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*young adult*  
library services



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## INSIDE:

## CREATING A CUTTING-EDGE STEM LIBRARY

## UNDERSTANDING CYBERBULLYING

## CHANGING OUR MINDS ABOUT CHANGING TEENS' BEHAVIORS

## AND MUCH MORE

**THE STEM  
ISSUE**

# YALSA'S YOUNG ADULT **LITERATURE** SYMPOSIUM



NOVEMBER 2-4, 2012  
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# young adult library services

VOLUME 10 | NUMBER 2

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## About This Cover

As part of YALSA's commitment to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) in libraries, YALSA is celebrating Teen Tech Week! This Teen Tech Week™ (March 4–10), YALSA invites you to Geek Out @ your library! This year's theme encourages libraries to throw open their physical and virtual doors to teens and showcase the outstanding technology they offer, from services such as online homework help and digital literacy-focused programs to resources like e-books, movies, music, audiobooks, databases and more. Official Teen Tech Week products, such as the poster on the cover, are available at [www.alastore.ala.org/ttw12](http://www.alastore.ala.org/ttw12).

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(providing advisory input for the journal)

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### 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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# from the Editor

Megan Honig

One of my favorite things in the library world is to see librarians challenging themselves. For those of us who are in young adult librarianship because we empathize with teens, love literature, or care about building relationships with our communities, incorporating science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) into our work can feel like a big stretch. Teen librarians are known for embracing new technologies, but where exactly do science, engineering, and math fit into our practices?

Well, wonder no more! This issue of *Young Adult Library Services* covers a range of STEM-related practices and activities, from green teen programming to using GPS devices in a hunt for hidden treasure to building a state-of-the-art school library STEM program.

Looking to revolutionize your school library's approach? Marina Duff's "10 Steps to Creating a Cutting-Edge STEM School Library" suggests both large-scale and small-scale initiatives toward supporting STEM activities. Wondering how to incorporate environmentalism into library programming? Beth Filar Williams offers a variety of green-themed activities. If you're still a "geomuggle," Priscilla Suarez and Jennifer Dudley will give you and your teens the rundown on a sport that "combine[s] the best of both worlds: technology and recess." Additionally, Renee McGrath describes how her library developed its mobile booklists; Denise E. Agosto, Andrea Forte, and Rachel Magee tackle the timely topic of cyberbullying; and Holly Anderton of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh walks public librarians through developing STEM programs and resources of their own.

But this issue isn't just gadgets and numbers. Read about Barbara Roos's struggles and triumphs serving teens in juvenile detention facilities, hear from Syntychia Kendrick-Samuel about the power of a library Junior Friends group, and take to heart Vikki Terrile and S. Michele Echols's nuanced, practical, and even spiritual reminder that "[Teens] Don't Leave Their Lives at the Door, but Neither Do We."

Plus, get up to date on YALSA's latest activities and initiatives, including the brand new web presence of *Young Adult Library Services*. Check us out at [www.yalsa.ala.org/yals](http://www.yalsa.ala.org/yals). YALS



# from the President

Sarah Flowers



Sometimes members wonder why they should bother with YALSA initiatives such as Teen Tech Week™. After all, they say, we do this stuff all the time in our libraries. We're always working with teens and technology. We do tech-related programs, we teach teens how to use our databases, we do digital literacy instruction. So what's the big deal with Teen Tech Week?

Think of it this way: Teen Tech Week (TTW) is an opportunity for you to turn outward a bit and show off to the rest of the community all those things that you do with teens and technology. TTW creates an opportunity to advocate for teens and libraries in a positive way—at a time when you are not asking for anything, not lobbying, just sharing information with your community.

How do you do that? YALSA makes it easy, by supplying templates for proclamations, letters to the editor, and public service announcements. Go to the Teen Tech Week website (<http://teentechweek.ning.com>) and click on Toolkits, and you'll find a publicity toolkit. YALSA has already done most of the work for you. It contains a sample press release, sample letters to the editor (one that you can ask a teen to write, another for a parent), sample public service announcements, and a sample proclamation.

