



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2021.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).


PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: Title Talk
Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Program Overview

Title Talk was a program series designed to recreate the in-person, spontaneous reader's advisory that takes place in libraries, in an informal, social, and virtual setting. Staff at Henrico County Public Library (HCPL) sought ways to maintain book discussions virtually when public health concerns prevented in-person library services. Book discussions are a cornerstone of library programming, and book discussion groups at HCPL have regular attendees who wanted to stay connected during the shutdown. HCPL devised as a solution a series of open-ended book discussion groups called Title Talk, where library book discussion leaders and attendees could share recommended titles, critique recent reads, and pursue their reading interests in a virtual group conversation. Title Talk was expanded to serve teens, and Teen Title Talk developed into a popular series for teens craving a less-structured way to connect over literature and fandoms outside of their regular virtual learning environments. Title Talk was an innovative solution to a challenge many library systems face during the pandemic.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

When the novel coronavirus arrived in central Virginia, Henrico County Public Library (HCPL) briefly closed to the public. Before contactless curbside pickup was implemented, there was a time period during which physical books could not be checked out from the collection. This posed a challenge for book discussion groups, which are a cornerstone of library programming. Many book discussion group members are older adults, who were at risk of social isolation during the pandemic, and would benefit from a continuation of book discussion groups. After the first few weeks of the shutdown, groups that already had checked out copies of their upcoming titles had met virtually where they could, and were facing a disruption to their meeting schedules. HCPL's book discussion groups needed to evolve so that they could stay connected and serve the community in the absence of a physical collection.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

Library systems across the country had to adapt to how the pandemic has disrupted public services and programming. As case counts waxed and waned, libraries closed and reopened. Staying connected to community members was a challenge. Many libraries will need to maintain some virtual program offerings indefinitely. Many library systems may face severe budget restrictions and may be unable to fund programs or book discussions they and their communities relied upon in the past. Both community members and library staff miss the opportunity to discuss books that may be of interest in the casual way that often happens with a visit to the library. Title Talk offers a way to provide programs, connect people, and find reassuring or recreational media recommendations in a safe, informal, virtual setting. Title Talk could be replicated by any library system in the country and would be an appropriate virtual program not only during this pandemic, but in response to any library closure, natural disaster, or other service interruption. Open-ended book and media discussions like Title Talk could continue even after the pandemic fades and library doors reopen in a physical setting, as it can provide an informal entry point for the public to engage with librarian expertise. Title Talk gave continuity to community members and to essential library functions like reader's advisory, book discussions, and community connectedness through learning.

How Program Was Carried Out

The idea for Title Talk came from a desire to create ways for the public to interact with library staff when HCPL buildings closed in March 2020. The conversations about books, reading, and all kinds of subjects that customers have with staff are part of the daily rhythm of the library and one of a library's key services. Sometimes these conversations are formal reader's advisory interactions, in which staff are providing customers with specific recommendations or helping customers articulate what it is they like about reading certain things. Just as often, these

interactions are informal discussions about various types of books and authors, with one suggestion prompting another and so on. In the absence of traditional book discussions, where customers check out a copy of a title and discuss with a trained librarian facilitator, Title Talk was created in order to provide a virtual space where customers could continue discussing literature with library staff. Participants were encouraged to come with specific asks for library staff. For each session, library staff prepared a five-minute book talk on a specific genre or subject area that was either an area of expertise for the staff member, or a high-interest subject for their community. During the course of Title Talk, popular topics included True Crime, Literary Fiction, and Narrative Histories.

The first Title Talk session was held on April 23, 2020 virtually using WebEx Meetings. The host is an experienced discussion leader who is passionate about and reads widely in a variety of genres. Title Talk was promoted heavily on social media, through the library's website, and by individual book discussion leaders to their email mailing lists. Promotion for Title Talk contained text about the program's presenter and their interests to drum up interest from people outside of the facilitator's regular group members. For the first Title Talk, an Instagram promotion's caption read:

"Our very first Title Talk will be this Thursday, April 23 at 6pm! This is an online book discussion where you can chat with us about what you are reading, share your favorite titles, and get suggestions from librarians. Bring your questions and comments about books you have been enjoying. Our host Maggie from Tuckahoe reads widely, and is an expert in Mystery, Thriller, Suspense, True Crime, and Historical Fiction. Join our Webex meeting using the link in our profile, password HCPL."

