

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES ASSOCIATION
A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

young adult library services



VOLUME 10 | NUMBER 1

FALL 2011

ISSN 1541-4302

\$17.50



INSIDE:

HOSTING AN ANTI-PROM
STREET LIT AND THE
INNER-CITY TEEN
READER

TAKING RISKS AT
SUMMER LIBRARY CLUB
YALSA'S NEW WRITING
AWARD

AND MUCH MORE

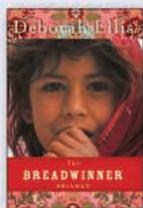
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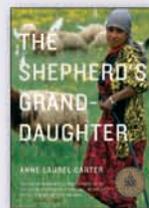
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About This Cover

This special issue of *YALS* focuses on communities and communication. Articles for this special issue focus on how libraries can better communicate with allies in their communities, whether it's reaching out to teens or like-minded organizations.

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Young Adult Library Services (ISSN 1541-4302) is published four times a year by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of ALA. Subscription price: members of YALSA, \$25 per year, included in membership dues; nonmembers, \$70 per year in the U.S.; \$80 in Canada, Mexico, and other countries. Back issues within one year of current issue, \$17.50 each. Periodicals class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Young Adult Library Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Members: Address changes and inquiries should be sent to Membership Department, Changes to Young Adult Library Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Nonmember subscribers: Subscriptions, orders, changes of address, and inquiries should be sent to Changes to Young Adult Library Services, Subscriptions, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; subscriptions@ala.org.

Statement of Purpose

Young Adult Library Services is the official journal of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association. YALS primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education for librarians serving young adults, ages twelve through eighteen. It will include articles of current interest to the profession, act as a showcase for best practices, provide news from related fields, publish recent research related to YA librarianship, and will spotlight significant events of the organization and offer in-depth reviews of professional literature. YALS will also serve as the official record of the organization.

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Indexing, Abstracting, and Microfilm

Young Adult Library Services is indexed in Library Literature, Library & Information Science Abstracts, and Current Index to Journals in Education. Microfilm copies of *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* and its predecessor, *Top of the News*, are available from ProQuest/Bell & Howell, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences-Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992. ∞

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from the Editor

Megan Honig

I'd like to start my first *From the Editor* page with an introduction.

I am at an unusual point in my library career. After four years as a young adult librarian in the New York Public Library's branches and two years as NYPL's Young Adult Collections Specialist, I have left that system and that city to pursue writing, speaking, and training opportunities elsewhere—including taking on the editorship of YALS.

I do not know whether or in what capacity I will return to libraries full time. I do know that I care deeply about the emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being of teenagers, and I believe that libraries have the potential to play a pivotal, positive role in teens' lives. I want to challenge us all not only to fight for our libraries' and our own survival, but also to think critically about the assumptions and choices we make in our everyday work.

In the library world, I strive to be an advocate and a conversation-starter. Last winter, when my book *Urban Grit: A Guide to Street Lit* was published, I launched a "30 Days of Street Lit" blog series that explored the complicated questions that street lit genre poses for librarians who serve teens: Why do we assume that teens should be protected from books with sexual content? How does racism inform our assumptions about which books are "appropriate"? How can the library empower teens to make sense of the world around them?

As YALS editor, I hope to keep asking questions and starting conversations. This fall issue, focusing on communities and communication, asks both what libraries can do for teens and—once we've earned their respect and trust—what teens can do for libraries. Lauren Comito and Franklin L. Escobedo discuss teens working as library advocates. Sarah Couri revamps her library's traditional Summer Reading Club and creates a dynamic, holistic, and wildly successful slate of summer programming. Vanessa Irvin Morris theorizes about the literacy of the teen street lit reader, while Natalie Mulder proposes that libraries can deepen their role in the community by connecting teens with community service opportunities. Finally, Chris Shoemaker explains how seven hundred New York City teens come together for a library mega-event that is both stylish and substantive: the Anti-Prom. Plus, this issue will give you information about professional resources, new opportunities within ALA and YALSA, and how to stay connected to YALSA online.

Got a question, a comment, or an idea for an article of your own? E-mail me at yalseditor@gmail.com. YALS

from the President

Sarah Flowers



I'm switching pages in *YALS* and switching hats, from editor of the journal to president of the association. First, I want to welcome Megan Honig, the new editor. I'm looking forward to working with her on the journal. I hope you enjoy *YALS* as much as I have, Megan!

As president, I would like to share some thoughts with all of you about my ideas for the year. My theme for the year is "Building the Future." It seems an appropriate theme to me, because YALSA has grown a lot in the past five or six years, and this is a good time to take a look at who we have become and where we are going.

We have already begun this process by spending some time at ALA's Annual Conference looking at YALSA's strategic plan (<http://tinyurl.com/YALSAstratplan>). The process actually began in March with a member survey on the plan. Then, in New Orleans, the YALSA Board of Directors spent an afternoon examining the assumptions, goals, and objectives of the plan, and determining what we had done and failed to do. In some areas, such as research, we feel that we have taken great strides. But in some other areas, such as marketing, we believe that we still have a long way to go. On Saturday morning in New Orleans, approximately one hundred YALSA members attended a workshop to give their input into the most important areas of the strategic plan and to share their priorities for the future. By the time you read this, you will all have had an opportunity to comment on the draft plan and the executive committee will be creating an action plan based on your input. The YALSA board will provide input during November, and

we hope to implement the plan at Midwinter. The plan will continue to guide the decisions we make about the initiatives and projects that YALSA will concentrate on as we build our future. Many thanks to Priscille Dando and the rest of the Strategic Planning Committee for all their work facilitating this whole process.

Another area I would like to focus on this year is building YALSA's capacity to implement projects and programs. One of the things I will be looking at is our Leadership Endowment. The endowment, which was approved by the ALA executive board in 2009, was created "to generate income to support the development of future leaders, both within the association and throughout the profession in order to ensure the future growth of YALSA and the field of young adult librarianship." Grassroots fundraising to establish the endowment began in 2007 with a group of YALSA past presidents led by Jennifer Gallant and Pam Spencer Holley. Right now, there is about \$40,000 in the endowment. This is great, but it isn't enough to allow us to start using the interest to give grants to members or do any of the other things we hope to do. To build our future, we need a healthy endowment, so I will be looking at options for fundraising, including encouraging planned giving.

Building future leaders for YALSA is another aspect I want to spend some time and energy on. We will continue to support our spectrum scholars and emerging leaders, and in addition, this year we have instituted a new Board Fellow Program (<http://tinyurl.com/3oeqjgv>).

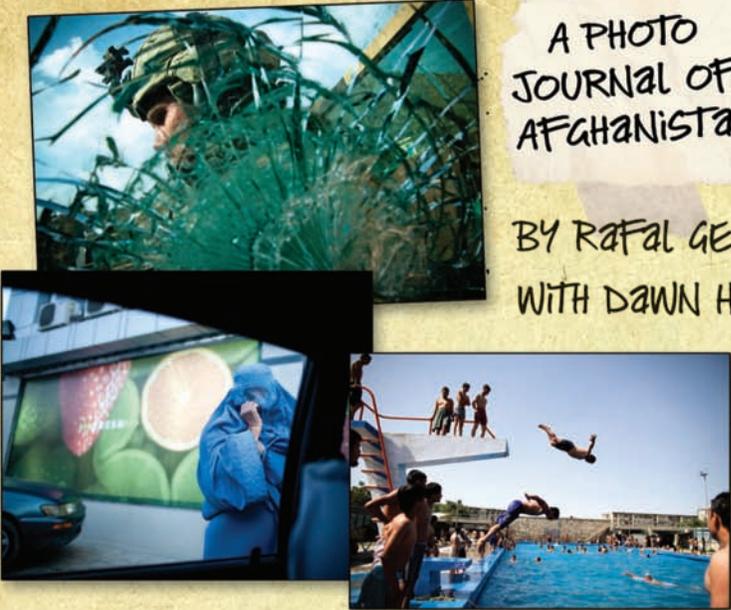
This program will give members a chance to be involved in YALSA's leadership by having a one-year, nonvoting seat on the Board of Directors. This is a great opportunity for members who think they may be interested in association governance, and I hope that Board Fellows will eventually run for and be elected to full voting positions on the board.

Advocacy is another area that is essential to building the future of YALSA. Advocacy can take many different forms. This year, YALSA members will start creating issue briefs, documents that are geared to provide quick, useful information to policy- and decision-makers who may have little or no background in the subject area. It's one way to share our expertise on the topic of teens and teen library service. Another aspect of advocacy is expanding YALSA's reach and influence as a national organization. We have created a new standing committee to oversee YALSA's portfolio of national guidelines, such as the competencies and the public library evaluation tool.

Those are just a few of the projects that I will be engaged in this year. Of course, we will continue to work on our successful programs, such as our awards and lists and our initiatives like Teen Tech Week™ and Teen Read Week™. We have already begun planning for our next YA Lit

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BEYOND BULLETS



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BY RAFAL GERSZAK
WITH DAWN HUNTER

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Symposium in November 2012 in St. Louis. YALSA has a justly deserved reputation as being one of the liveliest divisions in ALA, and we'll certainly keep it that way!

I am extremely honored that you elected me to represent you as president for 2011-12. I look forward to continuing to meet many of you, both face-to-face and virtually. Please follow me on Twitter (@yalsapresident) and retweet freely. Let's get the word out about YALSA and the great work we do to as wide a circle as possible. Together, let's work on building the future for and with YALSA. YALS

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) has worked hard to document how school libraries support student learning and provide guidelines and honors for exemplary programs—programs that showcase how a school library can make a primary difference in whether a school becomes truly effective at meeting its goals. Nonetheless, school libraries are being gutted, starved, and destroyed across the country. During her AASL presidential year, Nancy Everhart took to the road to demonstrate how learning thrives and students come alive in school libraries. See the account of her Vision Tour to highlight effective library media programs and see videos of the tour and the kids at <http://tinyurl.com/aaslvisiontour>.

As a result of the recession, school libraries are being closed, consolidated, and rendered ineffective by the elimination of staff. In addition, the federal No Child Left Behind legislation does not include school librarians as instructional personnel. If you followed the draconian and humiliating process that was put in place in the Los Angeles Unified School District to reclassify several school librarians as “nonteachers” (see “The Disgraceful Interrogation of L.A. School Librarians,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/laschoollib>), you get a sense of the desperation that school districts feel and the extreme actions that they will take to make cuts. Whether this is a trend or an anomaly, now is the time to demonstrate how the school library is not just an appendage, but an essential organ of any vital and optimally functioning twenty-first century school. This slow train toward disaster must be stopped, and that’s where YALSA members can step up and make a difference.

This fall, ALA is launching a massive “School Libraries Matter” campaign to address this national crisis. How successful we are and how *massive* we become will

Stopping the Slow Train to Disaster or How to Talk Up, Trick Out, and Establish Beyond a Doubt That School Libraries Are Vital for Kids (and That Means TEENS!)

By Steve Matthews

STEVE MATTHEWS is currently on the ALA Executive Board and serves as Chair of the ALA Conference Committee. He is proud to be the Executive Board Liaison to YALSA. He loves to read fantasy, political thrillers (sorry for the oxymoron), and serious fiction (whatever that is). He served on the first YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Committee.

depend on how engaged and committed ALA members are at getting out the message. YALSA, which counts school librarians as a quarter of its members, can be a key element of the expanding forward momentum of this campaign. YALSA, with its creative and tech-savvy ways, can be a critical partner, not only in broadcasting the essential role of school librarians, but also by helping to build a better awareness of how they work to build quality libraries that help teens learn and grow.

The Goals of the Campaign

- Increase public awareness of the impact of the loss of school libraries on students and student achievement
- Help local advocates save school libraries at the local district level
- Secure inclusion of school libraries with certified school librarians in the new federal ESEA legislation and

inclusion of school libraries in the SKILLS Act

The Campaign Committee will be led by Pat Tumulty, executive director of the New Jersey Library Association and co-chair Susan D. Ballard, President-elect of AASL. The central message will be short and striking and focus on the impact of the crisis on students. As the Campaign Committee works to define and implement its plan, it will develop strategies for success. Possible approaches may include outreach to national media to highlight and expose the crisis, the development of talking points for local and statewide advocates, legislative outreach at the national level, and the development of plans to connect with the national PTA, state school superintendents, and other potential national partners.

This multiyear campaign will involve Keith Fiels, executive director of ALA; the president, past-president, and president-elect of ALA; the Office for Library Advocacy; the Public Information Office;

the Government Relations Office; and AASL. Ideas and support from YALSA and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) are critical factors.

If you have questions or want to share ideas for the campaign, contact the Office for Library Advocacy (ola@ala.org). YALSA has been a leader in developing novel and effective ways to communicate with the public and those who hold the purse strings. YALSA's District Days initiative is a brilliant idea and a great model for advocacy to be sure that library service to teens penetrates the consciousness of elected officials. Our ability to take our place in the larger library ecosystem and get others—our public as well as librarians from all types of libraries—to pick up the phone, text, tweet, or just show up to make the case for the power of school libraries will be a crucial element in producing the swelling surge of support that will be necessary to achieve the goals of this campaign. YALS

At ALA's 2011 Annual Conference in New Orleans, the ALA Awards Committee approved a new award: the YALSA Writing Award. This award will honor the best writing in YALSA's blogs and journals: *YALS*, the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults*, the YALSA Blog, and The Hub, YALSA's YA literature blog. Each year, there will be a \$500 prize for the best article in *YALS*, a \$500 prize for the best article in *JRLYA*, and \$200 prizes for the best post in each of the blogs.

YALSA's Board of Directors proposed this award as a way to recognize excellence in writing for YALSA and to encourage members to write and submit articles to YALSA's publications. Articles in these publications inform and educate members so that they can continue to be effective in their work, and they give YALSA members an opportunity to share their expertise with others. Members are not paid for the articles they submit to the blogs and journals, and the board appreciates how generous they are with their time and talent. This award is a way to reward members for their work for YALSA and the profession. It is also the board's hope that increased submissions to our publications will help ensure that our journals and blogs retain a reputation for authority and quality.

Selection of the winners will be based on the quality and appropriateness of the submitted articles using the following criteria: applicability to a variety of library settings, originality of ideas, timeliness,

relevance to young adult librarianship, persuasiveness of arguments, quality of writing, clarity of presentation, and contribution to the YALSA membership. Each year, the editor or blog manager of each publication will select five articles or posts that he or she believes to be the best of the year. Those five articles will be forwarded to a YALSA writing jury who will select one winner for each publication.

Each publication has a specific mission, guidelines, and style. Check the author guidelines for the one you are interested in (see the links at the end of this article). Follow best practices for writing submissions by becoming familiar with the types of articles that appear in each of the publications, and tailor your approach accordingly. You may want to submit a proposal to the editor or blog manager before actually writing an article; that way you won't spend your time

writing on a topic that someone else already has in the pipeline. Once you write an article, read it out loud to check for grammar, syntax, spelling, and sense. Rewrite when necessary! In general, put your best foot forward.

So, writers and potential writers: pull out your best ideas, limber up your fingers, head for the keyboard, and create your best stuff—and maybe you'll end up \$500 richer!

Guidelines

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- *JRLYA*: www.yalsa.ala.org/jrly/author-guidelines/
- YALSA Blog: www.yalsa.ala.org/blog/blogger-guidelines/
- The Hub: www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/the-hub-blogger-guidelines/ *YALS*

YALSA Writing Award

By Sarah Flowers

SARAH FLOWERS is President of YALSA and former Editor-in-Chief of *YALS*.

feature

YALSA Perspectives

What's Good for Members is Good for YALSA

Introducing YALSA's Board Fellow Program

By Linda Braun

Have you ever thought you had a lot more to give to YALSA than you were giving already? Did you then wonder if the best way to support the association might be in a leadership position, say, on the YALSA board? Have you wondered what being on the YALSA board is all about? Have you felt the need to know more about how associations work? If you answered “yes” to any of those questions, then the YALSA Board Fellow Program may be just right for you.

Until Annual Conference 2011, the only way YALSA members could serve on

the YALSA board was by being appointed as chair of either the Strategic Planning or the Organization and Bylaws Committee; or by being placed on the YALSA ballot (by going through the nominations procedure facilitated by YALSA's Governance Nominating Committee) and winning an election. The new YALSA Board Fellow Program provides a new option for those interested in board service.