If you have never done a proclamation, now is the time to give it a try. Proclamations are ceremonial documents issued by city councils, boards of

supervisors, boards of trustees, and other governmental units as a way to celebrate organizations or individuals or to recognize events in the community. Each city or county has its own requirements for proclamations, but it's easy to find out what they are: just ask the city or county clerk, or look on their website. Check with your library director or principal first, in case the school or library has a policy or procedure for requesting proclamations. Generally, you will need to submit the request two to six weeks before you want the proclamation issued. You will need to supply the draft language (YALSA has again done most of the work for you), and your proclamation will be most effective if it specifically relates to your community—so feel free to change the language in the TTW proclamation or add items that focus on your teens and your library.

In some cases, proclamations are read out loud at the designated public meeting; other times, they just go in the minutes. In either case, your elected officials will read the proclamation as part of their meeting preparation. A TTW proclamation is an easy, positive way for you to let your governing body and your community know that libraries are there to help teens effectively use technology—and it doesn't even cost any money!

There are lots of other ways you can use TTW as a publicity and advocacy tool. Check out the website for lots of ideas. Just think about the fact that when you do a book or media display in the library

(see the list of "Get Your Geek On" Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults nominations, as an example), you're promoting teens and teen reading to everyone who walks by. There are some great event ideas on the website that could involve the whole community. For example, if you did the "Old School Tech" display, matching older technology with its newer replacement (typewriter/iPad, rotary phone/cell phone, etc.), you could display it in the library or somewhere else in the community that gets a lot of foot traffic. Be sure to note on the display that it was a project of the library's teens! Or if your teens create book trailers or ninety-second book adaptations on film, have a film festival to showcase them and be sure to invite the community.

In fact, if you do any programs at all for Teen Tech Week, invite your mayor, city councilors, school board members, and state and federal representatives. You might be surprised: some of them will show up. It's a great photo op for them, as well as for you.

So enjoy Teen Tech Week with your teens, but keep the rest of the community in mind as well. Use TTW to show them what you already know: that teens are fun, creative, and interesting! YALSA

**march 4-10, 2012**



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**for Teen Tech Week™ 2012!**

**Join the celebration!**

**Visit [www.ala.org/teentechweek](http://www.ala.org/teentechweek), and you can:**

- Register and receive a FREE webinar recording or win a Skype session with author J.J. Johnson
- Get great ideas for activities and events for any library, at any budget
- Download free publicity tools to get the word out
- Buy official Teen Tech Week merchandise from ALA Graphics & YALSA for your library
- Find inspiration or offer your own ideas in the forums



As ALA election season nears (watch for ballots this March), a number of your fellow YALSA members have thrown their hats into the ring to become at-large members of ALA Council. ALA Council is the governing body for ALA, and this year, several YALSA members are among the candidates. Candidates who were listed as current YALSA members on Nov. 15, 2011, were contacted and asked to fill out a short profile. The candidates profiled are those who answered the questionnaire.

Curious about ALA Council? Learn more at [www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/council/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/council/index.cfm)!

## Nancy Baumann

Instructor, University of Missouri School of Information Science and Learning Technologies

**YALSA Member since:** 1995-2001, 2010

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is the loss of professional library positions in libraries. Additional factors include closure of libraries, budget cuts resulting in losses to collections, programming and personnel. This is devastating to patrons who depend on and need libraries during these severe economic times.

**I'm running for ALA Council because** I feel I can be a strong voice for patrons and libraries. One of the lessons I learned in Library School is that librarians provide service to *everyone*. I will do my best to seek out opportunities to speak to any group in order to promote the purpose and benefits of strong and vibrant libraries in communities. I want to become a national spokesperson for libraries. Strong libraries can provide the education and tools our patrons require to secure jobs

and become thoughtful caring citizens. I will work as a marketer of libraries, promoting the benefits of investments in libraries to communities.

**Favorite YA books:** Naming just one favorite YA book is impossible. Here are some of my favorites: *Hoops* by Walter Dean Myers, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *Taking Sides* by Gary Soto, and *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper

## Betsy Fraser

Selector, Calgary Public Library

**YALSA member since:** 1999

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is convincing the public and government that we are a vital part of the community that deserves their ongoing support while figuring out how best to serve our customers in the face of budgetary challenges and rapid technological changes. I believe that

libraries are the heart and soul of their community.

