Tips for Recruiting Living Lab RAs

Many undergraduate students are interested in gaining research experience. Many of us mentor student research assistants through UROP and independent studies (e.g., PSYCH 326). Several students also volunteer, which is awesome! Potential RAs are easily recruited via psychology recruitment fairs, via Psych SAA emails, and via word-of-mouth (perhaps you’ve advertised positions in one of your classes?). We are happy to help you identify fruitful avenues for recruiting research assistants!

For the Living Lab, it’s important to identify potential RAs who will not only enjoy the research, but who genuinely enjoy chatting with people of all ages (and importantly, strangers), and are eager to educate the public about the Living Lab, research, and psychology more generally. Over time, it’s become clear that many students can become good RAs, but not all of these students make good Living Lab RAs. Finding those RAs that are well suited for the Living Lab setting is in your own best interest. Importantly, it also helps us fulfill the goals of the Living Lab. One of the key Living Lab goals is to serve as a dynamic educational exhibit that compliments the STEM education missions of our community partners. Please keep this in mind as you look for new research assistants.

Below we list some qualities of ideal LL RAs, and some questions you can ask potential RAs that relate to these qualities. (And some questions -- marked with asterisks below -- are for you to think about as you conduct your interviews.)

**RAs well-suited for the Living Lab:**

- **Demonstrate a clear enthusiasm for research, including working with children and their families…**
  - What experience do they have working with children?
  - Have they worked with children in a professional capacity (e.g., daycare, other lab research)?
  - Have they ever babysat?
  - Do they have younger siblings?
  - What do they enjoy about being around children?
  - What seems exciting to them about talking with parents?

- **Are interested in educating the public about psychology and research more generally…**
  - What experience do they have teaching/mentoring others?
  - How do they handle questions they don’t know the answer to?
  - What excites them about working with the public, outside the lab setting?

- **Can commit to a regular shift (and perhaps have some flexibility in their schedule)…**
  - What is their schedule like this semester/year?
- Do they hold another job/lab position?
- How would they manage a situation where they were unable to make it to a shift?

**Are very comfortable chatting with and approaching strangers...**
- If they’re being honest, how comfortable do they feel with the idea of talking to adults in museum settings (e.g., when engaging them in a recruiting conversation)?
- In what capacity have they worked with others in public settings?
- **How did they greet you at the outset of your interview?**
- **Did they ask questions during the interview?**
- **Did they elaborate on answers?**
- **In what ways did they seem engaged (e.g., good eye contact, minimal/no fidgeting, smiling)?**

**Are honest...**
- What challenges do they anticipate facing?
  - How would they work to overcome those challenges?
- What do they look forward to?
- What do they least look forward to?