Each year, one applicant will be selected as the YALSA Board Fellow. As a fellow, the selected association member will participate in all activities of the

YALSA board for a one-year period, starting at the end of the Annual Conference of the year in which they are selected. Although a nonvoting member of the board, the fellow will be involved in the work of the board by:

- Attending and being actively engaged in all board meetings (including Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting) and discussions, both face-to-face and virtual
- Taking part in training specifically geared to YALSA Board Members
- Participating in ad hoc committees of the board as appropriate to the Fellow's experience and skills
- Using social media—such as YALSA blogs, Twitter, and Facebook—to let others know about life as a board fellow
- Helping YALSA evaluate the work of the board and the board fellow program by taking part in an end-of-the-year evaluation
- Always bringing their ideas, knowledge, and skills to whatever board activity needs them

A variety of YALSA members interested in learning about board leadership service are eligible to be appointed as a board fellow. A fellow can be a library school student, a long-time YALSA member, or a new member. A key component of the board fellow application (available at www.ala.org/yalsa/awards&grants) is a statement explaining the goals and outcomes the applicant wishes to gain by being a board fellow. In other words, YALSA is looking for people who not only can give back to the association via board service, but who also are looking for experiences that help them grow professionally.

The board fellow will receive up to \$1,000 as a stipend to cover costs of attending Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. (Up to \$500 will be provided

LINDA W. BRAUN is a YALSA Past President and an Educational Technology Consultant with LEO: Librarians and Educators Online. She provides training and consulting to librarians and educators in a variety of areas related to technology in educational settings. She is also a Professor of Practice at Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

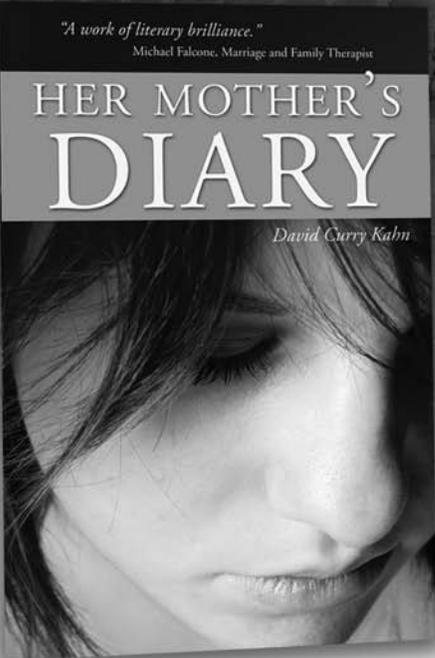
for each event the board fellow must attend.) Applications are due December 1. If you are interested, you can learn more by visiting the Board Fellow overview on the YALSA Web site at www.ala.org/yalsa/awards&grants.

Think about applying even if you are a new member or a library school

student. It is bound to be a great way to bring your skills and talents to the association while at the same time gaining expertise. If you are a more seasoned member, and have thought the YALSA Board might be right for you, but you just didn't feel comfortable getting your name on the ballot, this could be the

perfect way for you to progress with YALSA.

The Board Fellow Program is good for members and good for YALSA. Give the program serious consideration. Who knows what it might lead to! YALS



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feature

YALSA Perspectives

Get Ready for the 2012 Young Adult Literature Symposium

By Hannah Berry

The Young Adult Literature Symposium is almost upon us . . .

Every two years, YALSA hosts an event that brings together librarians and future librarians from across the world in one lucky town. When these teen librarians from schools and public libraries descend, no book is safe! But that is only how it starts. Authors, publishers, editors, and reviewers also come out of the woodwork to attend. It is the event for anyone in the field of teen literature!

The 2012 symposium will take place in St. Louis Nov. 2-4, with a theme of *The Future of Young Adult Literature: Hit Me with the Next Big Thing*. Proposals for programs and papers are now being accepted at www.ala.org/yalitsymposium. Visit the symposium website

(www.ala.org/yalitsymposium) to learn more about St. Louis and sign up for updates; registration will open in April. Past events have focused on diversity and how teens read in the twenty-first century. They were fun, memorable events filled with author signings, talks, presentations (on everything from body positivity to zines), and interactive fun with networking. Carla Riemer, a 2012 Young Adult Literature Symposium Task Force member, said she “really enjoyed meeting so many librarians from all over and in all stages of their careers. Tying real life experiences with the topics we were hearing about on the panel made the whole thing much richer.” This year it’s all about the next big thing!

The YA Lit Symposium can be an invigorating experience for anyone. Just ask

Kate Pickett, who said, “I know that about every two years I get bone tired and I need a shot of librarian-caffeine. This conference does this for me! It totally gets me re-energized, pumps me up, and gives me the fuel to run on for the next two years.”

I too have learned a lot from the past two conferences. Everything I learn I take back to my library and put to use. Like Kate, I start to run low on energy and ideas until I see that call for proposals go up. Then I know that soon the symposium will be here, and soon I will be a new me filled with ideas and plans for at least the next two years!

Everyone who attends walks away with something. Carrie Dietz said:

The general closing session was my favorite part of the 2010 Symposium. Lauren Myracle and Ellen Hopkins discussed the importance of overcoming intellectual freedom challenges. Hopkins read a letter from a St. Louis fan whose life is similar to that of the characters in her novels. Both authors expressed the fact that not every book is appropriate for every reader; however, some books are appropriate for some readers and are needed by them. After the Symposium I felt prepared to defend access to all types of books for teens.

Challenges are only one of the many things we face as teen librarians, and the closing session was a great way to end the 2010 symposium.

Tom Spicer said, “I want to go to the YA Lit Symposium 2012. Why? Because the symposium has a cool acronym: “YALS”! Also, because reading books as a teen changed my life, and I need to be informed on the great new fiction in order to provide that same experience that I had for today’s teens. The YA Literature Symposium is *the* place to do it!”

So think about the Next Big Thing. Who chooses what will be the next Harry

HANNAH BERRY grew up near St. Louis in a town without a public library. She has known that she wanted to be a Teen Librarian since 1997, and three years ago she became the Teen Services Librarian at the Aurora Public Library’s main location.

Potter or Twilight? How does a book get chosen to be the next big thing? Is the next big thing even a book, or could it be a new piece of technology? Or is the next big thing a way of interacting with authors or books that we haven't thought of yet? How do we break into the minds of teens and find out what they will consider the next big thing? Will the written word even be around in a few years? With all these questions and many more, this Symposium is sure to get you involved.

This year, the symposium is in St. Louis, Missouri—the Gateway City and home of toasted ravioli, Ted Drewes, and Cardinals baseball. Plan on making time to

visit Forest Park and all that it is home to on almost thirteen hundred acres (five hundred acres more than New York's Central Park)—the Science Center, the History Museum, a world-renowned art museum, and zoo—all free! Plus, see the majestic beauty of the Missouri Botanical Garden, the nation's oldest botanical garden in continuous operation, and a place that is world renowned for research and plant preservation. The conference hotel is just steps from the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, better known as the Gateway Arch, and across the street from the historic old courthouse where the Dred Scott decision was handed down."So," said

Patty Carleton, "I think I can say that Ted Drewes really does have the best frozen custard concretes in the world, and with all that history and beauty, you really can't miss making the trip to St. Louis, especially when you toss the Symposium into the mix."

So make a plan to join us at the 2012 Young Adult Literature Symposium in St. Louis, Missouri, and remember to get involved and send in those program proposals so you can be a part of the next great symposium. And thanks to the rest of the symposium task force for their help with writing this article! YALS



YALSA's Research Resources

- Read or submit articles to the **Journal of Research on Libraries & Young Adults** (<http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya>).
- Join the **Network for Research on Libraries & Teens** (<http://yaresearch.ning.com>) or sign up for **YA Researchers**, our research email discussion list (www.tinyurl.com/yaresearchers)
- Apply for the \$1,000 **VOYA/YALSA Frances Henne Research Grant** (www.ala.org/yalsa/awards&grants)
- Find tools for your projects in the **Research Resources Clearinghouse** (http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Research_Resources_Clearinghouse)
- Apply to serve on the **YALSA Research Committee** (<http://yalsa.ala.org/forms>. Appointments are made each spring and terms run from July through June)

feature

YALSA Perspectives

Get Connected to YALSA Online

By Jessica Sullenberger

Are you connected to YALSA's online resources? If not, you're missing out on a world of valuable information that could enrich your career, as well as your social life! Recently, YALSA conducted a social media use survey, and found that many respondents do not regularly use the variety of social media tools, blogs, and professional resources available to YALSA members. In fact, more than half of the 1,400 respondents do not use The Hub, YALSA's Twitter feed, Facebook, or the Books for Teens Facebook page. The YALSA blog, wiki, and ALA Connect spaces fared slightly better: roughly a quarter of respondents use them.

Perhaps some of us feel too swamped to check in on these resources regularly, or we may not be comfortable using social media or editing a wiki. Whatever the reason for nonuse, these resources are ours to create and consume, and they can improve our effectiveness as YALSA members, librarians, and teen advocates while making us feel connected to others

who fight the same battles and share our interests. Read on for a brief overview of these tools, including where to access them, why you might find them useful, and how to use them.

Yalsa Twitter Feed

<http://twitter.com/yalsa>

Why It's Useful

Twitter is a great place to network with like-minded people, and you will find many like-minded people who follow YALSA. By following tweets (brief updates no longer than 140 characters) posted by people of interest, you may make connections and expand your professional network. You might even make some friends! Moreover, YALSA tweets will keep you up to date on proceedings at ALA Annual and Midwinter, as well as other conferences, happenings, and opportunities within

YALSA. Even if you don't have much time to explore, YALSA's Twitter feed will give you timely, quick information to keep you up to speed on the organization. Many of YALSA's tweets share information from other YALSA web resources, so you can use it as a one-stop-shop to quickly update yourself when you're short on time. What's more, if you already use Twitter for personal social networking, you can enrich your professional life while keeping up with friends, family, and other interests.

How to Use It

Anyone can view YALSA's Twitter feed, but to follow it you must create an account. Visit <http://twitter.com>, and enter your information in the form at the upper right corner of your screen. Follow the instructions to create your username and register. After signing up, go back to YALSA's feed at <http://twitter.com/yalsa>. Beneath the YALSA logo, see a button that says "Follow." Click and you are following YALSA! New YALSA tweets will now appear in your timeline—the page you land on when you sign on to Twitter.

Twitter can be awfully confusing to the uninitiated, but it is a powerful information tool. According to Twitter, its best use is to follow other users who interest you, rather than worrying about tweeting original content yourself. As you learn what you enjoy reading, you'll feel more comfortable participating, but you don't have to tweet at all to enjoy Twitter. To learn the basics, visit <http://help.twitter.com>, and click on "Twitter Basics." Here you will find concise explanations of Twitter jargon and structure. The most important concepts to be aware of are your Twitter timeline, hashtags, mentions, replies, and retweets.

JESSICA SULLENBERGER is a Teen Services Librarian at Green Valley Library in Henderson, Nevada. Currently serving as Chair of the YALSA Website Advisory Committee, Jessica is addicted to Facebook, and she's trying really, really hard to keep up with YALSA online.

YALSA Facebook Page

<http://www.facebook.com/yalsa>

Why It's Useful

These days, Facebook is omnipresent. We can connect with our best friends from high school, our teachers, our family, and so on. Even pets have Facebook accounts. It is useful not only for keeping in touch and letting the world know what we ate for breakfast, but also for following businesses and organizations of interest, and putting us in communication with people who share our interests. YALSA's Facebook page exists to promote YALSA among members and nonmembers alike by providing current information on events, as well as starting conversations and providing information of interest to librarians, readers, and others who serve teens.

Facebook is more conversational than Twitter because multiple users can comment on a post in the same place, starting a discussion. For example, recent posts on the YALSA Facebook page have included discussion about how to name Teen Advisory Groups and book clubs, a story about Biblioburro (a traveling library on a donkey's back), and a request for feedback on proposed continuing education sessions at ALA Annual 2012. Users can engage in casual discussion while also collaborating to create a personalized professional experience in YALSA.

Following YALSA on Facebook also allows members to develop a more personal relationship with the organization, and to spread knowledge of YALSA and other library services information to family and friends. Pictures posted to the YALSA Facebook page put faces to names that we read in e-mails or online, but may not have the opportunity to meet in person. In this age of budget cuts, we may not all make it to conferences, but we can still get to know other YALSA members on Facebook,

Tips for Keeping Up with YALSA Online

- Set aside fifteen minutes every day during a time that is usually quiet, and dedicate that time to checking as many YALSA web resources as you can.
- Subscribe to the blogs in an RSS reader, and download Tweet Deck (<http://www.tweetdeck.com>) to manage Twitter and Facebook.
- Before emailing a question to a electronic discussion list, Search the YALSA Wiki to see if you can find what you are looking for.
- Schedule the YA Forum on your Outlook calendar or agenda, and make a point to check in a few times.
- Join a committee or interest group, or volunteer to write for one of the blogs!
- If possible, use the same username and password across YALSA web resources so it is always easy to sign in.

especially if we feel comfortable enough to befriend fellow members with our personal accounts. By reposting or tagging YALSA in posts to personal accounts, we spread knowledge of YALSA to our nonlibrarian Facebook friends, which may help garner support for and awareness of library services.

You may also want to follow the Books for Teens Facebook page to help spread the word about this awesome YALSA initiative to put books in the hands of underserved teens. Books for Teens's info page provides a link to donate to its cause, and those who update the page often share interesting links related to teen reading and literacy. Find Books for Teens at <http://www.facebook.com/booksforteens>.

How to Use It

As with Twitter, anyone can read YALSA's Facebook posts, but to get the most out of the experience, you will want to join. Visit <http://www.facebook.com> to create an account. After signing up, use the search bar to locate YALSA. Next to YALSA's name at the top of the screen, find the "Like" button with a thumbs-up on it. Click the button, and you will see YALSA Facebook posts in your Newsfeed.

Much like Twitter's Timeline, Facebook features a Newsfeed, which

gathers all posts from people you have friended on Facebook and organizations you have Liked. When you sign into Facebook, you will land on your Newsfeed page. To see all posts, click "Most Recent." Any new posts to YALSA's page will appear in your Newsfeed in real time. You can read and post comments on YALSA posts directly from your Newsfeed.

Facebook is generally more intuitive than Twitter, but knowledge of a few terms will guide new users. Items to be aware of are profiles, privacy settings, your Wall, status updates, and tags. To learn more about these, hover your cursor over the "Account" button at the top right corner of any Facebook page and click "Help Center." Click "Browse Help Topics," and find links to pertinent info under "Using Facebook" and "Managing Your Account."

Professional Resources

YALSA Wiki

<http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa>

Why It's Useful

The YALSA Wiki is a collaborative Web space that any member can edit. Pages are consistently updated with valuable

information, which is viewable without signing in. Members are encouraged to continually contribute to the wiki to maintain its value. Additionally, committees may submit an Application for a Section on the YALSA Wiki (find it at the following link: www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsa/wiki_application.doc) to the Website Advisory Committee at yalsa.wiki@gmail.com to facilitate the creation of new pages pertinent to their work. The best part about the wiki is that you have a voice! If you see outdated information, something that needs editing, or a topic in which you are an expert, you can edit or add information.

The public wiki offers abundant information all linked from the main page. The section on programming provides links to particularly useful tools to plan teen library programs, including a full calendar of program ideas, a list of authors by state, and ideas for passive programming. If you're in a time crunch or feeling less-than-creative, these ideas could save the day. Moreover, if you have planned a really successful program, this is the place to share it! No one needs to reinvent the wheel or repeat the same question continually on an electronic discussion list when we have such a powerful planning and collaborative tool at our fingertips.

Keep an eye on the wiki this year for improved navigation, a new help page, and other updates.

How to Use It

Use the existing information on the wiki to enhance your knowledge of a variety of topics, including job search tools, advocacy, programming, technology, research, and how to get involved in YALSA. Each topic has its own section with several links to additional resources. Create an account and edit any of these pages to add your own

expertise on the topic. If you see a gap in information that you would like to address, but don't have the information yourself, contact the Website Advisory Committee to discuss locating and posting this information on the wiki.

Creating an account is simple. Click "Create Account" and enter your information. After receiving a confirmation e mail, you are able to make edits to the wiki. You may edit information on existing pages or create new pages, as necessary. After signing in, you will see an "Edit" tab above each section of the main page. Click the tab to edit the corresponding section by changing text or adding new pages.

New wiki pages should always link from an existing page, or they will be difficult to find. To create a new page, simply create a link in an existing page by typing the desired page name in double square brackets. For example, you could click the "Edit" tab on the "Programming" section of the main page and type `[[Music Programs]]` below the existing links. Scroll to the bottom and click the "Save Page" button. When you view the main page again, your link will appear in red; upon clicking it, you will be delivered to a new page to edit. The new page will have a formatting tool bar at the top to help you edit your text. Fill in your information, format, save the page, and you have contributed to the YALSA wiki!

For additional editing help and formatting tips, visit <http://www.mediawiki.org> and click on "User Help." Browse the topics to learn more about wiki maintenance.

YALSA on ALA Connect

<http://connect.ala.org/YALSA>

Why It's Useful

ALA Connect is a professional networking tool that allows members to collaborate

with committees and interest groups while staying current and contributing to member divisions. When you create an account in ALA Connect, the service automatically loads all of your group memberships, including divisions and committees. YALSA on ALA Connect is one of YALSA's most used web resources, according to the member survey.