**I'm running for ALA Council because** the programs and activities of the ALA help those libraries and their staff in innumerable ways. I want to be part of Council to find a way to give back to ALA a part of what it has given to me.

**Favorite YA book:** *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith* by Deborah Heiligman

## Dr. Meghan Harper

Coordinator, School Library Media Program

**YALSA member since:** 2011

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is the elimination of school librarians in K-12 Schools and dwindling economic support for public libraries.

**I'm running for ALA Council because** I would like to make a

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STEPHANIE KUENN is YALSA's Web Services Manager and the Managing Editor of *Young Adult Library Services*.

contribution to national efforts to build advocacy for all types of libraries and support the professional development of librarians working with youth. I would like to support the advancement of ALA's role in the legislative process at the state level. I believe all types of libraries should collaborate with advocacy efforts to increase the economic support for libraries serving youth of all ages.

**Favorite YA book:** It's hard to choose just one. Favorite classic YA books, *Jacob, Have I Loved* and *Invitation to the Game*; favorite series, Gregor, the Overlander; and current favorites are *Unraveling* and *Paint the Wind*.

### Jody K. Howard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor at the Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University

**YALSA member since:** 2000

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is a crisis in leadership. I believe that as information professionals we need to become as relevant as possible to the people with whom we work. Change is happening very rapidly and it is difficult to stay connected with the members of our community unless we embrace change and work with it to develop a culture of excellence. This culture will not be developed unless we embrace leadership and have it as a guiding principle in our lives.

**I'm running for ALA Council because** I want to join others in the information profession as we together determine how we can prepare the students and adults with whom we work to become leaders in our great society. I hope to bring a voice representing the needs of students and young people to the general sessions of ALA council.

**Favorite YA book:** Currently, my favorite YA book is *The Girl Who Played with Fire* by Stieg Larsson.

### Carolyn Jo Starkey

School Librarian, Buckhorn High School, New Market, Alabama

**YALSA member since:** 2011

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is the daily fiscal challenge faced by libraries. This remains the greatest threat not only to the library as a public institution but also to the future of our profession. Libraries and librarians must practice resourcefulness, creativity, and ingenuity in our continuing mission to provide free and open access to our patrons.

**I'm running for ALA Council because** I believe our ALA leadership must be transformational, creating a vision for the future that safeguards the position of the library, whether in a physical or virtual locale, as a foundational public institution. My professional concerns include the reaffirmation of the library in all its forms as a necessary component in the creation and sustenance of a society of lifelong learners and achievers; adequate public funding to ensure institutional solvency for all libraries; intellectual freedom advocacy for patrons of all ages; privacy protection in an increasingly open digital society; and continuing professional development to support members in rapidly-changing digital environments.

**Favorite YA book:** *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins.

### Nancy J. Snyder

Public Library Branch Manager of Wichita Public Library

**YALSA member since:** 2001

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is to remain relevant to our respective communities. Communities are not static, but constantly growing and changing. To meet the varied needs of any community, libraries must strive to keep abreast of these changes and tailor services to meet ever-changing needs. Community outreach programs within a library provide a unique opportunity for excellent collaboration opportunities with community leaders, groups, and organizations that will enhance service to non-users, the under-served, and those with special needs. Yes, in today's world we cannot ignore the state of the economy and the importance of funding to give excellent service to our patrons. Tough choices have been made in order to prioritize the library's services.

**I'm running for ALA Council because** my fulfilling and gratifying journey with public libraries has been primarily promoting youth services for children and teens as a youth specialist in small/medium municipal libraries and as a children manager in a county-wide system library. Most recently I accepted a library manager position in a city-wide system that gives me the opportunity to advocate youth services on a different level. If elected to ALA council, I promise to be a voice for youth services on a national level and to "communicate relentlessly" for enriching communities, big and small, through empowering our children and teens.

It is my hope that all 16,604 public libraries in our nation will be a preferred destination for children and teens. Library staff will have moved beyond their desk to make face-to-face connections with those in the community who are not familiar with all the services offered by libraries. Our advocacy strategies and collaborative efforts will have been successful. Politicians and voters will recognize the important



presence of libraries to their communities and all libraries will be at the top of the list for funding.

