**Library Volunteer Manager Peers - Notes**

**10-14-20 1:30 EST**

**Host: Wendy Johnson, Indianapolis Public Library**

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Hello, Friends!

Great demo of Niche Academy – thank you, Jessica! This was just what some of us needed to redesign our training/orientation for remote access. Fresno, CA and Mesa, AZ are going to be reopening soon so we covered some general thoughts about communicating current volunteer needs, FOL/non-FOL issues, and related safety guidelines. Wrapping up the day was a discussion about Teen volunteers and their parents. As always, there were many wonderful ideas. Have I mentioned that I’m so glad that we “found” each other?

Take care!

Wendy

Meetings will be held every Wednesday at 1:30 EST for an hour until further notice. We’ll use the same meeting link each week. Please share the link with fellow library volunteer leaders…the more smart people the better.

Zoom:  <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85199850785?pwd=WHorb3h2ckgvZjhZT1BOVWxEMzhlZz09>

Not-so-secret Access Code: Volunteer

Please add/check/update your contact information on our shared Google doc. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19blg00lShuMShHK2ab1TGeiK6kYqGfpvxz8qO9F8nnM/edit?usp=sharing>

**Topics Discussed**

Niche Academy Demo

Last week we discussed using Niche Academy for volunteer orientation, COVID safety training, and “How to…” videos. Jessica was kind enough to provide a demo of her Niche Academy courses AND a tour of the tool to create courses.

* Niche Academy is built for libraries with a section for patrons and staff/volunteers. It’s a subscription.
* See an example here: <https://my.nicheacademy.com/infopeople>
* Many patron courses have already been developed
* Easy, intuitive user/creator interface
* Offers accessibility and accountability
* As an administrator, you can create teams (aka groups) for the various trainings required. For example, a group for collection support volunteers might have different training needs than youth program volunteers, just create a team for each.
* We can create courses (content, video and images) that include quizzes with feedback, a signature for “proof of completion”, an auto-created certificate, and more.
* There’s reporting that shows who has/has not completed a course
* One library is using this in their maker space to teach patrons how to use each of the machines in the space. Another will be loading volunteer PowerPoint presentations/training of content that is presented over-and-over.
* One library has access through their State Library and will be using this for the wide variety of trainings needed in different departments: Parks & Rec, Library, etc.
* Questions:
  + Will the electronic signature be valid if we need to provide it as “proof” at a later time? Things to consider…users have a unique ID and password. Check with your HR/legal team.
  + Pricing? You have to contact them. Leave a “contact me” message inside the application and a sales person will give you a call. Experience is the return call will be within 24 hrs.
  + How do you provide training to volunteers without an email or internet access? Consider creating a dummy email account; use a library public computer.

Returning to “normal” i.e. volunteers in the building

Planning for a potential (and real) issue with library opens. FOL will be allowed to volunteer right away to process materials. They will follow the patron safety guidelines (stay max of an hour, mask, distancing, etc.). Non-FOL volunteers are going to wonder why they can’t come back. What are the recommendations for how to keep the peace?

* Setup volunteer experiences that anyone can do:
  + Bring volunteers in before or after hours. This has worked well for kit/packet assembly. And projects that the volunteer coordinator can manage.
  + Volunteers can do activities in the community – service fairs, advocacy, promote library services
  + Virtual opportunities – like the Citizen Scientist we chatted about last week
  + Outdoor donation drive
* Communicate the phased approach – City/County/State COVID guidelines – and the library’s
* Share the volunteer guidelines with staff so that they are “in the know” – they need the “why”
* Ask that volunteers inquiring about returning/starting be directed to a central point of contact. We liked this idea for tracking interest and consistent messaging.
* Communicate often with volunteers to let them know what’s happening with the reopening. They are part of your team.
* Reminder – we’re doing what’s best for the library and how we can safely serve the community

Teen Volunteers

When do we get the parent involved when a Teen Volunteer goes off the rails? No show, no call. Discipline.

* Set the expectations with the parent and the teen upfront; on time, call/em when you can’t make it, respectful, here to do a job, position description, etc. Let the teen know that if there is a problem or concern that you’ll contact their parent/guardian. (Be sure to collect ALL the ways to contact this person.)
* Let the teen know that you’re going to keep their parent in the loop. Copy the parent on correspondence. i.e. “Thanks for your message that you won’t be in today. I don’t envy you taking a chem. test tomorrow. Good luck! See you next week.”
* When parent calls on behalf of the teen ask that the teen contact you. It’s their responsibility.
* It’s okay if the parent wants to come to orientation – especially since there’s likely to be paperwork for them to sign.
* Flip the script. Be transparent: here’s what’s available, the rules, the position description, FAQ. “Take a look at this information with your family to ensure that the library is a good fit. Call me if you want to set up an interview.”
* I am very firm the child must call me. And when I have volunteer information programs I urge parents to attend with the teens. If they are middle school, the parents are required to attend, so they understand what we expect of the kids in term of attendance.

Miscellaneous

* **CVA STUDY GROUP!** Marcia ([Marcia.hale@hillsboro-oregon.gov](mailto:Marcia.hale@hillsboro-oregon.gov)) is going to host/lead a CVA study group for anyone who is interested. This is an amazing opportunity! Marcia has an incredible depth of knowledge that she’s offering to share. A study group is invaluable if you’re considering certification. (Read accountability.) Learn more: <https://cvacert.org/> or contact Marcia. (GO FOR IT!)

**Resources and Training Opportunities**

* Volgistics National Peer Group – on-line – 2nd Tuesday of the Month – free!

FMI contact Jessica Link, [linkj@crlibrary.org](mailto:linkj@crlibrary.org). Recordings are available.

* ServeOhio will be hosting [Ohio Conference on Service & Volunteerism](https://www.serve.ohio.gov/News-Events/Ohio-Conference-on-Service-Volunteerism#:~:text=Virtual%20Training%20Series%20to%20Replace,on%20Service%20%26%20Volunteerism%20this%20fall.) on-line in October – Free! Sustaining
  + October 22, 2020 1:00 - 3:00 PM, Presenter: Sierra Austin Creating a More Diverse & Inclusive Environment Through the Mechanisms that Engage Volunteers
  + October 29, 2020 1:00 - 3:00 PM, Presenter: Jerome Tennille
* How long will the virus live on library materials? OCLC released REALM test 5 results. <https://www.oclc.org/realm/home.html>.

**Future Topics**

* Encore topic: Reinventing our programs
* Diversity and Inclusion in our volunteer programs
* Virtual volunteer positions for older volunteers (Carla)
* Volunteer Managers that run tutoring programs/ homework helper programs that are staffed by volunteers (Becky)
* Circle Back for updates:
  + Citizen Scientists – Kimi
  + University of North Carolina – Charlotte (UNCC) Class Project Update - Chauna
  + Needs Assessment – Jessica