So what will you find on YALSA on ALA Connect? Blog posts, online documents, a calendar, polls, a chat room, discussion board, and images are all available. Find current information under "View" and "Discussion." To get there, sign in to ALA Connect and click "My ALA Groups" in the top navigation. Follow the link to YALSA under "Divisions" and you will find yourself on the "View" tab, which shows all recent updates to YALSA's Connect page.

Important division information, such as meeting minutes and reports are available in Connect, as well as opportunities to get involved in YALSA, and YALSA's monthly forum discussions.

Each month, the YALSA forum on a topic relevant to library teen services takes place in ALA Connect. The forum opens at 10:00 A.M. EST on the first Monday each month, and closes the following Friday at 3:00 P.M. EST. An expert from the selected field moderates discussion, and members can ask questions or post discussion. Some great conversation has taken place during recent YALSA forums on services to LGBT teens and Facebook in the library. Find the calendar for upcoming YA Forums on the YALSA Web site (<http://yalsa.ala.org>) under "News and Blog," and join the discussion on ALA Connect.

How to Use It

Visit the ALA Connect Web site and sign up for an account by following the link at

the top left corner of your screen. Sign in, and Connect will populate your memberships. Click “My ALA Groups” in the upper navigation to view your ALA Groups and member communities. Look under “Division” for a link to YALSA. Don’t stop there, though! You can also find communities of interest and contacts by searching under “My Communities” and “Member Search” in the top navigation. Use ALA Connect to collaborate with your network, learn, grow, and get some work done!

Blogs

YALSA Blog

<http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/>

Why It’s Useful

The YALSA Blog provides “information about time-sensitive issues such as news in the YA field, programs, conferences, initiatives, resources, and activities of use to YALSA members and the YA librarianship community.”¹ Volunteer contributors post interesting, brief entries on a variety of topics, providing firsthand insight on conference events they have attended, groups they work with, YALSA opportunities, and information useful to librarians who work with teens.

Especially useful are the regular features “App of the Week” and “Tweets of the Week.” “App of the Week” introduces an application for iPad or other mobile devices that YALSA members may find helpful. “Tweets of the Week” compiles tweets from a variety of sources on hot

topics in libraries. The blog is particularly helpful for time-crunched librarians because it shares a variety of information from many resources in one place. It’s a great place to find inspiration for your individual professional endeavors while gaining a sense of involvement and understanding of YALSA.

The Hub

<http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub>

Why It’s Useful

The Hub, YALSA’s literature blog, describes itself as “a one-stop-shop for finding information about teen reads, including recommendations for great teen reads, information about YALSA lists and awards, book trailers and other book-related videos, and best of the best lists.”² Bloggers focus on book reviews, recommendation lists, and interesting literary info from resources across the web. We all need good resources to help us keep up with the publishing industry and readers’ advisory, and the Hub is the perfect resource to help with these. If you’ve become bogged down in planning and answering the same question repeatedly at the service desk, The Hub will rekindle your love of YA literature and remind you why you’re here.

How to Use the Blogs

This one is pretty simple: all you have to do is visit the URL and read!

If you want to keep track of multiple blogs, you can use an aggregator or RSS reader to read them all in one place.

Google Reader is a popular web destination. Visit <http://reader.google.com> and sign in with your existing Google account or create one. Click “Add a subscription” at the upper left corner of your screen and type the blog URL in the box that appears. Click “Add” and the blog’s RSS Feed will appear in your reader. You can categorize the YALSA blog by clicking “Feed Settings” followed by “New Folder” and naming the folder with an appropriate category (Libraries, perhaps). Now you can subscribe to other library blogs and read them all at once. If you are not a fan of Google, use a search engine to find other readers or to download aggregator software to your computer. Explanations of all of these abound online, and they are easy to understand and use.

You can also make more in-depth use of either blog by viewing the categories in the drop-down menu to see posts on a specific topic, such as “Awards” or “Gaming”, or by clicking on a pertinent tag in the tag cloud. Both of these features appear on the right-hand side of the screen. YALS

References

1. “About”, “Mission”, *YALSA Blog*, <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/about/> (accessed July 23, 2011).
2. “About”, “Mission”, *The Hub*, <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/about/> (accessed July 23, 2011).

feature

Hot Spot: Communities and Communication

Teens as Advocates

By Lauren Comito and Franklin Escobedo with questions from Megan Honig

I asked Lauren Comito and Franklin L. Escobedo, two librarians who have inspired strong advocacy work among their communities' teen populations, to talk about the theory and practice of teens advocating for libraries.

What Does It Mean To Advocate for Libraries?

Lauren Comito (LC): Advocating for libraries means something a little bit different in every community. In some

places it may mean fighting for the library's very existence, where in other places it might mean pushing for a new addition, or a millage increase. It's something to think about when you are asking teens to advocate for you. They can get really, really intense about things they care about. If you are just having a bake sale, you might not want that. So it's really important that they know exactly what the goal is and what limits should be in place for getting there. That said, if you are fighting to stay open at all, and the teens want to get a little pushy and

LAUREN COMITO is an Outreach Librarian for Queens Library in the Rockaway area of Queens. She is one of the authors of the upcoming book *Grassroots Library Advocacy: A Special Report from ALA Editions*, based on her experiences as an activist and organizer on the Save NYC Libraries Campaign.

FRANKLIN L. ESCOBEDO is a Principal Librarian responsible for Young Adult Services for the Oceanside Public Library in Oceanside, California. While juggling the duties of a Branch Manager, he has been developing and implementing the young adult programs as well as continuing to manage and recruit Teen Partners for the past four years.

indignant, let them! An angry teen at a city council hearing is going to get listened to more than a senior, precisely because they are an anomaly. There is this idea of teens as apathetic hedonists; no one expects them to show up at all, so when they do, it means more.

Franklin L. Escobedo (FE): I really believe that it means active involvement in how the library works and why it's important. To advocate for the libraries can come in many forms, from volunteering to standing up at city council meeting asking for funding. As librarians, we advocate for our collections, for our budgets, and for those who don't always advocate for themselves. As young adult librarians, we advocate for teens to ensure that they get a fair share of the resources.

Why Would a Teen Want To Advocate for Libraries?

LC: I've always found that teens have an innate sense of social justice. They know what's good for the community; they know what's fair. If they are in the library every day after school, then they clearly value at least part of the service. Just like with adults, you really have to lay out how what you're advocating for will affect them. Why should they care? It also helps to point out why their participation will make a difference. They may feel like no one will listen to them, and be hesitant to try anything. You can't guarantee that the powers that be will listen to their concerns, but at least *you* can.

FE: Teens who generally advocate for the library are big users of the library or teens that know the importance of the library in their community. Lately, many teens have been moved into action due to budget cuts. They see the importance of

the library and are willing to stand up to protect it. Many teens come in every day to use the computers or to come to library programs or to hang out with friends. They know that without this safe place to go many will have nowhere to go. Some teens are looking to get community service credit for school, but others are truly trying to make a difference in their community.

How Might Teens Participate in Library Advocacy?

LC: Teens can do the same things everyone else can do. They can testify at a public hearing, or make signs for a rally. They can go to a march or rally, or even organize one. I've personally found that teens make the best petition signature collectors ever. It's almost like no one can say no to them. That's certainly something to use when you are in the midst of an advocacy campaign.

FE: One of the best ways for teens to become advocates is for them to get involved with a Teen Advisory Board. My teens have become involved by volunteering at the library. Getting your teens to go to a city council meeting to let our politicians know how vital library services are to them can also make a huge impact on public opinion.

What Tips Would You Offer to Librarians Who Want To Encourage Teens To Do Advocacy Work?

LC: Have a good relationship with them first. To be blunt, you can't get them to do anything for you if they don't like you and

the library. Then tell them the truth (if you are allowed to). They can handle it, and if you are sitting at your desk with a layoff notice, they are going to want to know why you are upset anyway. Then, if they offer, have things they can do: whether it's setting up a petition table or making signs it helps to have a concrete task they can perform.

FE: Talk to your teens; find out what they want and what they want to do. If they don't come to your Teen Advisory Board meetings, take a moment during a program to find out what they would like to do. I often have mini Teen Advisory Board meetings, at the beginning of a program, just to get some feedback from the teens, either to find out why they didn't come or to dispel a misconception that they may have about Teen Advisory Board meetings. Once your teens get involved, be honest about what's going on. When times were good, I made sure our teens had an active voice in our Teen Zone remodel, even looking at carpet samples and furniture catalogs. If your library is facing cuts, let your teens know. When we started facing cuts, I let the teens know we were having financial woes. They helped to brainstorm on ways of raising money. While they may not be able to vote in elections, one day they will be able to and they have parents that they could tell. Teens can make a huge impact by voicing their opinions at library board meetings and at city council meetings or taking part in a library advocacy day at their state capitol.

Tell Us a Story From Your Own Work About Successful (or Unsuccessful!) Teen Library Advocacy

LC: Every March, the New York Library Association sponsors a Library Advocacy Day in the state capital. Some of my

teens wanted to go with us, but it was a school day, and the liability issues of a three-hour trip made that impossible. So we made a video instead. I got a bunch of librarians from different branches in Queens to record some of their teens saying why the library was important to them. One of my teens did a dark and foreboding voice-over, and we put the statistics in as captions. I took it with me on my tablet to show legislators at the capital, and an edited version of it was put on the Save Queens Library Web site during the city budget fight. It worked well; they got to go with us without actually going with us.

FE: When I started at my library, I had six Teen Partners, our teen volunteers; three of them came to my first Teen Partners meeting. When I asked them what they had been doing as Teen Partners, I discovered that they volunteered a little in our Teen Zone, but not much else. This gave me the opportunity to reshape the program. By talking to teens who came into the library and revamping what the Teen Partners could do, I was able to get a couple of teens involved who went about recruiting more volunteers. I took a program that had six registered Teen Partners to having fifteen in a month; by the end of the school year I had forty. Over the past few years, I have had many Teen Partners join and graduate and move on, and I currently have 134 active teen partners working at both the libraries in my system. They help with day to day operations of shelving throughout the library, assisting with our summer reading program, and helping with collection development of the Teen Zone. When I need to spread the word on programs, they use their social media connections to get the word out. The hardest part is keeping them engaged and keeping them interested in what we are doing. YALS

feature

Hot Spot: Communities and Communication

Summer Library Club Taking Risks, Finding Rewards

By Sarah Couri

As Summer Reading Clubs (SRCs) wrap up across the country, we have the opportunity to re-evaluate, reassess, and rethink our approach. When the New York Public Library sold its Donnell Library Center, Teen Central, formerly housed at Donnell, had a similar opportunity. We had a new home and had to adapt our slate of programs to a new, very reduced space. With this change came the opportunity to try out some new ideas for our Summer Reading Club. We ended up deciding to transform the entire experience into the Summer Library Club.

Based on the popularity of Web 2.0 activities, and their accompanying new literacies, Teen Central decided to incorporate new technologies into our everyday activities over the summer. We established an online presence while we simultaneously increased our numbers in

the new physical space. We made a point of including activities that specifically utilize skills that incorporate transliteracy. Ultimately, this plan provided an example to revamp Summer Reading Clubs in the New York Public Library (NYPL) system and could inspire libraries across the country.

According to Wikipedia, transliteracy is “the ability to read, write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks”.¹ Anyone who works with teens knows that transliteracy is an unthinking part of teens’ lives every day. They move fluidly from one environment to another—in fact, they often demonstrate their transliteracy skills to indicate a sort of internet prowess (finding the oldest, most obscure TV theme song posted on YouTube, for

example), and we wanted to run programs that would develop and showcase those abilities. We found that this shift allowed us to have conversations with teens about their online activities, giving a chance for both librarians and teens to switch the traditional dynamics of the information desk; those conversations were a time when teens could lead and librarians could learn.

We spent about one month planning and writing up our proposal. We were able to change our hours so that we could focus on outreach before opening. We planned to run at least one program while open so that there was always something for teens to do in our new location.

We created a slate of weekly programs:

- Teen Advisory Group (TAG)
- Game On!
- Teen Central Cafe
- Teen Central Field Trips
- Laptop Star Galactica
- AltLit

We ran these programs every week, hoping that they would appeal more to teens than the book discussion groups and craft activities that had previously made up the bulk of SRC programs.

Some of our Summer Library Club programs were successful school year programs that we continued throughout the summer months—TAG and our gaming program are two examples. We also created some brand new programs, or new approaches to old programs: Teen Central Cafe, Teen Central Field Trips, Laptop Star Galactica, and AltLit.

The Teen Central Cafe was an opportunity to allow healthy snacks in the library. Our Teen Central Field Trips were excursions to different locations in New York City, accompanied by our handy flip video camera for documentary purposes. Laptop Star Galactica was a tricked out

SARAH COURI is a teen librarian in New York City. She has served on numerous YALSA committees and is currently co-chairing the President’s Program Planning Committee.

version of computer time: Teen Central librarians made laptops available to our patrons and were on hand to offer troubleshooting, advice, and teaching if necessary. AltLit was an opportunity for interested teens to learn about video and audio editing; it gave them the opportunity to tell their own stories, in their own voices, in a new medium.

Every day, we gave out what we called NanoPoints (our grand prize was an iPod Nano) for all of the different activities at Teen Central. These activities celebrated literacy in all forms, rewarded social skills, honed communication skills, and enabled teens to learn some new software (mostly iMovie and Audacity). The teen with the most NanoPoints won the iPod. These points recognized, in a tangible way, all of the time and effort teens expend in the library. They gave a value to all of the learning and growing that Teen Centralites did over the summer.

We set a list of goals:

- Produce a weekly YouTube video, edited by teens and staff, starting in July
- Produce a weekly podcast, edited by teens and staff, starting in July
- Institute a weekly, teen-run cafe day at Teen Central 2.0, starting in July
- Increase attendance at our already successful Game On program
- Increase numbers of teens involved in our Summer Reading Club
- Hold at least one program every afternoon
- Conduct outreach every morning
- Allow teens to put their computer skills to work—also, to use their interest in YouTube and social networking to help teens to learn new skills and computer programs (Audacity, iMovie, Windows Media)
- Expand the library's understanding of literacy to encompass emergent

technologies, nonprint reading, and user-generated media

When we planned Summer Library Club, we decided to set our goals high. We looked at our statistics from summers past and set goals accordingly. We decided to try to triple the number of events (class visits and programs) and hoped that as a result we would double our attendance.

We surpassed our projected goals; we quadrupled both the number of events and our attendance. It was a +300 percent increase; our programs went up by over 310 percent, and our attendance went up by over 330 percent.

The Summer Library Club gave us a new set of examples for summer activities at the library. Instead of simply creating a database of the names of teen participants, as we'd done in the traditional Summer Reading Club model, we tried to do something different. We provided programs with substance and still raised our statistics. We demonstrated that it's possible to move away from the old SRC model and still show a healthy attendance. We created a template for innovative programs and projects throughout the NYPL. We provided a workable model of how to help teens learn new media literacies. The Summer Library Club provided a map for library services in the 21st century. SRC has not adapted well to the digital age; it's had some cosmetic changes, but hasn't fundamentally embraced the learning opportunities that are now available.

This changed focus gave Teen Central librarians the ability to become activists for a new definition of literacy, and for a new definition of the library. Every day, we were able to point out to teens just how much ancillary reading they do while playing video games and going online. The concept of "reading," for these teens, stopped being a dusty, unconnected, unusable idea and turned into a relevant

and fun activity. Through our close work with the teens, we also worked to redefine the concept of the library—what it is and what it can be. When we lost our deluxe space at Donnell, the teens were not thrilled with the replacement. When we worked together to come up with programs—especially programs that occurred off library property—we helped them realize that in some ways the library experience is not about walls, paint, shelves, and books at all. Together, we learned that Teen Central is an essence, not a place, which is a monumental change to the traditional idea of The Library.

The most rewarding part of Summer Library Club was watching our teens grow up and look for further success. We watched new teens find us in our new location and be welcomed into the Teen Central crowd. Because of the friendly networking that occurs at the public library, we have two teens who are newly planning on going on to college, and another five who are working together to find homes, schools, GED programs, and jobs. They have used the resources of the public library to email, research, make phone calls and appointments, fill out applications, and fax transcripts and resumes.

Because one of our goals was to create podcasts, we had tangible results built into the idea of the Summer Library Club. Of course the teens were happy to become famous internet stars, which is great. Also great for libraries: the education and advocacy opportunities this output creates. The podcasts we made have been shown to various grad school classes to teach about running TAG meetings. The teens' thoughts could also be shared with politicians to show just how connected the library is to teens' education and lives.