**Favorite YA book:** *The Giver* by Lois Lowry.

## Tracy Van Dyne

Head of teen services at Brentwood Public Library

**YALSA member since:** 2000

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is remaining a vital and relevant part of our community.

**I'm running for ALA Council because** I have become concerned about

the future of librarianship. I hope to be able to become a more vocal proponent for our profession and for our new members as well as making sure that ALA works to equip library professionals with the knowledge that we need to stay current.

**Favorite YA book:** There are always too many! My all time favorite book has always been *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. But runners up are *The Mortal Instruments* series by Cassandra Clare and anything by Holly Black.

## Jamie Watson

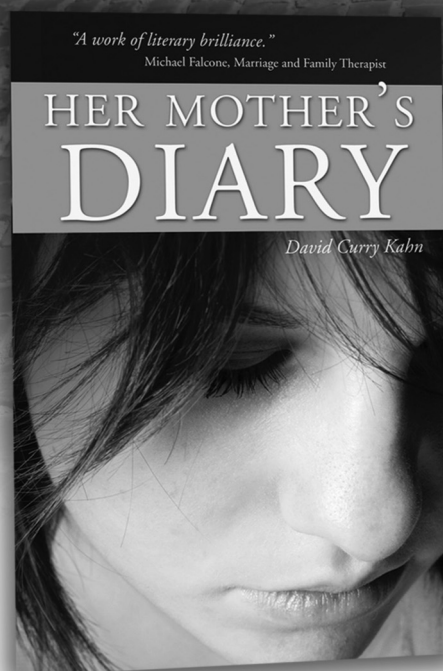
Collection Development Coordinator,  
Baltimore County Public Library

**YALSA member since:** 1999

**The most pressing issue facing our profession today** is being nimble enough to constantly adapt to a rapidly changing world.

**I'm running for ALA Council because:** I've often been told that the organization at large needs representation from members with a youth services focus. After many years helping the organization with ALSC and YALSA, this is a chance to work with the organization at large. I hope to be able to play a part in setting the agenda in the years to come.

**Favorite YA book:** Wow – of all time? Either *Weetzie Bat* or *Feed*. YALS



## 2011 National Indie Excellence AWARD WINNER

*HER MOTHER'S DIARY* is an inspirational love story about believing in yourself. Allison, a homeless orphaned teenage girl is detached from her wealthy family who neither accepted or acknowledged her. Her journey takes her down a road of betrayal, murder, and danger, but she learns to persevere for the things she believes in and in the end she shows us that if you believe in yourself, you can do anything.

[WWW.HERMOTHERSDIARY.COM](http://WWW.HERMOTHERSDIARY.COM)

# Sowing the Seeds of STEM

*By Shannon Peterson*

If you've perused recent grant opportunities or follow the amorphous world of national education policy, you've probably run across a four letter word that seems to pop-up with increasing frequency: STEM. Not to be confused with the controversial cell research or a part of a plant, STEM refers to science, technology, engineering, and math in student learning. To raise test scores and compete in the international market, innovation in these areas and a shift in the way in which they are approached is no longer a long-range desire but an impending necessity. Like hickory sticks or segregated classrooms, rote memorization seems to be becoming a thing of the past as the ability to do and to question becomes the modus operandi for the next generation of independent thinkers.

So what does this mean for teen librarians and how will it affect the work

that we do? That is exactly what the YALSA Board of Directors discussed at the 2011 Annual Conference in New Orleans. In many ways, as is often the case with YALSA, we as an organization are already on the playing field. YALSA is well-known for being proactive in the adoption of technologies and adaptable to new ideas, and we talked about how we could incorporate and unify STEM ideas in a substantive, long-range way within the organization. As chair of a board ad hoc committee on STEM, I'm happy to say that we've already made some meaningful progress: from this wonderful YALS issue to member forums and upcoming webinars to blog posts and articles, if you're a YALSA member, chances are you have or will come across some great updates, brainstorming sessions, and information.

