

## Programming Idea: “Know Your Rights”

### Objectives:

The objective of this program is to make teens aware of their rights as members of society.

### Rationale:

Many teens feel that they are discriminated against based on age, appearance and other reasons. Teens often do not know how to react to discriminatory positions taken by organizations that they have to deal with. Often the fact that they do not know their legal rights limits the ways in which teens can respond. These feelings of helplessness or oppression can result in teens choosing to fight a battle in the wrong way or simply to give up. This program is about empowering teens.

### Developmental Tasks:

- Self-definition: Knowing their rights will allow teens to define their place in the community.
- Positive social interaction with peers and adults: Interaction amongst the teens, lawyer, and librarian will allow for positive discussion.
- Structure and clear limits: Discussions of rights always are accompanied by talk of responsibilities, and knowledge of the law allows for more understanding of how it works.
- Meaningful participation: Knowledge of rights and responsibilities gives the teens the empowerment necessary to participate in society and speak up for change.

### Description:

This program is fairly flexible in the way it can be implemented; it could be a brief lecture, question and answer session or focused discussion. This program aims to bring together a lawyer who is interested in youth rights and advocacy and a group of teens. In the planning stages it is recommended that the librarian discuss with the lawyer which topics they would like to discuss. The librarian should also discuss with the teens who attend other programs what topics interest them. If possible it is recommended that a question drop-box be created as part of a static display. The answers can then be posted as another display for the teens that were unable to attend.

The event itself should be fairly low-key. The speaker should be encouraged to give a brief presentation to get everyone comfortable. After this the floor can be open for questions, and discussion. The librarian should have some prepared questions, or use those from the drop-box, to start things off in case participants are shy. If possible the librarian should take notes in order to post a question-answer display. The librarian should also be prepared to moderate the discussion if one person is dominating or if the discussion goes off topic.

The topics covered by this program are very fluid and depend on the interests of the teens, the structure of the community, and current events. This program should focus on the discussion of individual rights, teen rights, and how to advocate for oneself. See the Related Programs section for other programming ideas that can branch out from this session.

### Target Audience:

Ages 14+

### Scheduling:

This program could take place in the library but it would do equally well as a presentation at a school or another community event. This activity would probably do best on a weekend afternoon or during the after-school period.

### Staffing Requirements:

One librarian to host the event

### Community Partnerships:

This program requires partnering with a lawyer from the local community. Depending on the location, there are several options to find lawyers interested in citizens' rights and advocacy. Universities, even if they do not have a law school, usually have legal aid clinics. Should you have one in your area, they may be willing put on this type of clinic, but be aware of the busy times on campus (beginning and end of terms). Provincial governments operate Legal Aid services but these may be too busy to approach directly unless you already have ties to a particular lawyer. Another provincial resource is the Child Welfare or Community Services organization, which often offer advocate services for children and teens. Your best bet is to find a lawyer who is already involved in your community.

**Proposed publicity:**

Since this topic may seem a little dry to some teens, it is therefore important to stress the kinds of topics that you will cover in the talk. Posters with tag lines like “Can a store limit the number of teens that enter?”, “Can your school suspend you for something done off school property?”, or any other hot topics in your community may be effective.

**Proposed budget:**

The cost of this program would depend on whether the lawyer with whom you are working requires some sort of payment. Assuming that payment for their services is not required then the only costs would be for snacks. The budget should be less than \$30.

**Use of accompanying library resources:**

This program would require the use of a closed room of the library to ensure privacy. Books about legal rights in general or well-known civil rights cases would be a helpful addition to this program.

**Equipment needed:**

Depending on the speaker a computer and projector may be needed.

**Program evaluation method:**

This program would be evaluated by the librarian and the lawyer to judge the quality of the discussion. A very brief survey should also be distributed at the end of the event to determine what teens liked and what they learned.

