

Dear Tomball Economic Development Corporation,

The LSC-Tomball Community Library is committed to providing innovative services within the greater Tomball area for all age groups including the local youth. One of our current goals is to improve services for the local teens and to create an efficient teen space via its very much needed reorganization. The purpose of the reorganization is to provide the teens with the improved access to advanced technology, resources, educational opportunities and other relevant services. The goal is to create the space that will provide teens' development through their guidance into adulthood, workforce education initiatives, improving their quality of life, and various experiences to prepare them for the future. These resources will be also applicable to different age groups.

We are excited for the opportunity to partner with the Tomball Economic Development Corporation and thankful for the support.

Problem Statement and Needs Assessment

There are few free spaces in the Tomball area where teens can go to. We would like our teens space to become one of the teens' destinations.

"The allotment of space in public buildings clearly illustrates which groups matter and which do not," (Velasquez, 2016)¹. Currently the LSC-Tomball Community Library does not provide an adequate space for the teens in our community. The current YA space has the following service obstacles:

- Lack of the regular and advanced equipment appealing to this age group
- Lack of the services for teens due to the lack of the above stated equipment
- Outdated and unappealing décor
- No librarian service point (inability to offer specialized teen services, difficulty offering programs, inability to provide consistent technical support in the YA Space and to secure the space)

Research shows that teens from low-income households have limited access to technology, resulting in fewer opportunities to become technologically literate. Studies from the Pew Research Center have found that households that make less than \$30,000 a year are unlikely to have smartphones, computers, tablets or access to the internet at home, which leaves them "more likely to face obstacles in navigating this increasingly digital environment" (Vogels, 2021)². The updated YA Space can bridge this economic gap to improve career readiness and quality of life by providing access to advanced technology and related services.

¹ Velasquez, J. (2016, August 31). A place of their own. American Libraries Magazine. <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/09/01/library-teen-spaces-place-of-their-own/>.

² Vogels, E. A. (2021, June 22). Digital divide persists even as Americans with lower incomes make gains in tech adoption. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/06/22/digital-divide-persists-even-as-americans-with-lower-incomes-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>

Teen spaces reorganization have been proven to be successful in other public libraries (I.e., Logan Library in Philadelphia, the Los Angeles Public Library, the Orland Park Library and several others)³. The results of the on the Chicago Public Library reported that:

...youth of all participation types reported more involvement with their chosen interest(s) than they had when they first came...teens claimed they had improved in at least one digital media skill...participants reported that their participation had improved their academic skills...helping them communicate better with adults and improve their writing skills...finally, participants had reported [that the project] had helped them understand more about the opportunities available to them after high school (Sebring)⁴.

The Teens space reorganization represents Phase 2 of the Tomball Innovation Lab initiative that started in 2019 and had its grand opening on January 28, 2020. This initiative was supported by the Tomball Chamber of Commerce, the Tomball Economic Development Corporation, Tomball ISD, HCA-Houston Healthcare Tomball and the city of Tomball. The investment between HCPL and outside agencies totaled over \$45,000 (funds were used to purchase advanced technical equipment such as a laser cutter, 3D printers, laptops, and other). The addition of the TIL showed significant increase in community engagement and participation in technology-focused classes and programs*:

	January 2019-February 2019	January 2020-February 2020
Technology related programs	40	53
Average attendance	69	363
Average technology classes offered	43	70
Average technology focused contact hours	187	785

*Statistics are prior March 2020 (due to the pandemic).

The Space

The YA space will provide educational opportunities to our teens, jobs preparation and career development, technological literacy, social literacy and leadership experiences.