One of the most exciting initiatives is the newly created STEM task force chaired by Chicago Public Library's Amber Creger and her team of public and school librarians. This task force, which will be hard at work through the next year, will have an impressive list of objectives that I think will be of ongoing value to our membership. Some of these objectives include a downloadable "STEM in Libraries" toolkit to be released in conjunction with 2012's Teen Tech Week, a list of recommended reading related to STEM, and a STEM resources page on the YALSA wiki. And, for all of those incredible programming librarians out there, the task force will implement a STEM programming contest, so be ready to share your favorite "Geek Out" best practices!

Of course, an organization is only as dynamic as its members. As your Board of Directors, we strive to institute a direction and focus that will support and bolster our membership. But I for one look most forward to seeing how each of you will interpret and incorporate STEM into your libraries and communities. As I read about and hear the buzz on library homework apps, university science department/public library joint book groups, or robotics workshops, I add to my own (ever) growing must-do list and look forward to collaborating, sharing, and learning from the always inspiring YALSA community. Let's get our geek on! **YALS**

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**SHANNON PETERSON** is a current YALSA Board of Directors member board liaison. She works on a peninsula just across the Sound from Seattle as a Youth Services Librarian, serving youth ages 0-19ish.

This March, it's time to let your geek flag fly. Hundreds of teens voted on the Teen Tech Week™ 2012 theme, with "Geek Out" winning a whopping 62 percent of the votes. Geeks are definitely cool, and this is the perfect opportunity for your library to showcase all of the technology you have to offer your teen patrons and students. Teen Tech Week (TTW), the annual initiative sponsored by YALSA, will be aimed at teens, their families, their educators, and other concerned adults, and will focus on teens' ethical, competent, and efficient use of technologies offered through libraries.

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 93 percent of teens go online. It's where they get their news, do personal and academic research, and share their thoughts, ideas, and creative endeavors with others. School and public libraries are the perfect place for teens to do all this, not only because they can provide access but also because libraries are staffed with trained professionals who can help teens use these tools to the best of their ability. Librarians can help teens stay safe online, but they can also point them toward the best resources and outlets for their creativity.

For 2012, YALSA is using Ning, a social networking platform, for the TTW website and it looks fantastic. Visit [www.ala.org/teentechweek](http://www.ala.org/teentechweek) to register your library and get resources for programming, publicity, purchasing of books and media, displays, and more. The website is chock full of activity ideas, such as search engine battles, movie adaptations of books, Wikipedia experiments, and teen choice awards for video games, songs, movies, and more. "25 Easy Tips for Teens" is a list of technology activities that teens can try in the library, like downloading ebooks, blogging about a book, or making an avatar.

Find materials on the Books and Media Lists page, which contains nominees for the 2012 "Get Your Geek On" Popular Paperbacks list, audiobook lists, film lists, and more. In addition, librarians can purchase and download the TTW 2012 pamphlet, which

includes lists like Geekology, Geek-o-Rama, and iGeek, a list of digital resources like zines, creative sites, and games.

Librarians should also be sure to check out the TTW 2012 Facebook event page (<http://on.fb.me/sUOJTI>), where you can see who else is planning TTW events and share your own plans in the comments. The TTW 2012 Google map (<http://g.co/maps/f5buq>) will allow libraries to place themselves on the map and see where else TTW is being celebrated across the globe.

The website also has everything you need to promote TTW at your library, both within your school or building and in your community. You can also go to the ALA Store to purchase promotional materials for TTW via the website or simply visit [www.alastore.ala.org/ttw12](http://www.alastore.ala.org/ttw12). Here, you can find posters, bookmarks, digital downloads, and more. Visit the Publicity Toolkit for sample press releases, scripts for public service announcements, sample letters to the editor, and more.

If you register for TTW, you will receive a Technology Resource Pack, which includes bookmarks, YALSA's Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults, and a Social Networking for Teens brochure. These materials are designed to help you continue the work of TTW throughout the year. The first ninety-eight registrants will receive free registration for a STEM webinar on February 1, 2012; all other registrants will receive a recording of the webinar.