By putting teens' interests first, and allowing teen activity to shape our summer activities, we were able to redefine the library experience. We found that it created unique opportunities for different

Summer Library Club: Taking Risks, Finding Rewards

kinds of activism. As librarians, we are able to remind our public that the concept of literacy has changed—it's not just about taking information in; it's also about being able to express thoughts, ideas, and opinions on a variety of platforms; it's about being transliterate. While teens are naturally transliterate, they do not often reflect on this fact. By talking with us about their activities (in order to get their

NanoPoints), teens' daily pastimes could be cast in new lights.

Additionally, this was one more chance to prove that the library can be relevant to teens' lives. Their interests formed the heart of every single program we ran. Everything we did was educational and had purpose, but it began with the teens.

Summer Library Club began with a challenging situation for Teen Central

staff. By being willing to take some risks, aim high, and try new stuff, we ended up finding very exciting successes. *YALS*

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Note: This article is a mashup of two previously released publications: "Inner City Teens Do Read," a conference paper at the University of Birmingham (UK), and "The Author and the Teen Reader" a blog article from www.streetliterature.com.

The strength of America's diversity is that different cultural groups are able to express their own fictions, mythologies, legends, and folklores. Narratives can also be region or location-specific, such as the narratives of street lit that reflect the daily lives of poor city communities in sometimes fantastical yet perhaps relational and cautionary ways.¹ For the past decade or so, street lit has been a vibrant genre chronicling the narratives of American lifestyles in inner-city enclaves. Street lit speaks from a collective memory of humans surviving life and death in ghetto streets.² This collective memory is documented by authors who, more often than not, lived or witnessed the stories they tell as young adults. The strength of street lit is the authenticity that authors convey as they depict characters that experience unpredictable and all-too-often violent lifestyles as a result of choices made due to a lack of education and under- or non-employment. In short, street lit is a genre written to depict what daily living is like on the margins of mainstream American society. Street lit not only illustrates the dramatic impact of living as a marginalized American, but the authors also communicate gendered paradigms of womanhood and manhood, as characters try to reason the intense relationships illustrated within their fictionalized world.³

Outsiders to inner-city American life often struggle to accept that the street lit genre, as a collection of fictionalized depictions of life in the hood, could closely parallel the realities that many Americans face. However, my fieldwork in teen readership of this genre confirms that street lit is largely based on a world that the

readers recognize as real. One teen book club member, Angie (age 16) stated: "It's reality for me."⁴ Another teen, Tanya (age 18), said: "It's all life; non-fiction, fiction. It's life."⁵ With American street fiction novels typically set in major metropolitan areas such as New York City, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, teen readers often see themselves or someone they know (a friend or relative) within a narrative, and such recognition empowers them to make sense of their own

lives.⁶ Indeed, as Lily Owens wrote in *The Complete Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales* (Gramercy Books, 1981) of the Grimm fairy tales, characters in oral fictions and folktales based on a parallel reality allow us to further understand the real:

however high or low, exaggerated or outlandish, the emotions and experiences of fairy tale characters have their real-life counterparts . . . [we are] recognizing our world in theirs."⁷

Having served as a YA librarian with the Free Library of Philadelphia for a decade, VANESSA IRVIN MORRIS is the author of the upcoming book, *The Readers Advisory Guide to Street Literature* (ALA Editions) and the blog site, StreetLiterature.com. A YALSA member for the past several years, Morris is an Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science at the College of Information Science and Technology at Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (the iSchool at Drexel). Morris is completing her doctorate degree in Reading/Writing/Literacy with the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Street Lit Author and the Inner-City Teen Reader

By Vanessa Irvin Morris

Popular YA Authors for Inner-City Teen Readers

These authors are not street lit authors per se. They compose urban narratives (or stories with similar themes found in street lit) that have proven to appeal to the tweener - age sixteen inner-city teen reader.

Lenora Adams	Paul Langan
Jaime Adoff	Janet McDonald
Coe Booth	Victoria Christopher Murray
Tracy Brown	Walter Dean Myers
Babygirl Daniels	G. Neri
L. Divine	Will Robbins
Kia Dupree	Sapphire
Zetta Elliott	Earl Sewell
Sharon Flake	Ni Ni Simone
Helen Frost	Hope Anita Smith
Ellen Hopkins	Jacquelin Thomas
Paula Chase Hyman	Alison van Diepen
Kenji Jasper	Paul Volponi
Dream Jordan	Rita Williams-Garcia

Thus, street lit allows teen urban readers the benefit of recognizing their world in literature in order to validate their own lives. There is a connection between the worlds depicted in street lit and the worlds that inner-city teens navigate daily. Inner-city teens experience unique obstacles within their communities. Because teens are navigating these obstacles at the most intense developmental stage of their lives (adolescence), how they perceive their worlds is all the more intense and amplified.⁸ To map the connection between the worlds of street lit and real life ghetto worlds of its audience, it is necessary to place ourselves into the shoes of the reader so that we may comprehend their localized narratives.⁹ This is not an easy or attractive option, and librarians working in today's American inner cities often must accept the same raw and graphic conditions as the environments described in street fiction novels. However, such confrontation with the truth is necessary to document why teenagers living in such communities gravitate so heavily toward stories that parallel their experiences, rather than escaping into polarized realities of other forms of literature.

Once teen readers are engaged in the genre, we then must respectfully consider their literary responses to their readings and how their reading responses often inspire teen readers to perceive street lit with a heightened sense of literacy—one that allows them to employ a more refined reading and more enhanced critical literacy of their own lived worlds. Because the ghetto/inner city is their primary world, I contend that even before inner-city teens reach their teenage years, many of them are profoundly aware of their environments. Having worked with teens for more than a decade, I have seen how street lit aides in their overall comprehension of their surroundings. These teen readers have learned to combine both urban literature and music to empower themselves. Looking at life critically in order to “know what’s going on” is key to their survival, and street lit plays an important role not only in heightening their resistances to the unsavory people and locations surrounding them, but also in strengthening their resiliencies, allowing them to carve out a sober space within their neighborhoods.

When we think about the themes and plots of street lit, we see stories about a day

in the life of the ‘hood where inner-city people experience daily living struggles, navigate intense personal relationships, sometimes participate in illegal activities, and all too often die at the hands of someone’s gun. Name brand clothing labels, cars, and accessories are detailed in the stories to create a clear picture of what characters are wearing and driving. Amid the chaos of abuse, violence, and hustling, the characters are portrayed as looking very expensive. Contemporary street literature is a literary genre that hermeneutically chronicles inner-city living. In other words, street lit serves as a means through which inner-city living can be interpreted, based on the interpretation of the author via storytelling, and based on interpretation of the reader via their reading responses.

When inner-city teens read street lit themes and plots over and over again, book after book (which they do), such reading ignites the imagination of the reader so that they are able to locate themselves within the context of the stories.¹⁰ Dennis Sumara (1996), a reader response theorist and educator, advises us that when we read, we respond to the text based on the social and cultural context in which the reading occurs. We also interpret what we read based on our own personal experiences as they relate to the text.

Just by the act of reading, in and of itself, there is an “indeterminacy filling,” that occurs when the interpretive imagination is invoked.¹¹ This indeterminacy can be perceived as the gap between the imagination and reality that is filled when we read text, creating heightened thinking by the reader. Thus, when inner-city teens read street lit, their imaginations recreate their worlds inside their minds, thus filling the gap between the imagination and their reality. This gap is the space where interpretation of one’s imagination and lived reality is reconciled.

Just the pure act of reading street lit validates the reader’s reality of urban

inner-city life because it connects the fantastical (the sheer trauma of the drama in ghetto life) with narratives that say, “Yes, this exists; yes, this is real.” This validation empowers readers to be open to *negotiating* their reading of their worlds, with an entry into critical analysis and evaluation of their environments, the people in them, and their own location and interaction within their own worlds. In street lit, it is the streets telling their stories back to the people of the streets.

This is powerful stuff. Street lit has affected urban teen readers in a significant way because the pure act of reading ignites a magical connection between what was previously viewed (or read) as frivolous entertainment to a more critical lens of hermeneutical interpretation. Once this bridge has been made, the reader’s worldview broadens and they begin asking harder questions. From reading street lit and then talking about their readings of street lit, teen readers often expanded their critical analysis skills to question representations beyond the books, or beyond the books and the hood, to question even broader themes articulated in street lit, as expressed in overall American society. For example, I have had teens further question the identity politics of women, domestic relationships, and various cultural stigmas perceived about the African American community. Through a gaining of critical analysis with a slower reading of their lived reality via fiction, this new skill of critical analysis is now a strategic approach to how they read their worlds.

When an author publishes a text, a contract (if you will) is formed between author and reader where a relationship is formed based on what I call “textual trust.” When the reader decides to go past the book cover and the title, their choice to read the book implies that the reader trusts the author. Stories that relate to the reader in some way inspire this “textual trust,”

which, in turn, is hermeneutically invested so that the reader reads through the book.

While this trusting bond may not have been the intent of the writers of street lit (after considerable reading and research of this genre, I posit that many authors write to be heard; to claim voice to the reading of *their own worlds*), this trust is an important caveat for teen readers in particular, due to the developmental stage of life they are in and how they process information based on their lifestage of adolescence.¹²

In a world (the inner city) where it is hard to have faith in stability or consistency due to the ever impending threat of confusion, chaos, violation, and physical violence, to be able to trust what one reads within the ignited imagination of the environment of a street lit novel can significantly enhance the reading lives of inner-city teen readers.

For teens to read narratives that play out the dramas of their everyday lives without having to suffer real-life repercussions, wounds, or consequences of those dramas serves as a cautionary reconciliation of “yes, this is life in the ‘hood” and “been there, done that, I don’t have to go out like that.” (Meaning, “I don’t have to end up like that; that doesn’t have to be me.”) Just as contemporary young adult fiction helps teens make sense of their worlds; street lit serves the same purpose for teens living in the same settings as those stories.

In any book, the author writes the book to talk to the reader. The reader listens to the author by reading the text. This is not a one-way monologue from the author to the reader; there is a dialogue here. With street lit, teens read these books in common, sharing their readings and the books themselves.¹³ Eileen Landay (2004) tells us that reading fiction and biographies engages dialogue in three ways: 1) within oneself (the author to him/herself and the reader to him/herself); 2) between the

reader and the author; and 3) when text is shared between readers.¹⁴

In all these realms, we see street lit as a powerful conduit for readers finding authentic voice within the elements of their lives. The same happened for hip hop music, spoken word poetry, and the dance and art of hip hop. Where there was no voice for inner-city youths in mainstream culture, inner-city youths cried, “WE ARE HERE!” and found voice from their own streets to create their own culture. The same has happened with the continuing proliferation of street lit.

Street lit is a further reading (and rereading) of inner-city voicelessness, storytelling from the streets into written text, to be reread and retold to the imagination, bridging lived/witnessed reality with the reality of the mind, validating the truth of one’s existence. Thus said, street lit is necessary for teens who seek the genre because it informs them that they are literate readers of their own worlds and that they have a voice and place in life’s reality. After all, the books are talkin’. YALS

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A few weeks ago, a fellow student in the University of Michigan School of Information told me she thought public libraries were not going to last very much longer. Her reasoning was that when funding is cut in communities, the people in those communities vote for their public libraries to be the first things to go. She then asked me if I felt the same way. Taken aback, I told her that I thought the library was a necessary place of bringing people together in the community. I wondered how those people in the community could possibly cut their public library when they realized how much they could take advantage of it. Specifically in regard to younger users, the library can be a great place to introduce young people to the various members and organizations of the community. I also remember exploring public libraries when I was deciding whether to go into library science, specifically in teen services, and watching the teens come pouring into the library straight from school. Since the library already provides so many teens with a place to go in the community, the library can therefore enable teens to participate in and give back to the community.

Many teenagers already go to the library for homework help, computer access, book check out, or hanging out with friends. These activities are great ways for teens to become involved with the library. But what can make teens feel even more central to their community? Learning about community organizations, helping those organizations, and seeing the fruits of their labor may encourage teens to participate in community service. Particularly if teens meet some great people along the way, whether they are directors of community organizations, librarians, or fellow teens helping out, teenagers will develop respect for all people of the community, and they may find a focus for a future career path. There are many fantastic organizations—complete with

fantastic people—within any community that teens may never know about until they are introduced. By making these connections, the library can prove instrumental in letting teens know about other organizations and events within the community.

Raising Awareness

The library can start paving the way for teens' interactions with community organizations simply by making teens aware of the existence of those organizations. First, the simple act of displaying organizational brochures and flyers can catch a teen's eye. Flyers can promote a community event such as the performance of a local band, or advertise for help for a food drive. If there is a book

talk or other sponsored library event, the librarian monitoring the event can slip in a word about a community organization or event that might appeal to the teens in attendance. The library can also feature community organizations and events on its Web site, perhaps under a teen page describing the organization in language and graphics geared to teens. In this way, the library can also advertise an upcoming library event dedicated to serving a community organization.

The library can also partner with schools to make teens aware of other organizations. The library can be the initiator for pairing students to work with community organizations. Schools may be perfect for recruiting teenagers because students with the same interests and focus can participate in a similarly focused

NATALIE MULDER is a Master of Science in Information Candidate at the University of Michigan, specializing in Library and Information Services. She is an avid reader and follower of young adult literature, and she is a firm believer in the public library as a necessary community space for teens.

community service event. For example, student clubs often meet after school. The library can contact these clubs to organize events with community organizations. Perhaps a student musical or theatrical group could go out to a nursing home where they would be much appreciated. Or a grounds crew could clean up a community garden over-run with weeds. Students in a premed or biology club or even a class could visit a medical facility and volunteer in exchange for a tour of the premises.

Also, students often have to complete service project requirements in the community. If the library can contact the community organizations and schools to bring students to service opportunities, the library can subtly create teens' awareness of its existence and dedication to the community. By serving as a liaison between school groups and community organizations, the library helps to ensure its future existence by remaining relevant to the community. To advertise its liaison role to the community, the library can contact community newspapers and bloggers, and post announcements on its Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Getting Teens Involved

Of course, making teens aware of organizations within the community is often not going to be enough to promote participation within the community. Once schools start enforcing service requirements, the library can certainly help out, but ultimately the goal is for teens to become involved in their community without being "forced." The problem becomes how to best attract teens into participating in the community out of their own free will.

Start by appealing to teens' interests. Some teenagers have grand plans for their lives. If teens in your library are interested in a future career, the library can connect them to a community organization similar

to their career goals. If teens at your library like working with children, the library can host a reading day when teens read to little ones. Some teens may like knitting, in which case the library can hold a teen knitting event for making scarves and hats for charity.

Once at the library for community service, and although possibly facing a task that they are unfamiliar with, teens will hopefully be able to realize the important contribution they are making to the community. Whether licking envelopes for one organization or knitting for another, teens are capable of understanding how their work benefits the community.

Teens may be more receptive to understanding how their work benefits the community if they themselves get to choose which organization to volunteer for. Or else teens can decide which activity they want to help out with for a specific organization. The specificity of the tasks set for the teens may enable them to realize how easily they can contribute to an organization. Once teenagers feel comfortable participating in community service, they may be interested in leading community service events at the library themselves. If the teens have a positive experience, it may lead them to wonder what their own role in the community might be, and how they can specifically participate in additional voluntary tasks to contribute to the community.

Of course, when participating with fellow teenagers in community service, teens are also socializing within their community and learning that one can accomplish things for the community with the help of the community. Encouraging teens to participate in community service at their age will enable them to feel comfortable in doing community service, and so may lead teens to contribute to their community for the rest of their lives. The library as a familiar space, with familiar people (both teens and librarians), is

therefore a great place to introduce teens to community service and prepare them for lifelong voluntary community service.

Tips for Running Community Service Programs

To pull off a successful community service event for teens, librarians must make the service event both a positive and a rewarding experience. The librarian first has to make the event appealing to teens to motivate them to come. Once teens do show up, the librarian needs to continue to make the experience fun so that teens will want to participate in future community service events at the library.

Making the event a social experience will help make it fun. The librarian should make sure there are enough teens participating to make the event social. Even if the event requires lots of concentration or little time for talking, the librarian should block off time for breaks so teens can meet and talk with one another. Just meeting a new friend or an appealing person can make a teen want to come back. Also, the librarian can make the event fun by inviting unique organizations to the library that teens would want to work with. For example, mentorship programs, theater, music, art, political, or sports clubs, programs, and organizations will all appeal to teens with those interests.

Teens should ultimately participate in community service as a result of intrinsic motivation. In discussing the motivation of teens, Grolnick and Beiswenger said, "Interestingly, intrinsic motivation for after-school activity was the only type of motivation that was significantly associated with well-being, again supporting the importance of reaching the highest levels of autonomous motivation for adolescent adjustment."¹ While some extrinsic motivation may be necessary for beginning work with teens in community service, intrinsic motivation is needed to encourage

teens to enjoy community service and participate in community service for the rest of their lives. Intrinsic motivation will also mean that teens will contribute their best work to the community and will be most open to trying a new task by participating in community service.