³ Kozlowicz, C. (2020, January 26). Menomonee falls public library plans to create a teen center. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. <https://www.jsonline.com/story/communities/northwest/news/menomonee-falls/2020/01/23/menomonee-falls-public-library-include-teen-center-improvements/4530436002/>

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<https://why.org/articles/at-rejuvenated-logan-library-room-for-the-noisy-joy-of-teenage-kicks/>

Lange, A. (2018, May 24). Young adult architecture. Curbed. <https://archive.curbed.com/2018/5/24/17389648/library-architecture-teens-public-space>

⁴ Sebring, P. A., Brown, E. R., Julian, K. M., Ehrlich, S. B., Spote, S. E., Bradley, E., & Meyer, L. (2013). Teens, digital media, and the Chicago public library. University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research

Teen-Focused Furniture:

It is essential to provide teens with appealing décor, age-appropriate furniture and specialized librarian services. To this end we have researched furniture that is appealing, mobile and encourages project collaboration and ease of use for YA Space resources.

- Minimalistic service desk
 - Specialized, non-invasive or intimidating young adult librarian presence in the young adult space
 - Increases young adult reference and guidance for technology use
 - Librarians can supervise the YA Space, secure YA Space technology while not appearing invasive
- Modern furniture
 - Multi-functional furniture
 - Mobile chairs and tables are easily arranged for focused programming as well as casual collaboration and socialization
 - Chairs with power sources for charging wireless devices, moveable footstools with storage for backpacks and textbooks, mobile side tables for holding devices and books
 - Dividers in order to section off the room for programs while still allowing access to the YA space for casual use.

Estimated Cost for space remodel and refurnish: \$17,674

Featured Technology and Related Programs/Activities

The teen space must remain up-to-date with technology and equipment that is attractive and engaging with teens. Digital literacy is crucial for success in today's workforce, and access to these advanced technologies will also support learning and development in problem solving, health and wellness, and social skills.

Some of the proposed equipment:

- Digital Table – an interactive smart table with a touch screen interface. It has access to the internet and multiple activities via downloadable applications on several topics (I.e., education prep – Acellus Student; resume building – Resume Maker Professional 20; language learning – DuoLingo, art – Sketchbook Pro, Animation Desk Classic, Adobe Creative Cloud; design and drawing CorelCAD, Inkscape; and others). The table is compatible with multiple devices. Planned programs to use the digital table include Teen Tech Tuesdays, Career Workshops, and Robotics/Engineering Challenges.
- Digital Wall - a large screen display on one of the space's walls. (I.e., hosting virtual visits from local to international guests, virtual seminars, public speaking and presentations opportunities, collaborative learning and gaming) Planned programs to use the digital wall include special virtual events, Teen Anime Club, and Teen Advisory Group.
- Virtual reality headsets – wireless with realistic virtual experiences through downloadable apps or via Internet connection (cognitive and well-being applications – VRHealth Portal, Appility; interactive interview practice – VirtualSpeech Training; education - virtual tours of worldwide historical locations and museums; health – Human Anatomy VR to explore the human body) Planned programs to use virtual reality include special Quest, Focus on Art, and Teen Tech Tuesday.

Estimated Cost for Technology and Equipment: \$29,940

Total estimated cost: \$47,614

Desired Outcomes and Measurements

Desired Outcomes

Program: Teen Space Reorganization

Situation: Currently the LSC-Tomball Community Library does not provide an adequate space for the teens in our community

Inputs (What we invest)	Outputs (What we do and who we do it to.)		Outcomes – Impact (The incremental events/changes that occur as a result of the outputs)		
	Activities	Participation	Short	Medium	Long
Funding Advanced technology Engaged and creative staff TEDC support	Marketing and outreach Programs and events Career Workshops Creative Writing Group Technology and computer programs Professional visits Art and design programs Teen Advisory Group	Customers (teens) Community Teens Community Partners Families Teens School groups Other libraries	Improved access to advanced technology in the library Increased participation in a variety of library programs Increased connection with peers Increased creative expression Increased literacy: general, technology, health	Increased creative and practical application of technology skills Increased social skills and confidence with others Increased skills with particular creative expression (more skilled at digital drawing, for example) Forward thinking attitude towards career opportunities	Improved quality of life due to increased literacy skills Engagement with job-skill and education related activities Solid social skills and social confidence Decreased anxiety and uncertainty toward shift to adulthood Lifelong library users Independent learners Increased collaboration with partners