While the themes and goals of TTW 2012 are year-round pursuits in libraries, it's great to have a week devoted to showcasing all that your library can do for teens as they lead their digital lives. Be sure to watch the YALSA blog for more information on TTW as it approaches, and register soon to start planning your events and publicity.

Finally, special thanks must go to the hardworking and creative TTW committee members: Clair Segal, Donna Block, Karen Lemmons, Kip Odell, Samantha Marker, and Shannon Lake.

Enjoy Teen Tech Week! YALS

# Teen Tech Week™ 2012

## Get Ready to Geek Out!

*By Sarah Ludwig*

**SARAH LUDWIG** is the academic technology coordinator at Hamden Hall Country Day School in Hamden, Connecticut. She is currently the chair of YALSA's Teen Tech Week Committee. Her book, *Starting from Scratch: Building a Teen Library Program*, was published by ABC-CLIO in June 2011.

# YALSA's Driving Force

## Strategic Planning for the Future

*By Priscille Dando*

**M**ention strategic planning in a conversation and you are likely to be met with a glassy-eyed stare, but when you are engaged in the process, it is actually quite an exciting endeavor. Strategic planning is a vital process for any organization because it focuses priorities for coming years and keeps the association accountable to the mission.

Consider the strategic plan as YALSA's blueprint for the future. The plan consists of goals and objectives under which an action plan operates. Developed by the Executive Committee with input from the Board of Directors, the action plan outlines exactly how the association will meet those goals and objectives. It is the genesis of new initiatives, committees, task forces, partnerships, and activities. By

measuring the success of the action plan components, it can be determined if YALSA is meeting the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. In a nutshell, if an idea or action cannot fit under the strategic plan, it will not be considered a viable activity for YALSA.

### The Process

An effective strategic plan examines the trends and issues facing an organization for the next three to five years. Input from the membership, board of directors, and staff must be analyzed to determine a common vision. YALSA's Strategic Planning Committee has been facilitating the development of the new plan since February 2011. One of its critical charges is

ensuring members' priorities are reflected in the plan. The creation of an online member survey, the face-to-face strategic planning session of committee chairs and members during the 2011 Annual Conference in New Orleans, and the month-long member comment and review period were opportunities for members to express their opinions. The committee also communicated throughout the year via blog posts, Twitter and Facebook mentions, YALSA e-news blurbs, posts on discussion lists, and an all-member e-mail. In addition to the committee's work, YALSA hired a professional strategic plan facilitator, Alan Brickman, to host two planning sessions at Annual—one for the Board of Directors and one for members and committee chairs. Brickman also created a report identifying the essential outcomes of those sessions and proposed recommendations for the new plan.

### YALSA's 2011 Strategic Plan

YALSA's previous strategic plan was developed in 2008. The new plan continues to focus on five areas, but there have been some significant changes.

In Goal 1, activism has been paired with advocacy. The objectives include working with policy makers and establishing partnerships with other organizations along with conducting and supporting advocacy and activism efforts at the association and member levels. Goal 2 pairs research and best practices. Previously, the focus was on identifying opportunities for research. There is continued support for member-initiated research, but now the goal reaches for a higher level, seeking to establish YALSA as a leader in research and as the nationally recognized expert organization on teen issues and libraries. Fulfilling YALSA's

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Research Agenda ([www.ala.org/yalsa/researchagenda](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/researchagenda)) is also a priority. Goal 3 seeks to continue YALSA's high quality offerings for continuing education and staff development, with special emphasis on YALSA's portfolio of national guidelines and competencies. Goal 4 addresses membership and engagement. The objectives strive to expand and diversify membership while specifically offering opportunities for engagement through member groups such as appointed committees and opt-in interest groups, and individually through YALSA's blogs, publications, continuing education, and special events.

The most obvious difference between the 2008 and 2011 plans is the addition of Goal 5, capacity building. This goal was generated from the reality that as YALSA continues to add initiatives and seek a more national presence, it requires greater organizational power to increase work and financial capacity. Capacity building stresses the need for a variety of resources to support YALSA's activities through an increase in human resources, organization and structure, and financial resources. Development of a branding strategy for YALSA is also included. To make room for this new goal, marketing was removed as a separate goal, and instead is integrated into each area and is more specifically delineated in the action plan. The complete plan is available on YALSA's website: [www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/strategicplan](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/strategicplan).