Because book discussion leaders are widely experienced in facilitation, conversations could flow freely from one genre or recommendation to the next, with the staff member providing guidance and structure where needed. The Webex virtual conferencing platform enabled participants to join on their computer, mobile device, or by calling in. Attendance skewed older, though the range of ages present at Title Talk was refreshing, and some showcased a greater diversity of age than a typical book discussion group. This could be because the virtual setting and less rigid format held a greater appeal to younger readers. Because there was no single title to focus on, Title Talk allowed related books, podcasts, music, movies, and other media to be freely and openly discussed. The sessions were usually small, with no more than 5-7 people, meaning conversations could be more in-depth. To help keep track of the wide-ranging discussions, as the facilitator led the group, another staff member recorded the titles mentioned during each session and made these lists available to participants afterward.

The week after the debut of Title Talk for adults, Teen Title Talk started on Tuesday afternoons to help teens connect with library staff and discuss their reading preferences with peers in a virtual environment. Teen Title Talk was structured differently than Title Talk for adults. Teen librarians created plans for each session, with icebreaker questions, discussion prompts, and a bibliography of recommended books following a new theme each week. The sessions averaged upwards of 7-10 participants. Discussions covered favorite novels, manga, podcasts, music, art, and more.

When HCPL locations began curbside pickup service in the summer, Title Talk for adults was replaced with book discussions about singular titles. It successfully served as a way for library users to remain connected with the library and with a community of readers, as well as to discuss recent reads and other interests during a time that library books were inaccessible. It provided an opportunity for the kind of informal reader's advisory that takes place inside the library. Teen Title

Talk remained well-attended until the school year resumed in the fall, at which time it was phased out and replaced with other Teen programs. The program allowed Teen Services librarians to continue engaging with their teens and providing informal book recommendations in a virtual setting while libraries were closed, and programming remained online.

Financing and Staffing

Title Talk was implemented at no cost to the library. It was started using a free Webex account. Eventually, as the library system ramped up other online programming, Webex accounts were purchased with existing technology funds to gain access to additional features. There were no supplies and no books purchased for Title Talk. The resources required consisted of staff time and expertise. Any library system struggling with continuity of their book discussions during the pandemic or another natural disaster could implement a program like this at no cost.

Program Results

Title Talk bridged a gap in critical library services during a public health crisis. At a time when budgets were restricted, and the library needed to pivot to virtual programming quickly, Title Talk successfully offered a new service at no cost to the library. Sessions for teens and adults averaged at or near in-person attendance numbers. Many older adults were able to join and connect with librarians and their peers, and find recommendations for reading and other entertainment material, during a time of reduced activity and social isolation. Teen Title Talk participants were able to engage with educational content and socialize virtually without the same pressures and formality of their virtual schooling. Title Talk was an effective way to recreate the in-person, spontaneous reader's advisory that takes place in libraries. The program allowed hundreds of books, graphic novels, movies, podcasts, and pieces of music to be shared and discussed between community members.

Brief Summary

Title Talk was devised as a solution to a problem many libraries faced during the pandemic: how to maintain connectedness between communities, books and media, and library staff, when library services went virtual due to the public health crisis. The program series hoped to recreate the informal, serendipitous exchanges that happen between librarians and patrons in the context of in-person reader's advisory, and the type that can occur in book discussion groups. Book discussion groups are foundational to library programming, and Title Talk aimed to recreate the discussion environment of free exchange of ideas, insights, and preferences, but in a virtual setting. The library also hoped to maintain continuity for regular book discussion attendees, many of whom are older adults who may have been experiencing isolation during the pandemic. The programs were designed as open-ended, where library book discussion leaders and attendees could share recommendations, critique recent reads, and get guidance based on their personal preferences for what to read, listen to, or watch next. Title Talk was expanded to include programs designed for a teen audience, and Teen Title Talk evolved into a popular series where teens could discuss their reading preferences as well as various fandoms in a supportive environment with library staff and like-minded peers. Teen Title Talk provided a less-structured virtual environment for teens attending virtual school to explore their interests. Title Talk was an innovative solution to a problem many libraries faced during the pandemic, and can serve as a model for library systems who seek to continue offering virtual programming, or who need a simple but effective programming option in the event of future library service interruptions.

