This award-winning program encourages teens to design projects that bring big ideas to life.

Teen Reading Lounge is based on the belief that the humanities can be an effective tool for positive youth development. Through youth-focused book discussions and hands-on projects, teens build on their readings to impact their lives and communities. Since 2010, PHC has provided grants, training and technical support to launch more than 80 Teen Reading Lounge sites, reaching more than 1,000 teens across Pennsylvania.

Teen Reading Lounge helps youth build vital skills.

Major research studies project that 21st-century learning skills—such as critical thinking, creativity and emotional intelligence—will be the most crucial competencies for young people entering the workforce in coming years. Teen Reading Lounge has been shown to build skills that support teen participants’ personal development as well as their ability to succeed in the workforce later in life.

- **80%** show improved **COMMUNICATION** skills
- **80%** show improved **INTERPERSONAL** skills
- **77%** show improved **CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING AND CREATIVITY**
- **65%** show improved **LITERACY AND MEDIA** skills
Programming that resonates with young people.

Traditional youth programs follow the “if you build it, they will come” model by predetermining content for young people. Teen Reading Lounge is different because program development starts by asking youth what’s important and of interest to them. 83% of teens say that they would participate in the program again, and 80% report that they are very likely to tell their friends to join.

A leader in the out-of-school-time sector.

By effectively leveraging the humanities as a tool for positive youth development, Teen Reading Lounge has become a leader in out-of-school-time education in Pennsylvania and nationwide. Teen Reading Lounge was honored as a finalist for the 2015 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, and as a 2015 Afterschool Champion by the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network.

An emphasis on access and equity in education.

Pennsylvania is a “regressive” education funder, meaning the poorest schools receive the fewest resources. In recent years we’ve shifted the focus of Teen Reading Lounge to engage students who are disproportionately harmed by this inequity: youth from low-income backgrounds and youth of color. Among all Teen Reading Lounge participants, they are most likely to show improved skills and a stronger sense of identity.