Working Together: Developing Neurodivergent and IDD Inclusive Volunteer Opportunities

A Service of the City of Plano

Agenda

- About us & About our libraries
- Assessing volunteer opportunities and the value of partners
- Brief description of each program
- Preparation and Training
- Questions

About Plano, Texas

Plano Public Library

A Service of the City of Plano

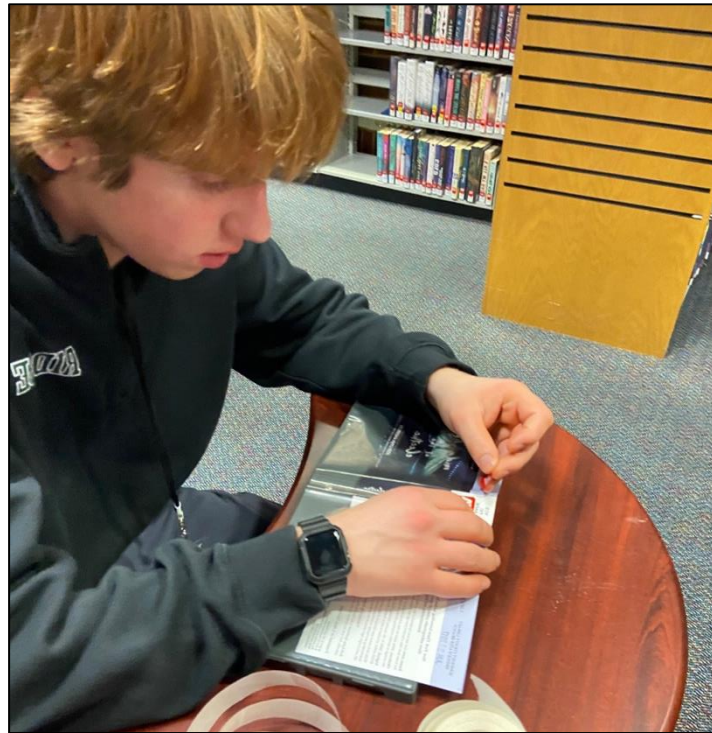**Engage|Enrich |Educate**

Population: 288,000

Volunteers: 750

Community Partners:

- **Plano Independent School District**
- **My Possibilities**
- **REACH of Plano**
- **Life Path**

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Volunteers in Plano

About Somerset County, New Jersey

Population:
Somerset County – 346,875
Bridgewater – 46,318

Bridgewater:

60-150 Teen volunteers
10-15 Teens with disabilities
3 Adults with disabilities

Community Partners:
Bridgewater-Raritan
Regional School District

Partners and Volunteers

- Role of the volunteer coordinator
  - Addressing needs or gaps
  - When are partners needed?
  - Establishing connections
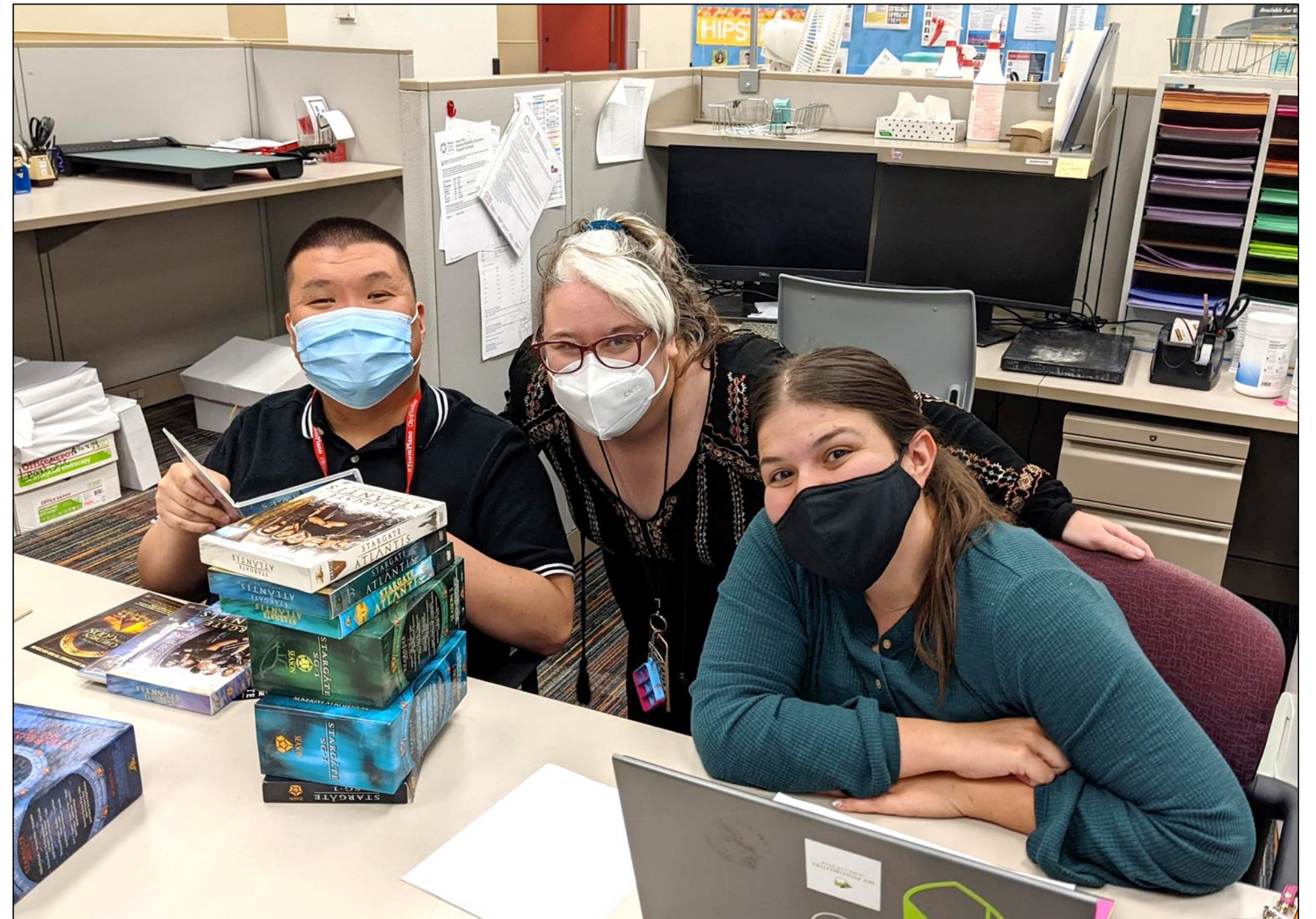 - Reasons for volunteering

Program Descriptions

Preparation and Training

- Seek stakeholder support
- Modify volunteer models
- Plan staff training
- Consider limitations

Preparation and Training

General Training Area	Work Preparation	Methods
• Why we work with volunteers with disabilities • Understanding IDD • Effective communications • About stimming • De-escalation skills • Needs assessment	• Simple and repetitive tasks • Quiet area to work • Flexibility • Characteristics of participants • Delivering supervision & feedback	**Department Staff Training** • One on one training from the supervisor • Personnel observation • Required training on Niche Academy and webinars **SCLSNJ Staff Training** • In-house presentations • Volunteer Coordinators Group & Special Populations Committee meetings • Guest speakers • Recommend webinars

Volunteer Work Program

- Beginning assessment
- Curriculum and collaboration
- Coaching and adaptation
- Personal connection

STAR (Supported Teens Alternate Route)

SC LS NEW JERSEY

Targeted Populations	Procedure	Tasks	Benefits	Limitations
Teens and young adults who are in a high school's post-graduate program	• Application • Interview (Assessment) • Assigning Tasks • Volunteering • Evaluation • Re-assigning Tasks • Certificate of Recognition	• Shelving Media • Cleaning & Dusting • Assembling take-home craft bags • Shredding • Die-cutting shapes • Shelf reading • Sorting	• Improve interpersonal skills and confidence • Prepare for a more typical teen volunteer program • Feel the satisfaction of knowing they are "needed" • Experience a real workplace • Create a more inclusive community	• All volunteers prefer to come in at 4 pm (or later) or on weekends • Staff availability • The number of tasks is not enough for multiple volunteers on the same day

Assessment and Recommendations

- Evaluation tools
  - Volunteer exit interviews
  - Partner program review
  - Library staff self-assessment
- Identify areas to improve
- Maintenance & sustainability

Assessment and Recommendations

Assessment	Recommendations
• Understanding work concept • Following directions • Accuracy • Speed • Independence • Time management	• Communicate with your volunteers effectively • Give a visual and/or verbal heads-up before changing any of their routines • Allow stimming - Get familiar with volunteers' behaviors before starting • Praise for the job well-done • Integrate volunteers into the workplace (e.g. breaks, social conversations) • Exchange feedback with volunteers and/or caregivers frequently • Tailor the assignments • **Respect your volunteers**

Civic Value, Community Benefits

- Value of starting a program in your community

- Best practices for seeking partnerships

- Benefits
  - Connect volunteers to the community
  - Maximize common resources
  - Long-term impact

Digital handouts

Contact

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Questions?