Title Talk
Supplemental Materials

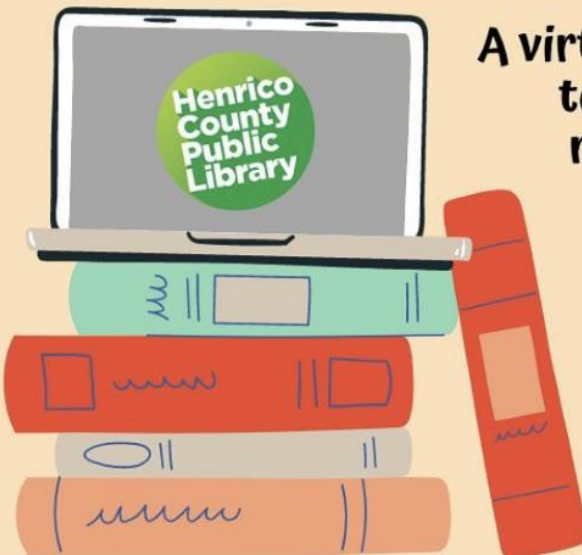
Promotional Graphics:



Teen Title Talk

1/2

Tuesdays, 7:30–8:30pm



A virtual hangout for teens to discuss what they're reading, watching, and listening to. A teen librarian will feature a selection of books related to a different theme every week.

Swipe for featured themes

Teen Title Talk

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Host</u>
9/15	Hispanic Heritage Month	Jamie - LM
9/22	Manga	Drew - TW
9/29	Banned Books Week	Amy - LM
10/6	Romantic Reads	Hannah - TU
10/13	The Great Outdoors	Jamie - LM
10/20	Food	Amy - LM
10/27	Horror	Rick - LAO

Tuesdays, 7:30–8:30pm via WebEx
visit henricolibrary.org for more details

LM=Libbie Mill TW=Twin Hickory TU=Tuckahoe LAO=Library Administrative Offices

The outlined plan for Teen Title Talk in Nov. 2020:

Teen Title Talk - Tuesday, November 10, 2020 (Presenter: Drew Carson)

Introduction

Hello, and welcome to Teen Title Talk! My name is Drew Carson, and I am the Teen Librarian at Twin Hickory Area Library. It is great to see you here today!

For those of you who are attending your first online chat with us, Teen Title Talk is a low-pressure program for teens and tweens who want to discuss what they are reading, watching, or listening to with others. It is also a chance for all of us to relax and share recommendations so we can find new books and other stories that are exciting, interesting, and creative.

As a part of our Teen Title Talk programs, we discuss a wide variety of types and genres of stories - pretty much any story you want to talk about! Later on in each program, we also highlight a small group of librarian-recommended titles related to a specific category. Today's topic will be **new teen releases for fall**, and I will mention a short list of noteworthy picks to check out in this category.

Rules

- No spoilers
- Be respectful
- Don't be afraid to participate

Icebreaker Questions

IF YOU WERE A SPORTS STAR: SOCCER, BASKETBALL, TENNIS, or TRACK?

IF YOU WERE A SUPERHERO: SECRET IDENTITY or KNOWN TO THE WORLD?

IF YOU COULD LIVE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY: FRANCE, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, or SOMEWHERE ELSE?

DECADES: 60s, 70s, 80s, or 90s?

WOULD YOU RATHER: LIVE WITHOUT HEAT/AC or LIVE WITHOUT PHONE?

2020 KITKAT FLAVORS: CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE, ORANGE CREAMSICLE, COTTON CANDY, or CHERRY COLA?

2020 OREO FLAVORS: CARAMEL COCONUT, CHOCOLATE MARSHMALLOW, TIRAMISU, or GINGERBREAD?

2020 MandM's FLAVORS: CHOCOLATE POPCORN, SUGAR COOKIE, WHITE CHEESECAKE, or WHITE PUMPKIN PIE?

General Discussion Questions (Will Use As Many As Time Allows):

What are you reading right now? Have you read any books in the past month or two? What did you think of them?

Are there any movies or TV shows you are watching right now (or have seen in the past week)?

What is your favorite thing about fall?

