



LOS ANGELES
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Invites You

TEENS!!

*Come to our Teen Meeting!
Make your Branch Library work for you.
Give us suggestions to improve library service to teens.*

**We will meet the following
Wednesdays from
6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

**January 12
February 16
March 16
April 13**

**EXPOSITION PARK
DR. MARY McLEOD BETHUNE REGIONAL BRANCH**
Los Angeles Public Library
3665 S. Vermont Ave.
(213) 732-0169

M0194

January 26, 1994

To: L [REDACTED], Young Adult Librarian, 06 Exposition Park
From: B [REDACTED], Sr. Librarian, 06 Exposition Park
Re: Teen Council

I received your January 18, 1994, memo written in response to my January 15, instructional memo regarding the need to establish a viable teen council at Exposition Park. Your memo gives me the impression that you have little interest in carrying out my instructions. Regardless of your feelings, my instructions still stand. Los Angeles Public Library Administration has instructed Young Adult Librarians to establish viable teen councils and it is your responsibility to do so.

I expect you to do a new round of school visits. You are to promote the teen council and to recruit active members. Schedule visits at St. Agnes and St. Vincent's immediately. Please have the dates for these two visits on my desk by Tuesday, February 1. I also expect you to promote the teen council with regular library users. Talk to our teenagers--many are here every day. Also Karen Bass, Executive Director, of the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment has expressed an interest in getting some of her teenage clientele involved in Exposition Park's Teen Council. You were given her business card. You should contact her immediately.

I will expect to see at least five community teens at the February teen council meeting.

MEMO

To: B██████████, Senior Librarian, 06 Exposition Park Reg.Branch
From: L██████████, Librarian II, 06 Exposition Park Reg.Branch
Date: Feb. 1, 1994
Subject: School visits (2-2-94 and 2-3-94) re teen council

You recently ordered me to visit schools to promote the teen council meetings. I then requested information as to what I should say to the students and teachers. Why should any teens come to our meeting? -- just to stare at the ceiling? There is no food or other bribes (to attract the more materialistic teens). There are no programs planned. Nothing at all.

It is the responsibility of the regional manager to provide funding for these things (see the Youth at Risk training manual, p.2, para 5, s.v. "Overview"). Furthermore, our branch does not have a Friends of the Library group to help provide funds.

Please let me know, prior to my school visit tomorrow, what to tell the students and teachers. I can invite them to come to the meetings (I will hand out flyers) but if they ask why they should come, I will be at a loss for an answer. I'll have to tell them I am visiting their school because I was ordered by my supervisor to do so (I am only following orders) and that if they have any further questions they should call our branch and speak to you.

February 7, 1994

TO: L [REDACTED], Young Adult Librarian, OBXP
FROM: B [REDACTED], Branch Librarian, OBXP
RE: Teen Council

EA

I have received your January 27 and February 1, memos regarding the formation of a Teen Council here at Exposition Park. As the Young Adult Librarian it is your responsibility to see to it that a Teen Council is formed. It will take some work on your part but it is not an impossible task.

At this point you should be developing two or three potential ideas for Teen Council projects or activities. That way you will have some ideas to share with teens when you visit schools, etc. During school visits and when talking to teens in the library you can ask them to comment on your ideas as well as having them propose ideas for projects. Make sure you talk to teens in the library they can be a valuable source of information and could give you ideas on how to attract other teens to the library.

Talk to your peers. They may be able to tell you about what has worked and what has not worked in their branches. Also it might be possible for you to visit and observe one or two Teen Council meetings held in other branches. This might also give you some ideas.

If you give this charge some thought you might even be able to think of ways to combine the Teen Council activities with your computer interests. For example the Teen council could be organized and trained to work as peer computer tutors in the Homework Center. Or the Council might develop some sort of newsletter that includes reviews, quizzes, puzzles, etc. and print it on a Homework Center computer. Or the Council might become a special interest Friends of the Library group. These are just three ideas. If you work at it I am sure you could develop others. Ultimately it will be the council members that pick the projects and activities. But with some well thought out ideas and a show of enthusiasm on your part, you could steer them into a project that would interest both you and the council members.

Until you have organized a group and developed some project ideas, there is no need to discuss funding options. At present there is nothing to fund. When you have the beginnings of a group and a specific activity in mind then I will arrange for us to meet with Mrs. C [REDACTED] to discuss our options.

February 25, 1994

To: L [REDACTED], Young Adult Librarian, Exposition Park
From: B [REDACTED], Branch Librarian, Exposition Park
Re: Teen Council

I would like a progress report on your plans for the Teen Council.

In my February 7 memo I gave you two or three potential ideas for Teen Council projects. Although you do not have to develop those particular ideas, you must develop at least two potential projects. You must also actively continue your efforts to recruit council members. How many teens have you actually spoken to in the library?

Now that the local schools are back in session, you must arrange school visits to Manual Arts High School and Foshay and John Adams Junior High Schools. The purpose of these visits is to promote the Teen Council. During these visits you are to discuss your potential projects and to encourage the teens to discuss the merits of each projects. These visits should be scheduled for the end of March or the beginning of April.

Teen councils have been successfully developed all over the city. It is not an unreasonable or impossible professional assignments. Your lack of progress in this endeavor brings into question your ability to accomplish an assigned professional task.

