

## MCL's Teen Advisory Board

My name is Kat Neidig, and I am the Teen Services Librarian and Technical Services Assistant here at the Murrysville Community Library. My goal as Teen Librarian is to foster an inclusive and encouraging environment where teens can feel safe expressing themselves and their interests. In other environments, where most local after-school hang-out spots for teens involve spending money and pressuring young adults to buy things, or take place through a screen online, I want to remind them that there is an alternative. The library is a space they can come to after school with no obligation or expectation, where they can freely socialize with friends, study, learn, and be themselves. I would like to share some of the teen services highlights from the past year, as well as share some of the fun things we have planned for 2023.

One of the foundations for the new teen services department was the creation of a Teen Advisory Board—a group of teens age 12-18 who help the library run teen-centered programs, recommend young adult books/movies for the library to buy, promote the library to their friends, contribute to the library's book blog, and help the library better serve teens. From its first meeting in October, 2021 the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) has seen steady participation from a total of five members and is boasting over double that number today. We hope to increase that number in the future. Plans to start a Teen Advisory Board began with a simple goal: to create a more welcoming and engaging environment for teens, as well as to give them an opportunity to have a say in how the library serves young adults. TAB teaches young adults life skills that can be used in any career path, such as leadership, communication, problem solving, teamwork, time management, and project development. Several programs have already been planned and hosted by members of the TAB, including: a holiday book exchange, summer writing workshop, tie-dye and smoothie luau, and TAB Trick or Treat.

Members are excited to plan new programs for 2023. Some of the programs to look forward to include a monthly **Teen Zine Workshop**, where teens are encouraged to create a mini magazine-style booklet that can showcase creative ideas such as poetry, writing, artwork, infographics, and personal memoir; a monthly **teen writing group**, where teens can explore literary concepts, practice writing in a variety of genres, and share their work with peers; the **2023 Teen Summer Reading Program**, designed to promote literacy and a continued love of reading; and of course, the **Teen Advisory Board**, which meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 5-6pm. At TAB meetings, much of the time is spent planning these programs, but teens can also enjoy snacks, discuss books they've been reading, and make new friends. To stay up-to-date on teen events, visit our website at [MurrysvilleLibrary.Org](http://MurrysvilleLibrary.Org) and choose either the Events Calendar or Teen Services pages.

Along with programming, we also offer a wide selection of young adult materials, with access to books, movies, audiobooks, and graphic novels. TAB members are always eager to recommend new books and materials to add to the collection. In addition, teens can access **Power Teens** anywhere, either at home or here at the library, which provides resources including full-text research e-resources, collections of photographs

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and documents, the statewide catalog of materials held in libraries through Pennsylvania, and Chat with a Librarian. Power Teens is a great tool for research, and all you need to access its resources is a library card. If you don't have a library card, stop in today and sign up so you can have access to all of these cool resources. Are you a teen who wants to be involved? Come to our next TAB meeting and enjoy snacks, make some new friends, and see what it's all about!

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