What is your favorite time of day?

What is one thing you are thankful for?

What is your favorite month?

What is your favorite smell?

Do you collect anything? What kind of collection do you have?

If you were immortal, which age would you choose to stop aging at?

Which of Snow White's seven dwarfs describes you best (Bashful, Doc, Dopey, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy or Sneezzy)?

What is the best piece of advice you have been given by someone?

What is your most used emoji?

Reader's Advisory Title List – New Fall Teen Releases:

- **Unbirthday by Liz Braswell (Print) (OverDrive eBook and eAudio) (Hoopla eBook)**
- **The Other Side of the Sky by Amie Kaufman and Megan Spooner (Print) (OverDrive eBook and eAudio)**
- **American Royals Series by Katharine McGee (new book: *Majesty*) (Print) (OverDrive eBook and eAudio)**
- **Furia by Yamile Saied Mendez (Print) (OverDrive eBook) (Hoopla eBook and eAudio)**
- **I Hope You're Listening by Tom Ryan (Print) (Hoopla eBook)**
- **Blazewrath Games by Amparo Ortiz (Print) (OverDrive eBook)**
- **Winter, White and Wicked by Shannon Dittmore (Print) (Hoopla eBook)**

Note about Anime Clubs:

Our library system has started offering virtual anime club meetings for teens who love anime and manga! During these meetings, we talk about all things anime and manga, highlight favorites, participate in anime-themed activities, and discuss episodes of an anime that you can stream prior to attending the meeting. Meeting and anime title details can be found by checking our [hcpl_teenscene](#) Instagram page.

Conclusion

I want to thank everyone for attending today's Teen Title Talk program, and I am glad we had such a fantastic discussion! Before we close, I want to highlight a couple of our resources that can keep you on the path to great reading. As I mentioned earlier in this program, we have a wide variety of e-book and e-audiobook resources available through our OverDrive and Hoopla services. To access these resources, go to our homepage (www.henricolibrary.org) and click on the blue box that says "Downloads and Streaming." From that link, you can then jump to our OverDrive and Hoopla sites as well as find help sheets for getting started with these services. Both OverDrive and Hoopla feature many great e-books and e-audiobooks, and Hoopla also features other entertainment options such as movies, TV shows, music, and comics.

Our next Teen Title Talk session will be taking place in two weeks: Tuesday, November 24 at 7:00pm. The topic of the week will be "Holiday Celebrations." We would love to see everyone back here in two weeks to talk about more books and meet some new faces. Until then, my name is Drew Carson, and I wish everyone a great afternoon and a fantastic rest of the week!

List of titles discussed during Title Talk #2:

Bitter Greens by Kate Forsyth

Dear Edward by Ann Napolitano

Every Heart a Doorway by Shannon McGuire

Devil in the White City by Erik Larson

Grief Cottage by Gail Godwin

Dead Wake by Erik Larson

Isaac's Storm by Erik Larson

The Crossing by Cormac McCarthy

All the Pretty Horses by Cormac McCarthy

Blood Meridian by Cormac McCarthy

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

No Country for Old Men by Cormac McCarthy

The Dinner by Herman Koch

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn

Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins

Sharp Objects by Gillian Flynn – and the television series

Ninth House by Leigh Bardugo
The Silent Companions by Laura Purcell
The Hunger by Alma Katsu
The Institute by Stephen King
Cujo by Stephen King
The Shining by Stephen King
Carrie by Stephen King
The Winter People by Jennifer McMahon
Pet Sematary by Stephen King
The Watchers by Dean Koontz
A Head Full of Ghosts by Paul Tremblay
The Cabin at the End of the World by Paul Tremblay
The Passage by Justin Cronin
The Essex Serpent by Sarah Perry
Psycho by Robert Bloch
American Gothic by Robert Bloch
Wayward Children series by Shannon McGuire
Garden Spells by Sarah Addison Allen
The Peach Keeper by Sarah Addison Allen
Raney by Clyde Edgerton
The Bible Salesman by Clyde Edgerton
Fannie Flagg
Rita Mae Brown
Serena by Ron Rash
The Wettest County in the World – book and movie – book by Matt Bondurant
A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles
The Starless Sea by Erin Morgenstern
The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern
Robin McKinley