



Contact: Lori Wilcox
Chicago Heights Library Board Chair
Office: 1-708-755-5304
Fax: 1-708-756-5310
lwilcox@chicagoheights.net

Chicago Heights Public Library's Outreach Initiative

Article

Please read the article I co-authored on my passion behind providing services for teens.

Publication: *Male-2-Male Mentoring Is Working in Chicago Libraries*

http://www.infotoday.com/mls/nov07/Nichols_Wilcox.shtml

Statement from Board Chair Lori Wilcox

Our programming supports the community by providing patrons with many diverse and none traditional services with the ultimate goal of informing them on how to effectively navigate the information world. Ultimately, the Library strives to support Lifelong Learning by providing programs and resources that help them explore new ideas and learn new skills. We are excited and privileged to offer these services to our patrons and residents.

Lori Wilcox, Library Board Chair

Teen Outreach Initiative & Super Saturdays:

Topic: Connecting Teen and Meeting Them in Their Space

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to get teen more active in the library and enthusiastic about library programs and services, creating a Digital Media Space can be the draw. It is a place that teens can go to and record videos, use social media, create projects, and engage with the community and their peers on their own terms. As an advocate for providing library services to the at risk population the ultimate goal is to connect boys to books, by providing a creative space to meet them where they are.

In the summer of 2014 the inauguration of the *Teen Super Saturdays* Program was launched in efforts to engage the Teens prior to the completion of the Teen Zone and Music Studio. As a part of the After School Initiative we are partnering with the Chicago Heights Park District's Teen Reach Program to offer programming during the week also.

Eliminating the Digital Divide:

The Chicago Heights Public Library in partnership with Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will offers basic and advanced computer literacy classes.

The program will feature computer literacy and educational services available to the community. Additionally, Chicago Heights program staff will accept RSVP list for residents of Chicago Heights that want to begin the obtainment of several computer literacy certificate programs such as IC3 (Basic Computer Knowledge), Microsoft Literacy Certification and the National Workforce Readiness Certification. We are also the IC3 site for the local high school.

The Chicago Heights Public Library has been a reliable source of information and assistance to residents of the Chicago Heights community for more than a century. We serve a wide range of ages with solid and diversified programming for the residents of Chicago Heights.

The Digital Divide Programs primary learning objectives include understanding basic technology terminology and equipment, using computers and productivity software to organize and create information, and using computers and communications software to access and transmit information. The program offers digital job readiness training, career exploration and work experiences. The program is open to all residents of Chicago Heights with programming beginning with youth and advancing to the valued and respected senior citizen population, who desire the need to be computer literate.

Little Free Libraries:

The Chicago Heights Public Library initiated and coordinated the *Little Free Libraries Literacy Outreach Campaign*. We want to place 26 small book sharing stations throughout local Chicago Heights Schools, Parks and social service agencies. . The idea behind the Little Free Libraries is providing free and easily accessible books for the community with the policy of “take a book leave a book”, allowing the reader to take a book and replace it with another one, perhaps one of their own they are done with. This project is designed to promote literacy in the parks and garner a community outreach effort surrounded around families reading together.

Union Street Gallery and its artists were invited to decorate the Little Free Libraries and further the project by making the libraries into small works of public art. Each Library was hand painted, designed and autographed by one of Union Street Gallery’s local professional artists.

After School Snack Program:

We also offer an after school snack program through Liberty Services and the (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service program.

Bloom Township Unincorporated Residents Library Card Partnership:

In partnership with Bloom Township we offer subsidized library cards to unincorporated residences. The township offsets the non-resident fees.