Please prepare a written progress report for me. I would like to have this report no later than March 9.

March 10, 1994

TO: L [REDACTED], Young Adult Librarian, Exposition Park
FROM: B [REDACTED], Branch Librarian, Exposition Park
RE: Teen Council

In a January 26 memo I instructed you that you were responsible for establishing a viable Teen Council. This was a task assigned to all Young Adult Librarians. You were also instructed to recruit at least five teens to attend the February Teen Council meeting. No teens attended that meeting and Exposition Park still does not have a viable Teen Council.

In a February 25 memo I made some suggestions for possible Teen Council projects and/or activities. You were directed to talk to our teen patrons and to schedule school visits at Foshay and John Adams Junior Highs and Manual Arts High School to promote the council and to recruit members. I asked you to prepare a progress report on Teen Council plans, etc. and to have this report to me by March 9. As of today, March 10, I have still not received your report.

You are directed to prepare this report and have it to me no later than Tuesday, March 15. Failure to prepare and submit this report by March 15 will be considered an act of insubordination and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

To: B [REDACTED], Senior Librarian, 06 Exposition Park Reg.Branch
From: L [REDACTED], Librarian II, 06 Exposition Park Reg.Branch
Date: Mar 11, 1994
Subject: Teen Council Memos and Threats

In my January 27, 1994 memo to you, I stated the following regarding the teen council:

"Paragraph 5, page 2, of "Overview" of Los Angeles Public Library Youth At Risk Project, Young Adult Library Training, January 1993 manual (copy of said page is attached hereto) states that the regional manager is responsible for providing funding for the teen council:

"The Regional Manager is responsible for obtaining corporate sponsors for each of the Teen Councils to provide snacks, goods, and/or services to further the aims of the Teen Council. . . ." (emphasis added).

I have received NOT ONE PENNY to provide anything at all for this program. Nevertheless, you are ordering me to visit schools and talk to teenagers to persuade them to come to our meeting room -- for what? -- to sit for an hour and look at the ceiling?

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Your Teen Council order -- ordering me to produce 5 teens at the next meeting -- is impossible for me to carry out.

I cannot kidnap 5 teens and bring them into the room. This is physically, as well as legally, impossible. Your supervisory jurisdiction (whatever your view on this matter), does not reach to the level of ordering me to do illegal acts.

In addition, you have taken actions to actually limit my ability to carry out your orders. For example, last week, out of the blue, you proclaimed a ban on librarians using the reference desk computer (for 5 hours of the day). While most of the library world, and the world in general, is moving in the direction of increased computerization, you choose to take a giant step backward. I do my project planning, including contact information, and log of conversations, using my database program. Therefore, by prohibiting computer use -- apart from the other disadvantages -- you make it much more difficult for me to carry out your order.

Therefore, I am, once again, requesting clarification and instructions as to how to carry out your order."

Your February 7, 1994 memo responding to my memo, states that I should "develop two or three potential ideas for Teen Council projects or activities".

Now, I can come up with plenty of ideas for activities or projects (e.g., chess club, computer club, concerts in the library, homework center extension type programs, discussion groups, etc.etc.). If there is funding and support for my ideas, I am able to implement them.

However, this has nothing to do with the TEEN COUNCIL.

I already organized a Teen Council.

It did what it was supposed to do.

The purpose of the Teen Council was to receive input from teens (via prepared survey forms) of what type of library services they want from us.

We had our meeting(s), received our surveys, implemented one of the suggestions received (viz. the Teen Music collection), and that is that.

Now the teen council is finished, dead, vanished -- poof.

It has served its purpose. The grant money has already gone into whosever pocket it was supposed to go into.

Our branch never received one penny for the purpose of promoting or implementing the Teen Council program. I would like to know where did the thousands of dollars of grant money go.

To specifically meet your request for a report on my plans for the Teen Council, the report is as follows:

--I have zero plans for the Teen Council -- .

Please note, I am not refusing to do anything.

Therefore, your threats of disciplinary action -- for "insubordination" -- are greatly misplaced.

I simply don't know what you want. If you can explain what it is, exactly, that you want, then I will do it.

Your vague orders -- "you must talk to teens about the teen council" -- without specifying what I should talk to them about -- are impossible to carry out.

What am I supposed to say to a teen (say Joe):

Me -- "Hello Joe, let's talk about our Teen Council.

Joe -- "Sure man, but like what's a teen council, like what do you do, what's it for?"

Me -- "The Teen Council is a group of teens that meets in the meeting room of our library once a month on a Wednesday evening. Why don't you come and join us?"

Joe -- "Sure man, but like, what do you do there in the meeting room?"

Me -- "Well, uh, we discuss ideas for what we will do in the future and try to get your input about what improvements you and other teens would like to see at our library branch".

Joe -- "Sounds exciting man. But like why don't you just get a suggestion box for that"?

Me -- "Uh, well, er, you're right, Joe. But you see, ah, our library system got a grant of money from somewhere to have this thing called 'Teen Council' -- uh, er, unfortunately our branch doesn't get any of the money, -- ah, but anyway, you see, we need to have a Teen Council -- even if we just sit and stare at the wall."

Joe -- "Oh, I got it now, man. It's like a meditation group for teens -- sounds interesting -- I'll see if I can make it".

I don't think Joe, or any other teenager, is going to come to our Teen Council meetings.