEY

Five years ago I had just graduated library school and, dreaming of becoming a teen services librarian, I volunteered in the teen room of the Beaverton City Library. Beaverton, with its service population of 142,000, was fully invested in its teen patron base. In the short time I was there I got to see a full renovation of the teen room, excellent teen programming and interaction between the staff and teens that made me proud to be starting the profession. What made Beaverton's Teen Services successful? Two things: two full time teen services librarians and a Teen Council.

Upon moving to Pendleton and taking the job of Youth Services Librarian I knew that having a teen room and full-time teen librarian

were outside of the budget, but I also knew that providing teens a space and generation-based programming was an essential part of my job. After all, the library has a lot to offer teens. It can serve as a safe place for them to hang out, a resource for homework assistance, and an opportunity to contribute. Pendleton couldn't be Beaverton, that much was clear, but we could create a welcoming space and we could give teens buy-in through the creation of a teen council.

The Pendleton Public Library Teen Council started two years ago with the help of city volunteer coordinator Tiffany Hegarty, who works tirelessly to ensure that teens who express interest are both dependable and en-



Pendleton Library's current Teen Council (clockwise, from top): Kaya Palmore, Sam Attridge, Kipling Bose and Daphne Chen.

gaged. What does the teen council do? They plan and implement their own programs, make purchase suggestions and serve as advocates for the library among their peers.

Currently both Pendleton Public Library and Hermiston Public Library have active Teen Councils. If your library does not have a teen council, that doesn't mean your teenager can't help improve their library. If you think your teen might be interested in helping the library provide teen-friendly service, please give your approachable local librarian a call and ask what volunteer opportunities are available.

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