

National Central Library

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Spotlights

■ *New Services: NCL Welcomes High School Students*

On July 1, 2011, National Central Library officially lowered the minimum age requirement to apply for a library card to 16, or high school students who are not yet 16. This new patron group will be able to access all library services, with hopes that these privileges will aid in the education and scholarly development in Taiwan. This is not only a new milestone for NCL, it is also highly significant for Taiwan's educational development.

In March 1956, NCL opened a reading room. In June of the same year, it did away with having patrons take a wooden pass to access the reading room and replaced this with a reading card.

When current NCL Director-general Shu-hsien Tseng assumed her post at the end of 2010, she noticed an increase in high school students' ability to conduct academic research and their needs to access scholarly works. She began surveying library staffs' views on the potentiality of



The power of reading: students of Taipei First Girls High School happily took photos together, after receiving their library cards from NCL.

reducing the minimum age requirement, while at the same time holding many activities promoting reading. One such activity was held on April 23 in conjunction with other libraries. Entitled "Literature Never Ages, Ohio: Modern Chinese Novel Month," this reading-promotion activity was attended by many high schools from around the country. A website is being established that will assist in working together with and serving high schools. The new policy officially went into effect on July 1, meaning those 16 years or older or high school students not yet 16 years of age can apply for a library card to access all holdings and services in the Library.

NCL organized a series of activities and services to welcome this new patron group. On the first day of the new policy, the first 100 applicants received a keepsake in addition to their library card. During the summer break, NCL held a series of movie showings called "Hot Summer, Cool Movies" and another entitled "Between Generations: Linking Grandchildren with Their Grandparents." Also, the 2nd Annual Golden Comic Awards were held at the Library's Arts and Audiovisual Center, where viewers were treated to the charisma of original Taiwanese comics. Guided group tours are also available that introduce the facilities, holdings, and use of each reading room in the Library. Secondary schools and above can arrange for these tours.

The Library has also selected and designed learning resources, internet courses, designated computers, and introductions to reference works especially for high school students, as a way to assist them in quickly making the most of NCL's services. Moreover, NCL has professionals that can guide and assist high school students search for specific information. The Library has also set up an E-reading Booth that allows patrons to access the Library's rich selection of digital resources on any number of devices. Also available is the

extremely popular Jin Yong e-book reader and the Greenbook e-book reader. These encourage patrons to experience the joy of mobile reading and give educational experiences an entertaining twist.

The announcement of the new policy was made on NCL's website and on the national news. The day before it went into effect, many inquiries were made as to whether or not it would be carried out as planned. Other patrons expressed concerns that high school students would adversely affect the scholarly and professional nature of the Library. Yet, in surveying the high school students that applied for library cards, it became clear they were familiar with the nature of the Library. Their reasoning for coming to NCL was based on the fact that its abundant collections and databases available could aid them with their studies and research. These resources are unavailable at school and public libraries. Starting on July 1, approximately 2,000 high school students have accessed the Library each month. In terms of overall patronage, this figure will not affect other patrons.

NCL is Taiwan's national library and is dedicated to scholarly research and assisting researchers. Future plans include a branch library or a National Youth and Children's Library to promote library development and stay abreast of international developments.

■ *The 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Library Association and Poster Session*

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Library Association was held from June 23-28 in New York. Taiwan's National Central Library's E-Publication Platform System (EPS) was selected for the 30th Annual ALA Poster Sessions. In addition, EPS also received an ALA Presidential Citations for Innovative International Library Projects for 2011 from the International Relations Round Table (IRRT). It was one of four systems to be cited.