**Related Programs:**

- Advocacy groups – Either as a poster display or a week-end/evening session to bring together different groups that advocate topics that are of interest to your teens. (E.g., Gay and lesbian rights, animal rights, environmental activism, anti-globalization, etc...)
- Voter preparation – Host a session for your older teens about how to find out about political parties, how to read manifestos, and critical thinking about political campaigns.
- Petition writing – Host a session showing teens how to write an effective petition, and cover the online tools available for petition and letter writing campaigns.
- Other ideas: Civil rights in Canada; Rights of women; Women and the vote; Rights of minorities

## Programming Idea: “Radical Movie Night”

**Objective:**

A movie night at your library can be an easy and fun programming option for your young adults. Here we’ve given you what you’ll need to get this event off the ground.

**Developmental Tasks**

- Self-definition: exposure to the dystopic themes of these films should encourage discussion of the rights of the individuals, the nature of power and the actions that can be taken.
- Positive social interaction: as a fairly informal gathering a movie night gives teens the chance socialize in a comfortable environment.
- Meaningful participation: if you partner this film with a discussion around the topics which the film addressed teens can participate in articulating their stance or the impact of the film on their personal views.

**Description:**

The programme would be a very easy going and customizable event to hold. Ideally, you can invite a relevant speaker to your library to speak on the themes in the movie before the showing, and then for the rest of the evening, bring on the snacks and the movie. Discussion afterwards would be suitable as well. To select a movie, why not consider one from our list (found on page X)? Be sure to get viewing rights for your province or state.

**Target Audience:**

While this would in some cases depend on the movie you are viewing, ages 14 and up would be appropriate.

**Scheduling:**

Definitely a week night. It may work best during the summer months, when students will have less commitments.

**Staffing Requirements:**

One librarian to host the event.

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**Community Partnerships:**

Making contact with someone in the community who can speak to the theme of your movie night will add overall value to the event for teens. Local interest groups, politicians, and business people can all be valuable guest speakers.

**Proposed Publicity:**

Placing advertisements where Young Adults are likely to see them is key. Key areas would be in the YA section, the DVD section, the main message board sites in the library, on the webpage (if applicable), and in the library newsletter or programming guide. Word of mouth would also work very well.

**Proposed Budget:**

Aside from movie viewing rights (which your library may already have), the costs associated with this event would be for snacks (if your library chooses to provide them), and a small gift of thanks for your speaker. In total, less than \$30.00.

**Setup:**

For the evening of the movie, make a cozy space if possible – one where some teens can stretch out, others can sit. You should also pull out and display books or other media you have related to the theme (see below for more details). Finally, if you plan on having snacks, purchase and put out for teens to take.

**Use of Accompanying Library Resources:**

For certain, a space in the library will be needed, preferably

a smaller enclosed space where the movie will not distract other patrons. You will also need a TV and DVD player.

**Programme Evaluation and Follow Up:**

After the movie night, you could have teens write up movie reviews for your YA webpage. Also, talking to the teens for suggestions and feedback would be helpful. You may also choose to have ballots on hand to help pick a movie for another movie night.



**Specific Ideas:**

*“V for Vendetta” Radical Movie Night*

- Possible speaker: someone from the local anarchist league or group
- Display the *V for Vendetta* graphic novel, as well as other graphic novels that tie in with this theme (see our list on page 33.)

*“An Inconvenient Truth” Radical Movie Night*

- Possible speaker: local Green Party representative, environmental group member, organic farmers, or like minded environmentally-conscious community group representative.
- Display the accompanying Al Gore books, and other books and magazines from your collection on environmentalism that are interesting for Young Adults.
- Encourage environmentally conscious decisions throughout the night by using reusable dishes and recycling.

**“Censorship is the tool of those who have the need to hide actualities from themselves and others. Their fear is only their inability to face what is real. Somewhere in their upbringing they were shielded against the total facts of our experience. They were only taught to look one way when many ways exist.”**

**- Charles Bukowski**