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## **Teen Perspective: Murrysville Community Library's Teen Advisory Board**

An integral part of our community, the Murrysville Community Library offers various materials and opportunities for all ages. The formation of Murrysville's Teen Advisory Board, commonly referred to as TAB, has created a close-knit, inclusive environment for all teens living in Murrysville and surrounding areas. With members from various schools, backgrounds, and ages, TAB has connected us through our similar interest in being an essential part of Murrysville's Community Library by being heard and voicing our thoughts. With local teen librarian Katherine A. Neidig spearheading and supporting our efforts, each meeting has been not only informative, but also productive.

By having only one meeting monthly during the school year, I have found it to be helpful for me to be able to attend most meetings. Being an athlete who attends Shady Side Academy, I have found that having one meeting a month lets me prioritize attending by understanding that being a member is not a commitment that overpowers other events that I am a part of. However, from the beginning of June to the end of August, meetings are held biweekly. Personally, I have enjoyed having meetings more often through the summer as we can achieve more in our meetings and create a larger impact in our community.

Throughout the year, we focus on and address a multitude of events and topics. A focal point of the advisory board is the aid we give in creating ideas for Murrysville's Summer Reading Program. Most of the programs offered this summer have been an idea of fellow TAB members such as the Rock Painting, Teen Donut Design, and Teen Friendship Bracelets event. We also pick out novels for the book display to highlight every month, initiated a Doggy De-Stress program for students during finals week, add to the Teen Advisory blog, and set up the guidelines and rules for the Summer Reading Challenge. While we are productive, we make it a priority as a board to also have a relaxing, enthusiastic environment. I appreciate each meeting because this perfect balance has led me, and others, to enjoy each meeting and catch up with others while also producing and addressing work that needs to be done.

There is also an opportunity for members to choose to run for a leadership position. Similar to other leadership roles, we have a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Blog and Social Media Coordinator, and an Energizer. With each position having different roles on our board, the combination of them has created a system where we can rely on each other to work smoothly together and stay on task. I value this opportunity for learning how to lead and be proactive. With various leaders heading our efforts, we can continue our work and develop events outside of our monthly meetings. It has also let people who have more time and interest in the Murrysville Community Library and TAB assist further by obtaining one of these leadership roles.

The annual Summer Reading Challenge our library offers is one of the main objectives of our advisory board. With the Summer Reading Challenge, members of TAB are included in each aspect. With teens being one of the main demographics of this program, it has been a beneficial decision for our members to help decide what the

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program should entail and provide. I have thoroughly enjoyed helping out with decisions pertaining to this program, but also being able to see them happen and participate. Some of my favorite events were the Andy Warhol Silkscreen Printing event and the Teen Mural event. We also helped adjust the Summer Reading Challenge's guidelines to improve them from last summer. Our perspectives and experiences as teenagers have shaped various events to better fit our demographics leading to a better experience for all. I look forward to the Summer Reading Program annually and hope others also take advantage of this offering.

The Teen Advisory Board has truly been an offering I have never taken for granted. I have been able to meet new people, attend events, plan opportunities for others, and have been heard throughout it all. By being exposed to the behind-the-scenes of our library's work, I have seen the amount of work and passion it takes to accomplish and am proud to be a part of it. If this seems like it would interest you, we would love to have you join us and become a member of the Teen Advisory Board. Hope to see you there!

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