In terms of rewards, librarians can help make sure that teens can see the results of their labor. For example, in a mentorship program, librarians can pair teens with younger children, perhaps in some sort of reading program, and display book reports and reviews complete with artwork. Libraries can also communicate with one another. While I was a student worker at Calvin College's Hekman Library, we participated in a Message in a Bottle program in which young children from one community send off a message in a bottle that arrives at another library. Public libraries can participate in such a program, and the teens in those libraries can receive and respond to the messages

with some basic information about themselves and the community they live in.

Another way for teens to see the fruits of their labor is to have teens design something for a community organization, such as flyers for a community musical or theatrical event. Teenagers can have a lot of fun designing something either by hand or on the computer. Invite a volunteer graphic designer to come in and demonstrate his or her art. Or try a free Web site like Glogster, a social network that allows users to create free interactive posters. This online site can be used to create posters for community service events. Once teens create posters for a community event or organization, they will be able to see their work displayed in public spaces throughout the community.

Overall, by using the library as a community service space for teens, librarians can further promote the use of the library in general. Librarians can take advantage of the library's location to attract

teens to participate in community service, and they can keep teens engaged by providing appealing and social community service opportunities. Whether making posters for organizations or tutoring younger kids, teens can see that the library is far more than a place to check out books. Teens will realize just how many ways there are to use the library as a community space. Hopefully this will encourage teens to continue to use the library whenever the space can be useful, not only for the teens' own use, but also in service to others. YALS

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feature

Hot Spot: Communities
and Communication

Anti-Prom: Teen Service with Style

By Chris Shoemaker

It happens in a moment: seven hundred people coming together in the library and clapping in sync as they perform the cha-cha slide. It's Anti-Prom at the New York Public Library. Growing from one hundred to seven hundred teens over the course of seven years, Anti-Prom nabbed attention in *Vanity Fair* and the *New York Times* Style section, and also received a YALSA Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults recognition in 2007. Teens trek in from neighborhoods across New York City and beyond to dance, snack, and chat with their friends. But between the noise, the cost, and the dancing, why have a prom at a library, much less an anti-prom?

Anti-Prom developed out of conversations between teen librarians at Teen Central and one of NYPL's first Teen Advisory Groups. During a 2004 meeting, the members started discussing the rise of prom books, the upcoming prom season, and their prom plans. One off-the-cuff "Prom sucks!" combined with an enthusiastic "We should create our own prom" vision, and the first Anti-Prom was born. TAG members

developed the art for the invitations, worked with the librarian to pick a date, selected the music, and chose refreshments. One hundred teens attended this first, very informal affair. The next year, those hundred were back, this time with friends.

By providing plenty of leadership opportunities to teen participants, the Teen Central staff gave TAG members the forum to show off their party planning skills to their friends, while also connecting them to a library that was in tune with their interests. Even as the event has grown from one TAG to teens from the five boroughs and beyond, from one hundred attendees to seven hundred, teens still select the theme, contribute to the artwork, build playlists, and create their own prom for the evening.

When teens are teens involved from start to finish, they are their own best marketers and supporters of events such as Anti-Prom. It keeps the event something they want and shape—something of which they're proud.

As Anti-Prom continued to grow, teens talked more and more about how they liked the library prom. One teen participant

said, "It's an event where kids from all over the city, no matter who they are or where they come from or what they like, can come together and dance and be themselves." The library developed as a space in which teens felt safe and comfortable, where there was a strong sense of community and belonging, where all were welcome. Because the library staff took the time to learn about their audience, to learn names and personalities, and to build connections with the library users, the teens bonded with the staff and were willing to modify potentially hurtful behaviors such as name calling and bullying into open discussions and information sharing instead.

Teens who identified as LGBTQ felt more comfortable bringing their dates to the library, both because of their strong relationship with the library staff and because they identified the library as a safe space. In addition, library staff members were able to do targeted outreach to youth serving LGBTQ organizations such as Gay Men's Health Crisis, the New York City Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Center, and Gays and Lesbians of Bushwick Empowered. These outreach efforts furthered awareness and helped to serve the needs of an underserved community. LGBTQ teens often face discrimination, even from their own schools, one recent case being Itawamba County (Mississippi) High School student Constance McMillen. Although NYPL can't create an alternative prom for every LGBTQ teen in the nation, they can have one where all teens are welcome and don't need to worry about having approval for their date, sexuality, or anything else.

One of the goals of Anti-Prom, printed on all the material, is to "provide an alternative, safe space for teens who may not feel welcome at official school proms or dances because of their sexual orientation, the way they dress, or any other reason." Teens who were unable to purchase the formal accoutrements normally associated

CHRIS SHOEMAKER is the Young Adult Programming Specialist for The New York Public Library. In addition to developing programs, guiding teens through fashion collections and visiting Teen Advisory Groups, he serves as a member of the YALSA Board of Directors.

with prom felt comfortable attending in their regular clothes, or in costumes. Cosplayers are one of the largest groups of attendees at Anti-Prom, many of them dressing in costumes inspired by the manga or comics they also read at the library. While the styles may raise an eye on a crowded subway train, in a classroom, or on the street, at Anti-Prom the outfits blend into the sea of costumes, encouraging conversation and photo opportunities.

Teens who belong to underserved communities or identify as non-mainstream may have trouble finding a place to gather safely, socialize, and develop a positive identity. As librarians build relationships with teens through conversations, programs, and resources, teens in turn embrace libraries as a safe space.

Snacks, dancing, costumes, and music are what teens want from a party. Anti-Prom goes steps beyond that, though, with a focus on recognizing teen projects from across the system and highlighting ways the library resources connect with teen interests. The biggest example of this is Design NYPL. A collaboration between the library and the High School of Fashion Industries, Design NYPL introduces teen designers to the collections of the library and challenges the designers to create a garment inspired by the theme of Anti-Prom. The theme for 2011 was Super-Prom, and past themes have included vampires, cosplaying, glam rock, and Heaven and Hell.

Students explore various library collections to gather inspiration, visiting the Library for the Performing Arts, the Art and Architecture Collection, and the Mid-Manhattan Picture Collection, speaking with the librarians who work there about their favorite parts of the collections or where they might find specific variations on themes and styles. Currently, Design NYPL is the main showcased teen display at the prom (besides the prom itself), but there are many other teen library programs that look

forward to displaying their work at upcoming Anti-Proms. Teens who attend but are not involved in library programs can be encouraged to become involved by seeing the results and enjoyment of their peers' work, and the event also gives them an opportunity to suggest other potential library activities in which they'd like to participate.

Linking library collections to after school activities encourages both self-guided learning and research skill development. Highlighting teen accomplishments is a means of recognizing teens' constructive use of time, empowering them as community leaders and reinforcing a positive identity.

Building Your Own Anti-Prom

Programming Spaces vary from small basement spaces to carpeted multi-purpose spaces to state of the art teen rooms to one-hundred-year-old marble halls, from acoustically designed rooms to sound graveyards. No matter the type of space at your disposal, you can make an Anti-Prom event happen.

1. Find out what your teens want. Are your teens happy with their school prom? Are they looking for an event with a theme that speaks more to them? Do they want to avoid the ruffles, tuxes, and flowers associated with a traditional prom, or are they looking to embrace the traditional ensemble? Are they looking to socialize or dance? These are all questions to ask your Teen Advisory Group to get them involved early and keep them connected to the event throughout the process. They'll also be your teen representatives who can talk with administrators, board members, and others who may have questions about hosting a dance-style event in the library.

2. Get a DJ. Once you've got the structure for the event and a theme, you'll want to find someone to provide music for the evening. Whether it's someone spinning turntables and scratching songs or creating a

few mixes in advance, music is an easy way to set the mood for your event. Set up a survey, add a playlist suggestion page, and talk to teen audiophiles. Music is an easy avenue for teen participation, and they'll love their mixes much more than the "Best of 2010" dance remix that's in the collection.

3. Focus on fuel. Snacks are key to any event, no matter the scale. But you'll want to think critically about the types of food and drink you supply. Sherbet punch is out as a matter of course. You'll also want to avoid chocolate and gummy candy, which grinds into carpet and linoleum equally well. It's much easier to sweep up a floor littered by Starburst wrappers than one littered by Skittles that teens have danced on all night. Hydration is even more important. Soda and juice might be in demand, but stock twice as much water as you would estimate. Trust me, it'll be gone.

4. Build in breaks. One effective method of crowd control is musical breaks. Pause the music and welcome all the attendees to the library. Pause later to introduce a special guest star—someone who is involved in the cosplaying community, a local teen author, an elected official, or a library supporter. Special guests further the message that teens are important to the community, and there are advocates for teens and teen services everywhere. Pause again to highlight some student work or to recognize your TAG members who helped make the event possible and to let attendees know how excited you are by all the great things you've heard them talking about, the amazing dance moves you've seen, and the great friendships they've been developing.

5. Bring them back. When the event is over, make sure you have giveaways. It can be pencils with the library name and logo, a bag with a book in it, or bookmarks that highlight the library resources. Make sure that one of the final thoughts of the night isn't just fun, but how the library is connected to the fun and supports teens' interests. YALS

Welch, Rollie James. *A Core Collection for Young Adults, Second Edition*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-55570-692-0, 440p, \$80.

More than one-quarter of the titles in this second edition repeat titles from the 2003 first edition, the classic by Patrick Jones, Patricia Taylor, and Kristin Edwards. Another third are newly published since then, and frequently the two editions list different titles by the same key authors. Despite these similarities, it is clear that rather than simply update the first edition with newer titles, Welch has chosen to dramatically overhaul the project in a number of ways. The most obvious, and most positive, of these changes is in the book's organization. The first edition had only three categories: nonfiction, fiction, and graphic formats. Welch retains graphic and nonfiction, but expands fiction into eleven genres (though strangely omitting mystery). This change makes Welch's edition immediately more useful for readers' advisory and easier to read. Other changes are decidedly more mixed.

While annotations in both works are generally excellent—the first more analytical, Welch more colloquial—they include different but equally important appendixes. More troubling, Welch takes a much narrower view of young adult literature than Jones, jettisoning a number of adult classics, much of the graphic novel selection, and most of the nonfiction. Welch does include a few adult titles strangely absent from the first edition (Shakespeare?), but he leaves out many still-essential titles, such as *Catch-22*, *The Bell Jar*, *Farewell to Manzanar*, and *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Most depressingly, as his restructuring makes clear, Welch's emphasis is heavily on fiction. He lists a paltry thirty-nine graphic novel titles or series, compared with the first edition's 115. Certainly his graphic picks are important, since Jones was largely unaware of manga, but they are simply too few for a core collection. So too, Welch's brief, puzzlingly selected chapter of “readable nonfiction” can't compare to the first edition's nearly one-hundred-page chapter. In short, libraries are advised not to replace, but to supplement the first edition with this edition.

—Mark Flowers, *John F. Kennedy Library, Vallejo, Calif.*

Helmrich, Erin and Elizabeth Schneider. *Create, Relate, & Pop @ the Library: Services & Programs for Teens & Tweens*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-55570-722-4, 218p, \$60.

Erin Helmrich and Elizabeth Schneider are teen and youth services librarians who are enthusiastic about providing quality services to

teens through the development of creative, engaging, educational, and fun programming, spaces, and collections. Their book is intended to be used by librarians (and others who are looking for teen programming ideas) right out of the box as a tool to begin planning and executing successful and wildly popular teen events. Offering an overview of pop culture through the ages, a philosophy of service to teens, ideas for attracting teens to the library, marketing strategies, and a plethora of pop culture-infused program ideas, this resource will be valuable to those who want to connect with the library's teens and add to their programming bag of tricks. There are more than forty program ideas to choose from, and each activity is presented from start to finish with descriptions, lists of supplies and equipment, intended audience, scheduling suggestions, and other useful information for planning and executing events. All programs have been tested on actual teens in library settings! This fun and informative book is sure get your creative juices flowing, and the teens in your library will love the events.

—Karin Thogersen, *Huntley (Ill.) Area Public Library*.

Harper, Meghan. *Reference Sources and Services for Youth*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2011; ISBN: 978-155570-641-8, 250p, \$70

Armed with a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction along with a MLIS, Harper tackles the overwhelming amount of information available to youth services librarians with an eye to order and ease of access. Packed with practical material, this title can be used both as a textbook for classroom use and as a reference tool for working librarians. Each chapter begins with an overview so readers know what to expect and concludes with exercises and scenarios that put the material to immediate use. An abundance of visually appealing charts and screenshots organize information in relevant ways while maintaining reader interest. Harper covers everything from collection development to management concerns but gets back to the basics by reminding us of the necessary basic communication skills required during successful reference interactions with patrons of all ages. Two indexes, one for reference sources and one for subjects, make finding what you need in this volume quick and easy. Clearly, Harper's work experience, both as a librarian and as a professor of library science, have positively influenced her choices in both inclusion and arrangement of material, resulting in an accessible and educational work for anyone involved in reference services to youth of any age or background.

—Kerry L. Sutherland, *Akron-Summit County (Ohio) Public Library* YALS

Outstanding Books in School Libraries

Curriculum Connections and Readers' Advisory

By Priscille Dando

The following article is excerpted from *Outstanding Books for the College Bound: Titles and Programs for a New Generation*, edited by Angela Carstensen. *Outstanding Books for the College Bound* is published by ALA Editions and is available at www.alastore.ala.org or by calling 866-746-7252.

A comprehensive list like Outstanding Books for the College Bound (OBCB) and Lifelong Learners is a natural tool for school librarians to use in a variety of ways. The title itself implies an inherent connection to high school and is an efficient avenue to help achieve both the instructional and literary roles of the school library. In her *Booklist* article "Loose Canon," Hazel Rochman poses essential questions: What should be on the shelves in a high school library? What is the appropriate balance between classics, young adult (YA) literature, and resources to support the curriculum? It is necessary to consider "subject, genre, format and reading level" in collection development to determine the composition that will meet the needs of students.¹ The OBCB list is an excellent tool—with so many titles to choose from, school librarians have a treasure trove at their fingertips to make curriculum connections and excel at readers' advisory.

Why Focus on a List?

The ongoing debate about required reading illustrates the dilemma many teachers face. Although there is an assumption that giving students free choice in titles results in more enthusiasm for reading, teachers have an obligation to ensure that the reading relates to their curriculum and is substantial enough to merit study and analysis. Andrea Cohen's *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article "Move Over, Gatsby, the High School Reading List Has Expanded" makes the point that the best books included on lists are not there because they fill a niche, but simply because they are "good literature."² The shift over the years in the OBCB list creates more of a balance, combining literary quality with teen appeal. In fact, some adults will be surprised to see contemporary best sellers and modern young adult literature (not to mention

nonfiction) on this list. Students may also be surprised to see some of their favorite titles such as John Green's *Looking for Alaska* and Jodi Picoult's *Nineteen Minutes* among the recommended reading. The appeal goes hand in hand with literary quality, and with one of the stated criteria being readability, it is likely that students will have an enjoyable experience delving into these titles. Gone is the impression that reading for college-bound students is limited to dusty old classics, and there is a happy medium to be found between lightweight reading and AP texts.

Summer Reading

Mention a recommended reading list, and one of the first things to come to mind is summer reading requirements. Libby Gorman, in the *Teacher Librarian* article "Purposes Behind Summer Reading,"

PRISCILLE DANDO is Head Librarian at Robert E. Lee High School in Fairfax County, Virginia and serves as chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and is an ex-officio member of the YALSA Board of Directors. Her favorite title on the OBCB list is Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*.

conducted an extensive study of summer reading lists. She surveyed librarians regarding why and how they used them. Her findings concluded that lists serve a multitude of educational objectives, including the desire to provide examples of quality reading, an outlet for independent study and lifelong learning habits, and challenging reads. She found it surprising that even parents depend on the lists, as they expect their children to read outside of school and especially during the summer whether or not it is required.³ Certainly, the College Bound list excels at all of these objectives, and is an excellent summer reading choice for older students. Susan Whittaker, media specialist at The Villages High School in The Villages, Florida, uses the list to identify titles for summer reading; students complete a variety of assignments based on their reading, including writing “book briefs” and holding online discussions on Moodle (a closed-access course management system). Her juniors and seniors often choose a book from the OBCB list to help complete their independent study in the spring.

Curriculum Connections

School librarians have always depended upon book lists for inspiration in collection development. The current and previous OBCB lists are a critical tool for keeping the collection relevant to students both in what they study and for general knowledge and literature purposes. Because of the lists’ multicultural and multigenre nature, every library could benefit from obtaining all titles on the lists. Of course it is convenient that the current list is already categorized by discipline: arts and humanities, history and cultures, literature and language arts, science and technology, and social sciences. The first step in leveraging this organization is to share the lists with faculty. Consider holding an open house and putting the titles on display

along with handouts of corresponding online databases or other relevant sources. A teacher workday or one of the days before the school year begins is a prime time to offer coffee and a chance to browse through the displays that relate directly to each teacher’s subject area. Teachers may want to check out the books for their own reading, but it is also an opportunity to spark conversation about their courses and what supplemental materials might be appropriate as outside reading.