Assumptions

A dedicated teen space in the library is an ideal space for teens to gain career development skills, technological literacy, social literacy and educational experiences

External Factors

Covid has delayed reorganization, and re-introducing the teen space will be challenging after a long time

Performance Indicators of Success:

Quantitative:

- Increase in teen usage of the YA Space
- Increase in attendance/participation of teen programs
- Increased variety of teen programs offered
- Increased teen usage of advanced technology and TIL equipment

Qualitative:

- Positive public feedback of the YA Space services via
 - surveys,
 - teen advisory group feedback
 - comment cards
 - impact stories

Sample of Planned YA Space Programs

- **Bi-Weekly Career Workshops:** Centered around job and career relate themes, these workshops can help to focus career goals, write resumes, practice interview skills, and can use the available technology (iPad, touch table, ect) to boost teens' technical skills. Guest speakers and professional contacts would be a great option here as well.
- **Weekly Teen Writers' Group:** Creative focus, writing, utilizing library resources to learn about publishing. Writing and language skills are extremely important for young people entering the workforce, and this program will help to increase competence and confidence.
- **Weekly Teen Tech Tuesdays:** Teens will focus on learning technology skills through lessons and free experimentation with interactive smart table, robotics kits, VR, and more. The goal is to develop confidence with technical applications and critical thinking skills.
- **Weekly Teen Anime Club:** In this club, teens can interact and develop social skills around a shared interest in anime and Japanese art/culture. Here, they can utilize the iPad and smart table to create their own art and animation projects, and also connect with other Innovation Lab equipment such as the 3D printer and laser cutter.
- **Weekly Teen Gaming Fridays:** Through collaborative and educational gaming we can encourage literacy activities like reading, writing & creating, as well as co-operative play and problem solving. Many games are themed around creating and learning, as well as being entertaining to play.
- **Bi-weekly Family Saturday:** Allow for the community to come in and use YA Room technology with guidance from YA Room staff. Getting parents and families of teens involved with activities in the Teen Space is important to maintain long-term engagement.
- **Weekly Homeschool groups:** A specific time to accommodate homeschooled teens during the day. The Teen Space will give homeschooled teens an opportunity to socialize, access new technology, and develop life and job-related skills.
- **Special events:** Through outreach to YA authors, other teen groups, and career professionals, the Teen Space will become a hub for teens to gain new information and perspectives on career options, how to improve their quality of life, and how to enhance their education and vocational opportunities.
- **Monthly Robotics Basics Build:** Go over the basics of building robots using the Mindstorm kits. This would cover basic builds that help understand different motor functions and coding to utilize those tools.
- **Quarterly Robotics Challenge:** Create challenges that must be completed by a robot built from these kits. Participants would have multiple days to design and build a robot that will then have to be tested by the challenges laid out ahead of time.
- **Weekly Free Build:** Allow kits to be checked out by patrons for use in the YA room with supervision. This allows free flow creative building and design.
- **Monthly Arduino Kit Projects:** Create programs that will focus on different aspects of the tools available in the Arduino kit to showcase how they can be used to create control devices and be implemented in other projects
- **Quarterly Arduino Kit Design Challenge:** Create a program that tasks participants with creating a control device that will be able to do specific tasks and allow them to design and create the final product.
- **Weekly Quests:** Find applications or experiences that promote a theme (exploration, health, careers, etc). Provide those experiences to those who may not otherwise be able to enjoy them in the real world (Tours of faraway places, walks through art museums, new takes on history through first person perspective). Integrate the quests into the game day programs by using VR games that are team focused (Keep Taking and Nobody Explodes, etc.)

- **Weekly Focus on Art:** Art and design sessions using iPad and interactive table to encourage creativity and connect art with technology. Can also be combined with VR technology to create interactive sculpture and displays.
- **Teen Advisory Group:** A group for teens to communicate and give feedback on library programs, help other in the community, and develop teamwork and collaboration skills. TAG activities include teen organized and led clubs and programs, volunteers, and connections with other teen groups around the world via our digital wall.