

Focused Discussion Session Notes Northside Teen Meeting

Northside Branch Library
Fort Worth, Texas
Thursday, May 30, 2002
4:30 p.m.
Attendance: 10

1. FLIP CHART SUMMARY

Ten teens--6th to 9th grade--participated in this session.

Their descriptions of Fort Worth varied: "cool," "nice and peaceful city," "better than Dallas," "pretty," "interesting," "has everything you need," and "boring and quiet."

They like many things about Fort Worth: "there are lots of animals"; "it is a cool city"; "things you need are right around the corner"; "the libraries"; "the city is nice and quiet"; "the job market is good"; "there are lots of cowboys"; "people"; "stores"; "the carnivals"; "the music"; "the museums"; "people from different races/ethnic backgrounds."

There are many things that they don't like about Fort Worth: "the teachers"; "the city is tiny"; "the Trinity River is dirty"; "discrimination"; "easy access to narcotics"; "cops don't answer fast enough"; "the people"; "the crime-- too much violence"; "people without education"; "too many bugs and insects"; "easy access to porn in the libraries" and "too many prostitutes."

The group would like to change Fort Worth in the following ways: "clean the city"; "change the schools-- to give students a better education"; "change the people--to be kinder and nicer"; "get the druggies out of town"; "bring more money into the city"; "have more libraries and recreation centers"; "have more activities for kids"; "plant more trees and make the city greener"; "have better cafeteria food"; "better jails"; and "bring more celebrities to Fort Worth." They would also like to have more protection agencies, colleges, churches and community services.

The group would like to learn a variety of subjects: karate / self-defense; how to drive; "learn skills for a job"; "learn about technology"; how to act, sing, draw, and make movies; how to play the guitar and the piano; and learn computer animation and a foreign language.

When they hear the word “library,” the following associations are made: books; computers; “profound knowledge”; quietness, peace and tranquility; “strict people”; “opportunities”; video games; movies; plays; “too many little kids”; “too many porns for kids”; and magazines. The library is seen as a “place to learn good stuff” and in which to work, do homework, take a nap and get help.

Describing the last time they visited a public library, the group’s comments covered a range of experiences and observations. They “played games”; “[an] officer got mad at them”; they wondered if the library had a movie they wanted; “calmness”; “it sucked”; they took a nap or saw friends; “the library was too loud– too many kids running around”; it was “boring”; the kids were “rude.”

The group would like their library to have a bigger space. They would also like to have more of the following items: books, DVDs, CD burners and computers; Marvel, DC, Dark Horse and Spiderman comics; volunteers; recent movies; tournaments (such as chess) and video game contests; and “rock music.” They would like to have a little stage for performing plays and a drama club.

At the end of the session, the teens added the following suggestions: a library for kids 12 years old and up; a wider selection of movies and more “scary movies” on the shelves; a larger room; more video games and a game room/arcade; a room in which to sit and read and another for live performances; a broader selection of books; and more CDs and televisions in the libraries.

2. FINDINGS

Because the middle school is across the street from the Northside Branch, these teens regularly use the library after school. The library is their meeting place in which to do research and homework, visit with friends, and play games and attend programs. They are a very active segment of the Northside Branch’s patrons.

The group had interesting insights on what they would like to see in the library and in the city. Their comments were broad in scope: A branch of their own; “clean the city”; attract more money to the city; “get druggies out of town”; end discrimination; have more comic books, movies, CDs, and DVDs on the shelves; put more computers in the library; and give them a space they can use to stage plays. Easy access to porn in the libraries was another concern for this group.

The group was most interested in learning about technology and computers, self-defense, skills for a job, and drama. The participants repeatedly mentioned that they would like to see a theater space in the library for their plays or those staged by other groups. When preparing programs and acquiring materials, the library could use some of the group's suggestions.

3. SERVICE RESPONSES SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are recommended as service responses from this group:

- Current Topics and Titles
- Lifelong Learning
- Commons
- General Information

APPENDIX A. FLIP CHART SUMMARY

Number attending: 10

Age group: 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th graders

1. How would you describe Fort Worth to a newcomer?

- Cool
- Nice, peaceful city
- Better than Dallas
- Pretty
- City's OK
- Interesting
- Has everything you need
- Extremely boring
- Boring
- Nice and quiet

2. What do you like about living in Fort Worth?

- Lots of animals
- It is cool
- Things you need are right around the corner
- Nice and quiet
- Libraries
- Jobs, lots of them
- Cowboys
- Stores
- Lots of people
- Flea markets
- Cleanliness
- Carnivals
- Car racing
- Music
- Museums
- Races – people from different ethnic backgrounds

3. What don't you like about living in Fort Worth?

- Teachers
- Too tiny
- Trinity River is dirty
- Discrimination
- Easy access to narcotics
- Cops don't answer fast enough
- Cowboys
- The people
- Crime
- People who bum
- Violence – too much
- People without education
- It smells
- Too many bugs, insects
- Easy access to porn in libraries
- Too many prostitutes
- Too many drugs on the streets

4. What would you change to make Fort Worth a better place in which to live?

- Clean the city
- Schools to give kids a better education
- The people – they should be nicer, kinder
- Get druggies out of town
- More money into the city
- More libraries and recreation places
- More kids activities
- More green land, trees – too much desert
- More agriculture
- Better cafeteria food
- More protection services
- Train dogs more
- More colleges
- Bring more celebrities to FW
- More churches
- More community services
- Better jails
- More cars
- Less pollution

5. What is one thing you would like to learn to do?

- Karate/self-defense
- Drive
- Skills for jobs
- Learn about technology
- Draw caricatures
- How to act (become an actor)
- Sing better
- To make movies
- Play the guitar, piano, electric guitar
- Computer animation
- Foreign language

6. When you hear the word library, what comes immediately to your mind?

- Books
- Computers (more than once)
- Profound knowledge
- Quietness
- Peace
- Tranquility
- Chat
- Strict people
- Opportunities
- Place to work
- Place to do homework
- Take a nap
- Help (get help)
- Video games
- Movies
- Popcorn
- Put on plays
- Too many little kids
- Too many porns for kids
- Magazines
- Can learn good stuff
- They make you be quiet

7. Think back to the last time you went to the public library. What was your experience?

Playing games
Officer got mad at me
Curiosity about whether library had a movie
Calmness
Take a nap
Sucks
Quiet
Saw friends
Too loud – too many kids
Boring
Kids are rude

8. What would you like to see in your library?

- Bigger space
- More books
- Marvel, DC, Dark Horse comics
- No little kids
- DVDs
- More computers
- Spiderman books
- Volunteers – more
- More recent movies
- CD burners
- Little stage, theater area
- More tournaments, like chess
- Parties
- Play Station II
- Drama club
- Other clubs – like animé
- More rock music
- More video game contests
- More Mr. Pibb

9. Anything else?

- Make a library for 12 and over
- More scary movies
- Bigger room
- Bigger selection of movies
- More video games
- Game room/arcade
- TV
- Room to sit down and read
- Room for live performances (theater area)
- Bigger selection of books
- More CDs
- Beach
- Tanning machine