

Youth Volunteers – Things to Keep in Mind

The Bare Bones of Volunteer Program Management

1. They respond best to adults who don't try to a.) invent what a youth should be like, or b.) talk like them
2. We need their energy and enthusiasm
3. They need our expertise
4. They like:
 - a. Fun
 - b. Situations that don't embarrass them (we forget about what could be embarrassing to a youth.....feeling foolish, being shown up in front of peers, some kinds of teasing)
 - c. Feeling successful
 - d. Work that means something; accomplishments they can see or understand
 - e. Technology
 - f. Working with a group
 - g. Their own work space/tools/name badge/etc. They like to feel part of the process, and important.
 - h. Freedom. Give them excellent instruction and supervision, but don't breathe down their necks. They might not do it your way, and they actually might come up with a better one! Be open-minded.
 - i. Cutting to the chase. They think and act in short spurts, so get to the point.
 - j. Flexibility
 - k. Being creative. See H.
 - l. Food
5. They need:
 - a. Guidance, not lectures
 - b. Instruction and trust, not micromanaging
 - c. To be able to act, not sit around and listen
 - d. To have specific feedback
 - e. To see results
 - f. To be challenged
 - g. To be treated as though they have something valuable to offer
 - h. To have mentors they can look up to
 - i. To know they're being held accountable for their actions
 - j. To eat