

Spaces of Belonging

Poudre Libraries and the State of Our Youth

In March 2023, Executive Director Diane brought together the Librarians whose duties center on serving teens (Jace Long, Ludy Rueda, Jenny Thurman, and Miranda West) and their managers (Kristen Draper, Currie Meyer, Irene Romsa, and Molly Thompson) to start an appreciative inquiry discussion on Spaces of Belonging for middle and high schoolers in Poudre Libraries.

This was prompted by a workshop and community discussion titled The State of Our Youth that Diane attended in January and February of 2023. This event was hosted by the Poudre School District and brought community partners together to discuss the needs of local teens and how best to support them. The discussions were focused on four priority areas: Destigmatizing Health Services, Access to Health Providers, Self-Regulation, and Spaces of Belonging.

Over the spring and summer, the Teen Librarians and Public Services Managers continued to meet to further the discussion and provide updates on the projects that came out of those discussions.

The projects and programs that were prompted or improved by this discussion include:

- Improving physical spaces by
 - revitalizing the Teen Spaces at Old Town Library
 - providing free snacks for youth every Wednesday at Council Tree Library
- Meeting teens where they are at by
 - establishing a working partnership and relationship with TAC 212
 - providing access to a therapy dog and licensed therapist during the annual IMAGINANTES workshop
- Expanding opportunities for teen participation by
 - participating in the Youth Summer Adelante Fellowship, which provides paid internships and job training to historically marginalized youth
 - reorganizing the Teen Council to create a Leadership Committee that will work on projects related to library policy, collections, buildings, and services.
- Providing staff training on Services to Teens at Staff Day in order to help make sure that staff are friendly and welcoming to teens, and are knowledgeable about teens' rights and needs.

About TAC 212: <https://tac212.com/about>

About Youth Summer Adelante Fellowship: <https://isaacnoco.org/adelante>