One of the most valuable uses of the OBCB list is as a resource when a teacher is looking for a book recommendation. Bonnie Prouty, librarian at Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, Virginia, turns to the list when a teacher catches her off guard and needs an appealing but substantial read quickly. Her colleague Vicki Emery, media coordinator at Lake Braddock, made a powerful curriculum connection when a teacher approached her for help.

[The list is a] good source for finding nonfiction books to pair with assigned reading for English classes. For example, an English teacher came in and said that she thought that she would resume assigning *The Grapes of Wrath*. She hadn’t assigned it for awhile. I suggested that she pair it with *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl* by Timothy Egan. Egan’s book is a National Book Award winner and it comprises first person accounts through interviews and diaries of those who actually lived through the very trying times in the 1930s. I believe that this book also shows how well Steinbeck understood the time and place and was able to develop his characters realistically. Many links and discussion points can be made by comparing the two books.⁴

This experience simply confirmed for the teacher that her school library staff has

expertise in literature, resources, and instruction, and she will be even more likely to approach them when she needs recommendations in the future.

Using the OBCB List as a Teacher

Teachers are likely to look to the list for ideas on classroom novels or nonfiction works. Whether students have the freedom to choose from the list what appeals to them, or the teacher determines one whole-class work to study, there are many books that support the high school curriculum in addition to providing exposure to a topic in preparation for college work. The list is also a boon to teachers organizing literature circles, allowing students to group themselves by a particular book to study and discuss. Giving students some selection choice, but ensuring that the choices are meaty enough to sustain discussion, enriches their interpretation of literature. Teachers who use the list to guide student choices will not have to be concerned with the quality of the works. The books on the most recent list that lend themselves to analysis in a particular course are as follows:

Social Studies

Bitterly Divided: The South’s Inner Civil War by David Williams
The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak
Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed by Jared Diamond
The Complete Maus: A Survivor’s Tale by Art Spiegelman
Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists by Joel Best
Daniel Half-Human: And the Good Nazi by David Chotjewitz
Forgotten Fire: A Novel by Adam Bagdasarian

The Known World by Edward P. Jones
New Found Land: Lewis and Clark's Voyage of Discovery by Allan Wolf
The Night Birds by Thomas Maltman
Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea by Guy Delisle
The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation by Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff
The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II by Iris Chang
Shooting Under Fire: The World of the War Photographer by Peter Howe
Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
The Voice that Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle of Equal Rights by Russell Freedman
A Voyage Long and Strange: Rediscovering the New World by Tony Horwitz
World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained by John Bowker
The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl by Timothy Egan

English and Literature

Caramelo by Sandra Cisneros
Ella Minnow Pea: A Novel in Letters by Mark Dunn
Good Poems edited by Garrison Keillor
Heart to Heart: New Poems Inspired by Twentieth-Century American Art edited by Jan Greenberg
Mister Pip by Lloyd Jones
Rotten English: A Literary Anthology edited by Dohra Ahmad
Shakespeare: The World As Stage by Bill Bryson
Who the Hell Is Pansy O'Hara? The Fascinating Stories Behind fifty of the World's Best-Loved Books by Jenny Bond and Chris Sheedy

Your Own Sylvia: A Verse Portrait of Sylvia Plath by Stephanie Hemphill

Sciences

American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau edited by Bill McKibben
The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World by Michael Pollan
The Genomics Age: How DNA Technology Is Transforming the Way We Live and Who We Are by Gina Smith
Greasy Rider: Two Dudes, One Fry-Oil-Powered Car, and a Cross-Country Search for a Greener Future by Greg Melville
The Green Book: The Everyday Guide to Saving the Planet One Simple Step at a Time by Elizabeth Rogers and Thomas Kostigen
Lost Discoveries: The Ancient Roots of Modern Science—From the Babylonians to the Maya by Dick Teresi
The Race to Save the Lord God Bird by Phillip M. Hoose
A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson
The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth by Tim Flannery
The Wild Trees: A Story of Passion and Daring by Richard Preston

Electives

The Annotated Mona Lisa: A Crash Course in Art History by Carol Strickland
Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design by Deborah Nadoolman Landis
Frida: Viva la Vida! Long Live Life! by Carmen Bernier-Grand
My Start-Up Life: What a (Very) Young CEO Learned on His Journey through Silicon Valley by Ben Casnocha
Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science by Charles Wheelan

Our Movie Heritage by Tom McGreevey and Joanne Yeck
Photography: An Illustrated History by Martin Sandler

Teachers know the students best, and in advanced classes or even when an individual student is a more mature reader, the list is a great place to identify supplementary reading. Cohen describes the advantage that students who read challenging books have over others on standardized tests. The vocabulary and reading comprehension skills required on such tests is more easily honed when students regularly read quality texts. Several studies support her assertions. Richard Anderson et al., in their 1985 report from the U.S. Department of Education, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, make several recommendations, one of which is to ensure opportunities for independent reading. The report states that “children’s reading should include classic and modern works of fiction and nonfiction that represent the core of our national heritage.”⁵ Stephen Krashen’s *Knowledge Quest* article, “Anything but Reading,” may provide the most convincing evidence of the potential the OBCB list has for improving performance. The article synthesizes a number of studies, all of which conclude that students who are high achievers in reading read more than their counterparts. “Self-selected, voluntary reading” has a direct relationship to improving literacy, and while some adults lament a lack of motivation among students to read, Kashen notes that the most successful motivator is providing access to “interesting, comprehensible reading material,” the very criteria for inclusion on the OBCB list.⁶ The value of supplementary reading is not only proven for those who are high achieving readers. Steve Metz notes in “Closing the Gap,” published in *The Science Teacher*, that more than a decade of research at Johns Hopkins

concluded that “two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be attributed to unequal access to summer learning opportunities.” Based on that information, Metz believes that recreational summer reading is a must for everyone.⁷

Displays and Marketing

Once the titles are available in the collection, the OBCB list becomes a tremendous resource for readers’ advisory. Thomas Kaun of the Bessie Chin Library at Redwood High School in Larkspur, California, has a quick tip. He recommends keeping copies of the list at the circulation desk. Students frequently pick up the list, and parents see it and take a copy themselves during back-to-school nights, open houses, and tours of the building. If the list is too bulky to keep at the desk, it would be easy to create jazzy bookmarks by discipline. Susan Whittaker takes it one step further by linking to the list on her school’s Web site and promoting it in her library’s newsletter to parents. Because it is such a broad list, there is something to appeal to everyone.

The OBCB list is a natural for displays. During the fall college application season, intersperse the titles with other books and resources for college readiness. Books on applying to and selecting a college, study guides, and choosing a major are complemented nicely with copies of the list and its books. In the Spring, seniors might be interested in reading books like those on the list that are intended to help prepare students encounter unfamiliar experiences, points of view, and challenges.

Booktalks

Booktalks are a classic promotional tool for a reason—students tend to read what librarians take the time to spotlight, probably because librarians’ enthusiasm for the titles shines through. When an

advanced class has a free-choice independent reading assignment, booktalking from the list pays off with suggestions of out-of-the-ordinary titles. Books on the most recent list with a natural hook for booktalks include:

- American Shaolin: Flying Kicks, Buddhas, Monks and the Legend of Iron Crotch: An Odyssey in the New China* by Matthew Polly
- Another Day in the Frontal Lobe: A Brain Surgeon Exposes Life on the Inside* by Katrina Firlik
- Beautiful Boy: A Father’s Journey through His Son’s Addiction* by David Sheff
- Born Standing Up: A Comic’s Life* by Steve Martin
- Eagle Blue: A Team, a Tribe, and a High School Basketball Season in the Arctic* by Michael D’Orso
- From Clueless to Class Act: Manners for the Modern Man* by Jodi R.R. Smith
- John Lennon: All I Want Is the Truth* by Elizabeth Partridge
- Killed Cartoons: Casualties from the War on Free Expression* edited by David Wallis
- The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam* by Anne Marie Fleming
- The Radioactive Boy Scout: The True Story of a Boy and His Backyard Nuclear Reactor* by Ken Silverstein
- A Rare Breed of Love: The True Story of Baby and the Mission She Inspired to Help Dogs Everywhere* by Jana Kohl
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard
- Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- Someday This Pain Will be Useful to You* by Peter Cameron
- Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* by Mary Roach
- Sunrise Over Fallujah* by Walter Dean Myers
- The Taste of Sweet: Our Complicated Love Affair with Our Favorite Treats* by Joanne Chen

- Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines* by Nic Sheff
 - What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng: A Novel* by Dave Eggers
 - Wheelchair Warrior: Gangs, Disability, and Basketball* by Melvin Juetette and Ronald J. Berger
 - The Year of Living Biblically: One Man’s Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* by A.J. Jacobs
- It is clear that booktalk ideas are available for virtually every class when examining the list by discipline. Extend this idea by providing students the opportunity to create podcasts promoting the books that can be shared with a wide audience. Collaborating on podcasts with an English teacher can satisfy several objectives. From the teacher’s point of view, writing for a specific audience and crafting an engaging style are skills that are suited for an oral presentation, and required by the podcast recording. It is an opportunity to incorporate technology in an authentic manner, and is an entertaining assessment of a student’s understanding of the book. The librarian can assist with the technology and give pointers for what makes a good book review. Creating book trailers through video production or the Microsoft Photo Story program fulfills similar objectives. An added bonus to these projects is the end result of a pool of student-created advertisements for reading the OBCB list available online to the student body at large.

Book Groups

The most successful book group discussions revolve around titles that are substantial enough to spark a reaction or contain a compelling conflict. A quick review of the list reveals several books that

have proven to be popular by adult book clubs.

The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson
The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls
The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
The Known World by Edward P. Jones
A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest Gaines
A Long Way Gone by Ishmael Beah
Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett
The Red Tent by Anita Diamant
The Road by Cormac McCarthy
Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson
The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell
Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom
Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen

In addition to the adult titles, student book clubs have a rich array of book club choices in the most recent OBCB list. Some of these include the following:

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie
The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak

The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale by Art Spiegelman
The Complete Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon
Eagle Blue by Michael D'Orso
Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer
Feed by M. T. Anderson
Little Brother by Cory Doctorow
Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro
Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd

The Bottom Line

The Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners list is not a litmus test to say that all educated people have read these books. Rather, it is a modern collection of titles representing different points of view that provide insight into our world. Students seeking a challenge and who are curious about any number of topics will find something to enjoy and learn from on this list. Savvy

school librarians will understand the value of these collected titles and strive to incorporate them into their programs. **YALS**

References

1. Hazel Rochman, "Loose Canon," *Booklist* (Sept. 1, 1996): 114.
2. Andrea Cohen, "Move Over, Gatsby, the High School Reading List Has Expanded," *St Louis Post-Dispatch* (March 26, 2003).
3. Libby Gorman, "Purposes Behind Summer Reading Lists," *Teacher Librarian* 37, no. 5 (June 2010): 52.
4. Interview with the author (Sept. 1, 2010).
5. Richard C. Anderson, et al., *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* ERIC (ED253865; accessed Oct. 17, 2010).
6. Stephen Krashen. "Anything but Reading," *Knowledge Quest* 37, no. 5 (May-June 2009): 18.
7. Steve Metz. "Closing the Gap with Summer Reading." *Science Teacher* 76, no. 5 (Summer 2009): 8.

Guidelines for Authors

Young Adult Library Services is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association. *Young Adult Library Services* is a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with young adults (ages twelve through eighteen) that showcases current research and

practice relating to teen services and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

For submission and author guidelines, please visit www.ala.org/yalsa and click on "Publications."

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the YALSA update

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Find the latest YALSA news every Friday at the YALSA Blog, <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog>.

Read YALSA's 2011 Awards Speeches

Speeches from YALSA's 2011 literary award winners are available online at www.ala.org/yalsa. Download PDF versions of this year's speeches, including those from:

- Blythe Woolston, winner of the 2011 Morris Award for her novel *The Freak Observer*, and honor book authors Karen Healey (*Guardian of the Dead*), Lish McBride (*Hold Me Closer, Necromancer*), and Barbara Stuber (*Crossing the Tracks*) at www.ala.org/yalsa/morris.
- Ann Angel, winner of the 2011 Nonfiction Award for her book *Janis Joplin: Rise Up Singing*, and honor book author Rick Bowers (*Spies of Mississippi*) at www.ala.org/yalsa/nonfiction.
- Michael L. Printz honor book authors Lucy Christopher (*Stolen*), A. S. King (*Please Ignore Vera Dietz*), and Marcus Sedgwick (*Revolver*) at www.ala.org/yalsa/printz.

YALSA also offers bookmarks, spine labels, bookplates, and more featuring its 2011 award winners. All of the tools and videos can be found at www.ala.org/yalsa/best.

Register for Midwinter Meeting

Join YALSA January 20-24 in Dallas

YALSA has big plans for Midwinter Meeting in Dallas—and we want them to include you! The ALA Midwinter Meeting will take place Jan. 20–24. Register by December 2 at www.ala.org/midwinter to save up to \$25 over onsite registration fees. Here are a few highlights from YALSA's Midwinter schedule (complete details available on the YALSA wiki www.tinyurl.com/yalsamw12):

Friday, January 20

Join us for our pre-Midwinter Institute, **Innovations in Essential YA Services**, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Looking for innovative ways to refresh or enhance teen services that you are already providing? Then join YALSA for a half-day workshop and get tips on how to: revamp your homework help services using NYPL's Homework Help app; create inviting, purposeful teen spaces on a budget; incorporate essential digital literacy skills into programs; provide creative readers' advisory using QR codes; use outcome-based evaluations to assess retention and program effectiveness; and harness the power of youth participation. Tickets cost \$89 for student members and

\$129 for all others. Registration is available at www.alamidwinter.org. If you want to attend this workshop without attending Midwinter, follow the instructions at www.tinyurl.com/yalsamw12.

Join us from 8-10 p.m. for YALSA's **YA Lit Trivia Night FUNdraiser**. Think you know all there is to know about young adult literature and YALSA's book awards and booklists? Then come show off your knowledge at this event! Cash bar and light refreshments. Donations will be collected at the event for YALSA's Leadership Endowment, which will fund future leadership-focused efforts, such as student scholarships, mentoring programs, leadership institutes and more. You do not need to register for ALA's Midwinter Meeting to attend this event.

Saturday, January 21

Want to learn how to be more involved with YALSA? Come to our Selection Committee Leadership Development meeting and YALSA Groups Work Session! **Leadership Development** is for YALSA selection committee chairs and those interested in chairing a selection committee. A continental breakfast will be served at 8 a.m., with the meeting from 8:30 to 10 a.m. The **YALSA Groups Work Session** is a working meeting for YALSA's committees, taskforces, and juries, but it's also a chance for those not on

a committee to learn more by sitting in. It's a great introduction to the business of YALSA. Come at 10 for a continental breakfast, with meetings beginning at 10:30 and finishing at noon.

Learn about the latest news in our profession at the **YALSA Trends in YA Presentation**, 4–5:30 p.m., hosted by YALSA Past Presidents. This event will feature a paper presentation from Jeanie Austin called "Critical Issues in Juvenile Detention Center Libraries." The paper will explore the tensions present in juvenile detention center library services (such as institutional limitations and access to technologies) and how youth and librarians can and do navigate these tensions within the library setting.

Sunday, January 22

YALSA elections open soon, so before you vote, come to the **YALSA Coffee with the Candidates Forum** from 10:30 to noon. Meet and mingle with the candidates who are on the ballot for the 2012 election, President-Elect, Division Councilor and Board of Directors at Large. Attendees will enjoy light refreshments and get the chance to win door prizes.

Want to know what teens *really* think of books released this past year? Come hear local teens reflect on the nominees for the 2012 Best Fiction for Young Adults list at the **BFYA Teen Session**, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m..

Monday, January 23

The most exciting part of any ALA Midwinter Meeting is definitely the ALA Youth Media Awards Press Conference! Come bright and early Monday morning to the ceremony (8–9:15 a.m.) and find out who won this year's top prizes in young adult literature. The award announcements include:

- the Alex Awards, honoring the ten best adult books with teen appeal, will be announced at 7:45 a.m., before the press conference begins.
- the Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature, as well as honor books
- the Margaret A. Edwards Award, which honors an author for a specific work for lifetime contribution to writing for teens

- the Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audio Production for Young Adults, plus the honor recordings (co-administered with the Association for Library Service to Children [ALSC])
- the William C. Morris Award, for the best first book written for young adults by a previously unpublished author.
- the YALSA Excellence in YA Nonfiction Award, for the best nonfiction book written for young adults

Can't make it? Watch the event live via a webcast from the ALA homepage or liveblogged on The Hub at <http://yalsa.ala.org/thehub>. Details on both will be available on the YALSA wiki in December.

