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*Serving Urban Teens* (review)

Vivian Howard

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## Reviews

### Comptes rendus

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Paula Brehm-Heeger. *Serving Urban Teens*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. ISBN 978-1-59158-3776. CAN\$42.60.

North Americans are increasingly living in heavily populated urban centres and, in response, public libraries are adjusting their resources and services to meet the needs of users living in densely populated urban environments. How do urban teens differ from their suburban or rural peers? Brehm-Heeger provides research to suggest that urban teens tend to be more diverse, coming from a wide array of cultural, ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds. Additionally, these teens have access to more facilities and activities than do teens in rural or suburban areas, and consequently public libraries in urban settings face increased competition for teens' leisure time.

Although this guide focuses specifically on the particular challenges and opportunities posed by public library service to urban teens, it is an invaluable resource for any librarian working with teens in any context. The book begins with a brief overview of the historical context of library service to urban teens. Chapters 2 and 3 outline key competencies needed by staff serving teens and suggest a framework for in-service training. These chapters also stress the many ways teens themselves can participate in library services as paid staff, volunteers, or members of a teen advisory group. Subsequent chapters build on this foundation to discuss tips for designing appealing library spaces for teens, strategies to ensure the library's teen collection includes high-interest, high-demand materials, techniques for effective programming, and ideas for community partnerships and outreach. Each chapter includes practical and easy-to-implement suggestions as well as a bibliography of further resources. For example, the chapter on programming includes a general framework for planning, budgeting, and promoting library programs for teens, as well as detailed guides for eight successful programs ranging from poetry slams to career-planning workshops. The sample programs provide the practitioner with key guidelines for planning, promoting, and conducting the program as well as tips for materials and evaluation. The chapter on

collection development provides a wealth of general guidelines for the teen collection as well as specific suggestions for creating collections of particular interest to urban teens, including fiction featuring African-American and Hispanic protagonists and street literature.

Brehm-Heeger has 15 years of practitioner experience as a youth services librarian and was president of YALSA from 2007 to 2008; her expertise is evident throughout this very practical manual, which would be a very valuable addition to the professional bookshelf of any teen services librarian. It would also be a useful supplementary text for classes in services and resources to teens. While the focus is clearly on urban American teens, the ideas for staff training, space planning, and program development can be adapted easily to the Canadian context. For a Canadian reader, the primary gaps lie in the chapters on collections development and advocacy and outreach. Despite the lack of specifically Canadian resources and materials, this volume is a welcome addition to the growing professional literature devoted to teen services in public libraries.

*Vivian Howard, assistant professor, School of Information Management, Dalhousie University*

Nancy D. Courtney, ed. *More Technology for the Rest of Us: A Second Primer on Computing for the Non-IT Librarian*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2010. ISBN 978-1-59158-939-6. CAN\$44.00.

Nancy D. Courtney has put together a supremely practical book that gives just enough about the latest library technologies to make you dangerous . . . and that's a good thing. If you have ever lacked the confidence to chime in on a discussion related to library technology, fear no more. This book will provide the necessary background to get you in on the conversation. It is topical and well thought out. This volume is a follow-up to *Technology for the Rest of Us: A Primer on Computer Technologies for the Low-Tech Librarian* published in 2005. The subtle change in the title from 2005 to 2010 is telling. Librarians in 2010 do not really have the option to remain low-tech. Those that do will be left out. So while IT or systems librarians must know library technologies inside and out, the "rest of us" non-IT librarians must be at least competent in a wide range of these technologies.