- After the announcements, attend the complimentary **Morris & Nonfiction Award Program & Presentation** from 10:30 AM to noon. Enjoy coffee, tea and a danish and listen to the winners and finalists speak about their honored titles. After the speeches, mingle with the authors and pick up free copies of their books.

Finish out conference with your colleagues at the **Joint Youth Division Member Reception** from 6:00 to 7:30. Join your colleagues from ALSC, the American Association of School Librarians, and YALSA for light refreshments and a cash bar.

To register and learn more about YALSA's plans for Midwinter 2012, visit the YALSA Midwinter Wiki at www.tinyurl.com/yalsamw12.

YALS wins fourth Apex Award

For the fourth year in a row, Communications Concepts awarded *Young Adult Library Services (YALS)*, the quarterly journal of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), an Award of Excellence, as part of the APEX Awards for Publication Excellence.

YALS was recognized in the category of Journals and Magazines over 32 pages.

The journal won for issues from its ninth volume, edited by Sarah Flowers.

The APEX Awards are chosen based on excellence in graphic design, editorial content and the success of the entry in achieving overall communications effectiveness and excellence. More than 3,300 journals and magazines entered the annual competition. A full list of winners is available at www.apexawards.com.

YALSA's Research Journal Seeks Manuscripts

The *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* (<http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya>), YALSA's peer-reviewed, open-access online research journal, seeks manuscripts for future issues.

The purpose of the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* is to enhance the development of theory, research, and practices to support young adult library services. *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* promotes and publishes high quality original research concerning the informational and developmental needs of young adults; the management, implementation, and evaluation of library services for young adults; and other critical issues relevant to librarians who work with young adults. The journal also includes literary and cultural analysis of classic and contemporary writing for young adults.

Submissions and questions about the new research journal should be sent to Editor Sandra Hughes-Hassell at yalsaresearch@gmail.com. Before submitting a paper, please read through the call for papers and the author guidelines at the journal's website, <http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya>.

Save the Date for YALSA's 2012 Young Adult Literature Symposium

Paper and Program Proposals Due Nov. 15

YALSA's 2012 Young Adult Literature Symposium, will be held Nov. 2-4, 2012,

in St. Louis with a theme of The Future of Young Adult Literature: Hit Me with the Next Big Thing. The symposium will gather together librarians, educators, authors and publishers to explore what lies ahead for young adult literature, including trends in content, format and interaction.

In an era where trends can rise and fall in the blink of an eye, how do we find the next Big Thing? How will the changing face of today's teen drive changes in content? What, besides words, will be in the digital future of young adult literature? Can looking into the past of the genre help us determine where we might be headed in the years to come? What factors play a role in determining what will become the Next Big Thing? Join YALSA as we explore what the future has in store for young adult literature and what or who may transform it.

YALSA is accepting programs and proposals on the theme through Nov. 15 www.ala.org/yalitsymposium. Interested in learning more about the symposium? Join the community, sign up for our mailing list, and learn more at the symposium website, www.ala.org/yalitsymposium. Registration opens in April 2012.

ALA/YALSA Election Reminder

ALA and YALSA will hold their annual elections next spring! To make sure you are eligible to vote for candidates for the YALSA Board of Directors, award committees (including Edwards, Nonfiction, and Printz) and on bylaws changes, your membership in ALA and YALSA must be current as of Jan. 31, 2012. Be sure to check your membership status at www.ala.org/membership.

Apply for More than \$90,000 in Grants and Awards from YALSA

Deadline: Dec. 1

More than \$90,000 worth of grants and awards are available each year to YALSA members. The deadline to apply for the following grants and awards is December 1, 2010. To learn more, visit www.ala.org/yalsa/awards&grants. Awards and grants available this year include:

- **Baker and Taylor/YALSA Conference Grants.** Funded by the Baker and Taylor Company, two grants of \$1,000 each are awarded to librarians who work directly with young adults in a public or school library to enable them to attend the Annual Conference for the first time.
- **BWI/YALSA Collection Development Grant.** This grant awards \$1,000 for collection development to YALSA members who represent a public library, and who work directly with young adults ages 12 to 18. It is funded by Book Wholesalers, Inc.
- **ABC-CLIO/Greenwood/YALSA Service to Young Adults Achievement Award.** This grant of \$2,000 is funded by ABC-CLIO/Greenwood Publishing and recognizes the national contributions of a YALSA member who has demonstrated unique and sustained devotion to young adult services.
- **MAE Award for Best Teen Literature Program.** Designed to honor a YALSA member who developed an outstanding reading or literature program for young adults, the award provides \$500 to the winning librarian and \$500 to their library. The award is made possible

through an annual grant from the Margaret A. Edwards Trust.

- **Frances Henne/YALSA/VOYA Research Grant.** This annual grant of \$1,000 is to provide seed money for small scale projects which will encourage research that responds to the YALSA Research Agenda.
- **Great Books Giveaway Competition.** Each year the YALSA office receives approximately 1,200 newly published children's, young adult and adult books, videos, CD's and audio cassettes for review. YALSA and the cooperating publishers offer one year's worth of review materials as a contribution to a library in need. YALSA distributes three awards as part of this competition. The estimated value of the entire collection is \$30,000.

YALSA Names Spectrum Scholar

As part of its commitment to improving diversity in the profession, YALSA chose Hannah Gomez as its 2011-2012 Spectrum Scholar. Gomez will attend Simmons College in Boston in the fall, pursuing an M.A. in children's literature and M.S. in library science. YALSA's Spectrum Scholar is funded by the Friends of YALSA. YALSA has made encouraging diversity in the profession a priority.

Established in 1997, the Spectrum Scholarship Program is ALA's national diversity and recruitment effort designed to address the specific issue of under-representation of critically needed ethnic librarians within the profession while serving as a model for ways to bring attention to larger diversity issues in the future. YALS

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool

This tool evaluates a public library's overall level of success in providing services to teens aged 12-18. Potential users include library administrators, library trustees, teen services librarians, and community members and jobseekers. The evaluation areas are derived from *YALSA's Competencies for Librarians: Serving Youth: Young Adults Deserve the Best* (YALSA, 2010). Not every element of the rubric will apply to every library situation, but the tool can serve as a place to begin the conversation about what constitutes excellent public library service for teens. The tool, and further resources, can be found at www.ala.org/yalsa/competencies. — *Adopted by the YALSA Board of Directors, January 2011*

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool		Area I: Leadership and Professionalism			
Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Examples/Resources
Equitable funding and staffing levels	Library maintains line items in the budget for YA materials and staff at levels proportionate to YA usage and circulation.	Line item for YA materials budget; at least one librarian FTE devoted to YA services for each branch.	Line item for YA materials budget. Some staff (professional or paraprofessional) devoted to YA services.	No line item for YA materials or staff.	YALSA White Paper: The Benefits of Including Dedicated Young Adult Librarians on Staff in the Public Library; Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA's Competencies in Action, Chapter 1; "Defending the YA Budget," by Audra Caplan, YALS, Fall 2009
Commitment to professionalism and ethical behavior	All library staff demonstrates extensive knowledge of ALA Code of Ethics, ALA Bill of Rights, YALSA Competencies and Guidelines for Service to Teens. The library defends YA services and the rights of teens to privacy and access. YA staff are actively involved in at least one professional organization on the national, regional, state or local level. Subscriptions to appropriate professional journals are provided by library and accessible to all interested staff.	YA staff demonstrate knowledge of ALA Code of Ethics, ALA Bill of Rights, and YALSA Competencies and Guidelines for Service to Teens; defend YA services and the rights of teens to privacy and access. YA staff belong(s) to a professional organization and reads appropriate professional journals.	YA staff read appropriate professional journals.	Library staff, including the YA staff, are uninformed about Code of Ethics, Bill of Rights, Competencies, etc. YA staff do not read professional journals or belong to professional organizations.	School Library Journal; VOYA; Journal of Research on Libraries & Young Adults; YALS; YALSA issue paper: The Importance of a Whole Library Approach to Public Young Adult Library Services; Institutional membership to YALSA; Active involvement includes committee responsibilities, writing for professional journals, presentations at conferences
Plan for personal & professional growth and career development	Written professional development plan in place for the YA staff that is updated yearly. At least one professional development activity (course, conference, etc.) is completed each year. Library supports and pays for all professional development.	YA staff have a professional development plan and have regular opportunities for professional development, at least some of which are paid for by the library.	YA staff have no professional development plan but do have occasional professional development opportunities.	YA staff have no professional development plan or opportunities for professional development.	YALSA Webinars; University classes; Workshops; ALA Annual Conference; State and regional association library conferences
Develop & supervise formal youth participation	Library has ongoing teen advisory group, teen volunteers, and opportunities for teen employment	Library has ongoing teen advisory group OR teen volunteers OR teen employees	Library uses teen advisors on an ad hoc basis	No teen input to programs or services	Ladder of Young People's Participation: freeshild.org/ladder.htm
Implement methods to attract, develop & train staff working with young adults	Library routinely includes information about YA services in all staff development activities, including regular staff meetings. Staff at all levels are encouraged to learn about working with teens.	Library occasionally includes information about YA services in staff development activities and staff meetings. YA staff are supported in professional development and encouraged to share their knowledge with other staff.	Library staff are aware minimally of YA services but are not encouraged or trained to work with young adults.	Library staff are not offered opportunities to learn more about young adults.	YALS is routed to entire staff. Library offers workshops or presenters specific to working with teens. YALSA Speaker Database

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool		Area II: Knowledge of Client Group			
Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Examples/Resources
Familiarity with developmental needs	All staff members receive training in youth development and understand that every library employee serves youth. YA staff know adolescent development theory and are familiar with Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets. Staff receive training to ensure they are familiar with the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets.	All staff understand that every library employee serves youth. YA staff know adolescent development theory and are familiar with Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets.	YA staff know adolescent development theory and are familiar with Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets.	Library staff working with young adults possess no training in adolescent development.	YALSA e-courses; YALSA institutes; Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets for Young Adults; Young Adults Deserve the Best; YALSA's Competencies in Action, Chapter 2
Current knowledge of technology and popular culture	Library supports current knowledge in the areas of technology and popular culture through formal professional development as well as the time necessary to read print/online resources (blogs, websites, journals, etc.) and test out tools that teens may want & need to use. Library collects data on an annual basis from young adults through surveys, observations or focus groups as to their interests in technology and popular culture.	Library supports current knowledge in the areas of technology and popular culture for the YA staff through formal professional development and the time necessary to read online/print resources. Library collects data every several years from young adults.	YA staff are aware of print/online resources regarding technology and popular culture and attempt to keep current. YA staff participate in at least one professional development opportunity each year on these topics.	YA staff are unaware of print/online and professional development opportunities regarding technology and popular culture.	YALSA blogs; Teen Tech Week and Teen Read Week resources; Teen-oriented magazines; Popular culture websites and blogs
Demonstrated respect for diversity	Library completes formal, annual community studies at a schedule appropriate to the rate of changes within the community. Library collection, programs, and strategic plan reflect the variety of cultures in the community and around the world. YA staff reflects diversity of the community.	Library conducts occasional formal community studies. Library collection, programs, and strategic plan reflect the variety of cultures in the community and around the world.	Library conducts incomplete or informal community studies. Library collection, programs, and strategic plan only recognize the largest demographic populations in the community.	Library collection, programs, and strategic plan only recognize the largest demographic populations in the community.	Programs, services, materials in multiple languages; Popular culture needs/desires of different ethnic cultures (e.g., telenovelas, Bollywood, magazines)
Special needs patron issues addressed	Library community studies thoroughly address the question of services to young adults with special needs. The library cooperates with organizations devoted to young adults and special needs clients to provide appropriate library services. Young adult library spaces are ADA compliant. Young adult strategic plan includes services needed for special needs patrons.	Library community studies in-completely address the question of services to young adults with special needs. The library strives to cooperate with organizations devoted to young adults and special needs clients to provide appropriate library services. Young adult library spaces are ADA compliant.	Library community studies partially or informally address the question of services to young adults with special needs. Young adult library spaces are ADA compliant.	Young adult library spaces are ADA compliant.	Americans With Disabilities Act homepage: www.ada.gov

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool

Area III: Communication, Marketing, and Outreach

Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Examples/Resources
Form appropriate professional relationships with young adults	Library supports a culture where all staff act as role models to young adults, following the guidelines of the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets: interacting in a caring, encouraging manner with young adults, modeling responsible behavior and providing clear rules and consequences.	Library supports a culture where YA Staff act as role models to young adults, following the guidelines of the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets: interacting in a caring, encouraging manner with young adults, modeling responsible behavior and providing clear rules and consequences.	YA Staff act as role models to young adults.	YA Staff interact positively with young adults.	Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets
Develop relationships and partnerships with young adults, administrators and other youth-serving professionals in the community	Library creates a culture in which all staff are encouraged to develop community partnerships and collaborate on programs and services and given work-time to attend meetings and work on collaborative projects with other community groups.	Library creates a culture in which YA staff are encouraged to develop community partnerships and collaborate on programs and services.	YA Staff communicate occasionally with community partners.	YA Staff do not have relationships with community partners.	<i>Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA's Competencies in Action</i> , Chapter 3
Advocate for young adults and effectively promote the role of the library in serving young adults	Library policies and public relations emphasize the importance of young adult services for both young adults and the community. All staff are encouraged to advocate for teens within the community.	YA staff encouraged to advocate internally and in public relations for the value of services to young adults for both the young adults and the community.	YA staff work to establish a culture of advocacy both internally and in public relations.	YA staff do not advocate for young adults either internally or in public relations.	YALSA's Speaking up for Library Services to Teens: a Guide to Advocacy; YALSA Advocacy Toolkit
Design, implement, and evaluate a strategic marketing plan	Library has a marketing plan tailored to young adult services, including promotion within the library, schools, youth-serving agencies, in web-based venues used by teens, and the community at large.	Library references young adult services in their institution-wide marketing plan.	Library markets young adult services on an ad hoc basis, without a unifying marketing plan.	Library does not market young adult services.	Ohio Library Council: Marketing the Library (http://www.ohlc.org/marketing/index.html)
Establish an environment in the library wherein all staff serve young adults with courtesy and respect, and all staff are encouraged to promote programs and services for young adults	Library rules and behavior codes are enforced fairly without regard to age. Customer service training for staff includes component on serving young adults. Staff are aware of young adult programs and services and frequently recommend them to teens and talk about them in the community.	Library rules and behavior codes are enforced fairly without regard to age. Customer service training for staff includes component on serving young adults. Staff are aware of young adult programs and services but do not regularly recommend them to teens or the community.	Library rules and behavior codes are not consistently enforced across demographics. Customer service training does not include a component on serving young adults. Staff rarely serve customers outside the age range they feel comfortable and/or are assigned to work with regularly.	Library rules and behavior codes are not enforced fairly across demographics. Staff are not trained on serving young adults and do not feel comfortable with or do not feel the need to provide young adult services.	Rules regarding noise, food, number of people at one table or computer

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool

Area III: Communication, Marketing, and Outreach

Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Example/Resources
Identify young adult interests and groups underserved or not yet served by the library	On a regular schedule and at least once a year, library combines informal inquiries with formal research methods to identify gaps in service and new and emerging trends. Young adults are involved in identification efforts.	Library identifies gaps in service along with new and emerging trends through occasional usage of information inquiries and/or formal research instruments.	Library investigates gaps in service through informal inquiries.	Library does not use any methods, formal or informal, to identify gaps in service.	Focus groups; Print or online surveys; Community demographics research; Crowdsourcing
Promote young adult library services directly to young adults	Library uses a variety of communication tools, both high-tech and low-tech, to reach young adults directly with regular updates on programs and services. The library web presence includes section devoted to young adult services. The library uses technologies currently used by teens. YA staff visit schools and community agencies virtually or face-to-face at least twice a year.	Library uses at least one communication tool in addition to a web presence and print flyers to provide regular updates on programs and services. YA staff visit schools and community agencies virtually or face-to-face at least once a year.	Library uses the web presence and print flyers to provide information about programs and services. YA staff occasionally visit schools and community agencies face-to-face.	Library does not market directly to young adults.	Teen services mobile app; Library Facebook/MySpace page; Library Twitter feed

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool

Area IV: Administration

Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Examples/Resources
Develop a strategic plan for library service with YAs based on their unique needs	Library has created a YA mission statement or strategic plan with goals that connect to the overall institutional mission statement with input from YA staff that is subject to ongoing (at least annually), output-based evaluation. Programs and services are offered on the basis of needs articulated in a written community analysis and needs assessment. Young adults are involved in development of Needs Assessment.	Library mission statement addresses teen services. A separate YA mission statement or strategic plan is in development with input from YA staff.	Library mission statement and strategic plan do not specify teen goals or services.	Neither library nor YA department has a strategic plan. YA staff operate in isolation.	YA Strategic Plan with short-term and long-term goals. YA Mission Statements is a guide to serving young adults in the community; Young Adults Describe the Best: YALSA's Competencies in Action, Chapter 4
Design and conduct a community analysis and needs assessment	Programs and services are offered on the basis of needs articulated in a written community analysis and needs assessment. Young adults are involved in development of Needs Assessment.	Library has a Community Analysis and Needs Assessment that includes some data on young adults.	Community analysis and needs assessment is in development.	Neither library nor YA department has a current community analysis or needs assessment.	Community Analysis and Needs Assessment Document. Circulation and population statistics.
Develop, justify, administer and evaluate a budget for YA services	YA department has a budget proportionate to young adult usage and circulation. Annual reports show young adult circulation, usage, materials spending, etc. Funding sources are identified and available for additional services and programs.	YA department has adequate funding for materials, staff, technology, facilities. Spending is planned annually. Special projects can be funded through separate requests to administration or other funding sources.	Young adult materials and staffing are funded as part of the overall library budget, but not recorded or tracked separately.	Inadequate funding for YA materials, staff, and programs.	Funding for materials in multiple formats; Funding for staff; Funding for programs and additional services; Funding for spaces

Area IV: Administration				
YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool				
Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
Develop written policies that mandate the rights of YAs to equitable library service.	All library policies and practices reflect a commitment to intellectual freedom and equitable access. Policies and procedures are examined annually and developed collaboratively and ensure that collections, resources, and services are available to all teens. Library maintains thorough documentation of all young adult programs and activities, including information on presenters, statistics, evaluations, notes about successes and failures. Reports with abundant data and statistics are shared at least quarterly and published widely within the library and the community.	All library policies and practices reflect a commitment to intellectual freedom and equitable access. Policies and procedures are addressed on an ad-hoc basis with the help of YA staff when requested. YA department maintains statistics on young adult programs and services. Information is reported periodically, at least annually, to library administration.	Most library policies and practices reflect a commitment to equitable access for teens. Policies are not reviewed.	Young adults are limited in access to certain materials, services, or areas.
Document YA programs and activities	Library maintains thorough documentation of all young adult programs and activities, including information on presenters, statistics, evaluations, notes about successes and failures. Reports with abundant data and statistics are shared at least quarterly and published widely within the library and the community.	YA department maintains statistics on young adult programs and services. Information is reported periodically, at least annually, to library administration.	YA department provides a basic report annually to the library administration.	Little or no reporting with regard to young adult services and programs is required.
Use the skills, talents, and resources of YAs in programs and services.	Teens are involved at every level of planning and presenting young adult programs and services. Teens are encouraged to use their skills in creating and implementing programs and services, volunteering, and applying for employment in the library.	Teens are involved in some aspects of planning and presenting young adult programs and services.	Teens are occasionally consulted when the library is developing young adult programs and services.	Teens are never or rarely consulted in the development of programs and services.
Dedicated spaces for Young Adults	The library includes a dedicated space for young adults that is open and staffed all hours that the library is open. This space is equal or greater than the percentage of the full square feet of the library as the percentage of teens in the community. The young adult space has been planned and is updated regularly with the assistance of young adults. The young adult space includes at a minimum print fiction, print nonfiction, media, technology and devices, and comfortable seating.	The library includes a dedicated space for young adults. The young adult space has been planned and is updated regularly with the assistance of young adults. The young adult space includes at a minimum print fiction, print nonfiction, media, technology and devices, and comfortable seating.	The library includes a dedicated space for young adults.	There is a young adult collection located in the library.
				Collection development policy; Challenged materials policy; Patron confidentiality policy & practice; Internet access policy; Absence of barriers to access.
				Annual report to administration & library board; Articles for professional journals; Output data.
				Teen Advisory Group; One-time or short-term focus groups; Online polls.
				YALSA White Paper: The Need for Teen Spaces in Public Libraries; YA Spaces of Your Dreams (VOYA column); <i>Teen Spaces</i> , by Kimberly Bolan for YALSA, (ALA Editions)

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool		Area V: Knowledge of Materials			
Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Examples/Resources
Collection Development Policy	Library maintains a YA Collection Development Policy that is consistent with the parent institution's mission statement and strategic plan, includes materials in a variety of formats including print and digital, is reviewed annually, and YA staff have significant input into this plan.	Library maintains a separate YA collection development policy that is reviewed biennially with some input from YA staff. Policy includes plans for collecting materials in a variety of formats, including print and digital.	Library maintains a collection development policy but does not have a separate document for young adults.	Library does not have a formal collection development policy.	Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA's Competencies in Action, Chapter 5
Knowledge of YA Literature & selection sources	YA staff show a deep knowledge of young adult literature by reading two or more YA books per month and participating in multiple literary professional activities; reviews for a journal, writes a review blog, participates in a Mock Printz or other workshops each year. Library subscribes to multiple review sources which are shared with all interested staff.	YA staff show a good knowledge of young adult literature by reading 1-2 YA books per month and participating in one other professional activity. Library subscribes to at least 2 different review sources and shares them with YA staff.	YA staff read ten YA books or less a year. Library subscribes to at least two review sources.	YA librarian does not read YA literature and the library does not subscribe to a review source for YA literature.	School Library Journal; VOYA; ALAN Review; Booklist; YALSA selected lists and awards; YALSA literature blog
Collection of materials in a variety of formats, reading levels, and languages	Young adult collection represents a wide variety of formats including print and digital. The entire collection is continually evaluated & weeded. Collection reflects languages other than English that reflect the library community. YA staff is familiar with all types of materials that teens consume in all types of formats.	Young adult collection consists of print books, periodicals, and at least two other formats. Collection reflects the languages spoken in the library community. All areas of the YA collection have been weeded in the past 1-2 years.	YA collection consists of print books, periodicals and one other format. YA collection has been weeded in the past 2-3 years.	YA collection consists mainly of print books and periodicals. The collection is out-of-date and hasn't been weeded in 3 or more years.	Formats may include: print, audio, video, video games, e-books, graphic novels, periodicals, downloadable music, etc.
Serve as a resource, liaison, & partner with schools, parents & caregivers	YA staff visit area schools virtually or face-to-face at least once a year and together they work to collaborate on programs and services to young adults. YA staff regularly attend school events to liaison with teachers and parents.	YA staff visit area schools virtually or face-to-face at least once a year. YA staff attend one or two events at the school each year	YA staff communicate with area schools to ensure they are aware of library services and programs.	YA staff have no relationship with area schools and/or PTAs.	Monthly newsletter to teachers and school librarians. School events include: open houses, back-to-school nights, PTA meetings, science fairs.

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool

Area VI: Access to Information

Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Examples/Resources
Organize the collection for ease of access	Library organizes physical and virtual collections to maximize easy, equitable and independent access to information by all young adults. Library consistently, at least annually, reevaluates the organization scheme to make sure it is still relevant to young adults	Library organizes physical and virtual collections to provide easy and independent access to information by young adults and evaluates the scheme every two to three years.	Library has organized physical and virtual collections but needs to reevaluate and update to accommodate new or growing collections.	Library has organized physical and virtual collections but they are not easy to use and the Library has not reevaluated the organization structure.	Using consistent labels and tags on both print and online collections to make transition between print and virtual collections as seamless as possible; <i>Young Adults Deserve the Best</i> ; YALSA's <i>Competencies in Action</i> , Chapter 6
Merchandise and market the collection	Library uses up-to-date merchandising and promotional techniques, including displays, print marketing and online tools to attract young adults to use the collection. Library consistently evaluates the organization scheme to make sure it is still relevant to young adults.	Library uses merchandising and promotional techniques including displays and print marketing in the Library to attract young adults to use the collection. Promotional materials are updated regularly.	Library uses promotional techniques like displays and print marketing in the Library to promote the collection. These are not updated often.	Library does not merchandise or promote the collection.	Facebook fan pages; Web-based pathfinders; Book Blogs
Provide instruction in basic research skills	YA staff use a wide-variety of print and online tools to teach how to find, evaluate, use and credit information effectively. YA staff teach these skills formally and take every opportunity to teach in one-on-one and group interactions, both face-to-face and virtually, and encourage life-long learning habits.	YA staff take initiative to formally teach how to find, evaluate and use information effectively, using a variety of print and online tools.	When requested, YA staff formally teach how to find, evaluate and use information.	YA staff do not teach research skills and do not model basic research skills.	Screencasts and pathfinders to teach students basic research skills; Virtual tools wherever appropriate to community (e.g., mobile device reference app); Group instruction; Turning every reference interaction into a teaching moment.
Develop and provide access to technology and electronic resources.	YA staff work with others in the Library, the community, and in the profession to build and share new technology and digital resources and tools that ensure young adults' access to knowledge and information. YA staff implement and integrate digital tools in programs and services on a regular basis.	YA staff are aware of new technology and digital resources and adopt them when convenient.	YA staff are aware of new technology and digital resources but are unable to use them in the library.	YA staff are unaware of new technology and digital resources that increase young adults' access to information.	YA staff contribute to online information collections or initiatives.
Maintain awareness of ongoing technological advances	YA staff weekly use a wide-variety of tools, books, magazines, newspapers, blogs & microblogs, and podcasts, to remain aware of advances in technology that can improve access to information for young adults and act as advocates for the adoption of these advances in the library.	YA staff use some tools at least monthly to stay aware of advances in technology that can improve access to information and incorporate them into the library when already approved by library administration.	YA staff are aware of advances in technology when library incorporates these advances into a larger technological upgrade but do not seek information about these topics.	YA staff are unaware of advances in technology that can improve young adults' access to information and do not update technology regularly.	Reading technology related blogs and Twitter feeds; Subscribing to technology related podcasts

Area VII: Services

YALSA Public Library Evaluation Tool

Essential Element	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Examples/Resources
Evaluate programs and services	Library programs and services meet the goals of the library's strategic plan while also meeting the developmental needs of young adults. Programs and services always include young adult involvement, through planning and implementation or volunteering, whenever possible.	Library programs and services meet the goals of the library's strategic plan while also meeting the developmental needs of young adults and sometimes include young adult involvement.	Library programs and services meet the goals of the library's strategic plan but do not take into consideration the developmental needs of young adults.	Library programs and services do not have any driving goals connected to strategic plan or the developmental needs of teens.	YALSA Youth Participation Handbook; Search Institutes 40 Developmental Assets; <i>Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA's Competencies in Action</i> , Chapter 7
Develop and implement services to young adults outside the library	YA staff initiate and foster partnerships with organizations outside the library to provide services with young adults in non-traditional library settings.	YA staff work with organizations that approach the library to provide services to young adults in non-traditional library settings.	YA staff are aware of community organizations that serve young adults but do not partner with them to offer services	YA staff are unaware of community organizations that serve young adults and methods of offering services in non-traditional library settings.	Outreach opportunities may include: hospitals, home-school settings; alternative education facilities; foster care programs and detention facilities.
Provide services that meet the needs and interests of young adults	Library provides a variety of services, both informational and recreational, that meet the needs and interest of a majority of young adults in the community while still ensuring that these services also meet the goals of the library as a whole.	Library provides services, both recreational and informational, that meet the needs of a majority of young adults in the community.	Library provides services, both recreational and informational, that meet the needs of some young adults.	Library does not provide services that meet the needs and interests of young adults.	Homework help; College/Career help; Programs that support teen popular culture interests (e.g., gaming, anime, fanfic, etc.); Readers advisory lists and displays
Provide programs and services current with young adult interest and trends	YA staff use a variety of tools, professional journals, magazines, online articles, etc., to remain aware of trends and pop-culture interests of young adults and use this knowledge on an ongoing basis to create new and improve existing library services and the library collection.	YA staff use tools like professional journals and magazines to remain aware of trends and pop-culture interests of young adults and periodically use this knowledge to improve existing library services and the library collection.	YA staff do not seek out information about current trends and pop-culture interest of young adults, but when the knowledge is available, improves library services and collections.	YA staff are not aware of trends and pop-culture interest of young adults.	YA staff are aware that new TV show based on a teen series will be airing soon and so order extra copies of the series to meet the predicted demand.
Accept the changing nature of young adult needs	Library is aware of and is prepared to adapt quickly to the flexible and changing nature of young adults' entertainment, technological and information needs.	Library is aware of the flexible and changing nature of young adults' entertainment, technological and information needs but needs time to act on these changes.	Library is aware of the flexible and changing nature of young adults' entertainment, technological and information needs but does not act on these changes.	Library is unaware of the needs of teens.	School assignments; New formats

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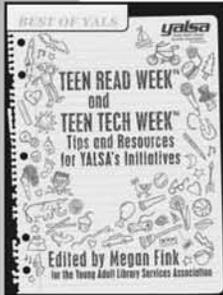
YALSA's self-paced winter online course session on YA programming begins in February! Registration starts at \$135 for YALSA members.

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Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week: Tips and Resources for YALSA's Initiatives

Edited by Megan Fink

Plan your best event yet for YALSA's Teen Read and Teen Tech Week! Editor Megan Fink, middle school librarian and advisor at the Charlotte Country Day School and a former Teen Read Week chair, selected the best reading and technology articles from YALSA's award-winning journal to form a manual that will offer guidance to librarians planning their annual events, with advice on best practices, collection development, outreach and marketing, program ideas and more. In addition, YA authors Walter Dean Myers and Cynthia Leitich Smith and Best Teen Read Week contest winners Elizabeth Kahn and Jennifer Velásquez contributed original content about the importance of these initiatives and how they support teens' information needs, along with an introduction by YALSA past president Judy Nelson. **Available now for \$35**

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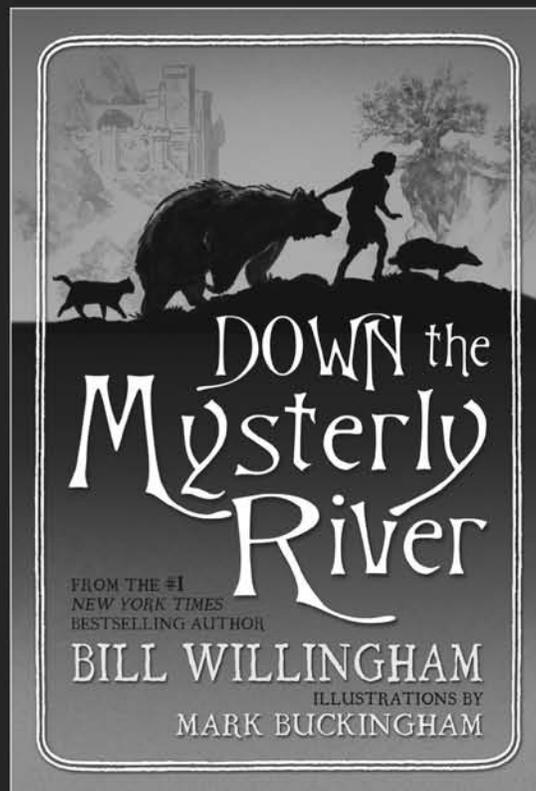
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DOWN the Mysterly River

MAX "THE WOLF" is a top-notch Boy Scout, an expert at orienteering, and a master of being prepared. So it is a little odd that he suddenly finds himself lost in an unfamiliar wood. Even odder still, he encounters a badger named Banderbrock, a black bear named Walden, and McTavish the Monster (who might be an old barn cat)—all of whom talk—and who are as clueless as Max.

Before long, Max and his friends are on the run from a relentless group of hunters and their deadly hounds. Armed with powerful swords and known as the Blue Cutters, these hunters capture and change the very essence of their prey. For what purpose, Max can't guess. But unless he can solve the mystery of the strange forested world he's landed in, Max may find himself and his friends changed beyond recognition, lost in a lost world....



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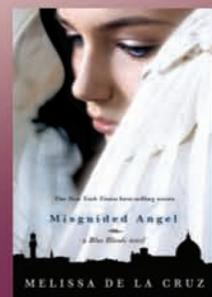
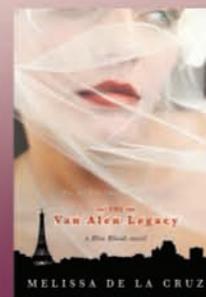
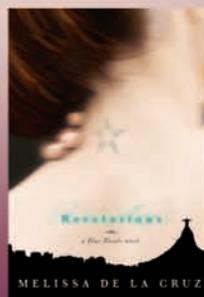
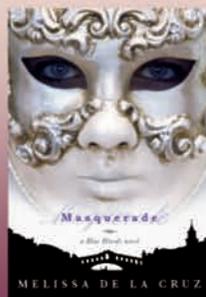
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