**Table 1. YALSA Strategic Planning Process Timeline**

February 2011	Strategic Planning Committee reviewed 2008 YALSA member survey and created new online survey for member feedback.
March	Committee began publicizing the new plan process with a series of blog posts throughout the month. Conducted online member survey and encouraged participation by posting to discussion lists, spreading the word through Facebook and Twitter, and sending an all-member e-mail.
April	Committee analyzed and shared survey results. Submitted report to the Board.
May	Board discussed survey results.
Annual Conference	Two strategic planning sessions were conducted by professional facilitator Alan Brickman. The Board participated in a half-day session and committee chairs and members provided input during a 90 minute session.
July	Committee compiled results from Annual sessions. Facilitator presented comprehensive report based on findings.
August	With input from facilitator and YALSA staff, committee developed first draft of plan and submitted it for review by the Board. Draft revised to incorporate recommendations.
September	Committee publicized membership comment period on plan draft.
October	Committee reviewed member comments and made recommendations for final revisions. Executive Committee reviewed draft and made revisions.
November	YALSA Board voted to adopt new strategic plan. Action plan drafted.
December	Action plan refined and finalized.
January	New round of Great Ideas Contest begun.

## Next Steps

Establishing YALSA's new strategic plan was an important process, but now the real work of making the plan a reality begins. Consider your role in YALSA's success and your priorities for the association's future. Which goal area is important to you? Take advantage of opportunities such as volunteering on committees, joining an interest or discussion group, conducting

research, or writing an article for a YALSA publication. Have an innovative idea on how to achieve an objective? The latest round of YALSA's Great Ideas Contest is underway in January. This is your opportunity to propose an idea that can further YALSA's mission. Don't miss your chance to win a cash prize, *and* help to keep YALSA on the cutting edge. Check YALSA's website, [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa), for details. **YALS**

# Beyond the Bars

## Serving Teens in Lockdown

*By Barbara Roos*

**“M**y Nanna said reading will make the time go faster.”

This bit of wisdom was told to me by a first-timer at our parish’s Juvenile Detention Center. He looked to be about ten years old and was trying bravely not to cry. Not trusting myself to speak around the lump in my own throat, I just nodded and wrote down the titles he wanted to check out. Library school had definitely *not* prepared me for serving teens in a locked-down environment.

I’ve worked in the public library for fifteen years and currently serve as coordinator of teen services for the East Baton Rouge Parish (EBRP) Library in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Prior to my library career, I worked with the public in various capacities: waiter, tour guide, singing telegrams. Truly, I thought I’d seen it all, but kids in chains? That has taken a lot of getting used to.

Outreach to our local juvenile detention center (JDC) is a fairly recent addition to our system’s mission of serving the public. The initial idea grew from a discussion between several juvenile court judges and detention center personnel. In 2003, JDC volunteer Bill Wilson, an attorney in Baton Rouge, contacted the library, asking if we’d be interested in providing a new outreach service for the incarcerated teens. Judges Pamela Johnson and Kathleen Richey provided a tour of the facility, and then discussed ways in which we could complement their existing services. Judge Richey explained that she often assigned reading as part of an offender’s sentence, and she wanted the detention center teens to have access to materials that would be meaningful.

In 2004, Lydia Acosta, director of the EBRP Library at that time, facilitated the partnership between the JDC and the Library. A small room in the facility would

house a deposit collection with the EBRP Library donating hundreds of print and nonprint resources. Librarians cleaned the space, brought in tables and chairs, shelved materials, and hung “READ” posters to brighten the room. An opening day ceremony took place with library officials, juvenile court judges, detention center staff, and the local news media in attendance. The JDC staff was to run the library, with teen librarians visiting once a month to meet with the teens and weed the collection. Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that the library was being underutilized. The matron in charge kept the library locked and rarely allowed teens to visit. The public librarians were often turned away and denied access to both the collection and the teens.

For the next few years, the library at the detention center remained dysfunctional, although public librarians continued their attempts to fulfill our commitment. Brenda Eames, then coordinator of teen services, made regular reports to library administration detailing the obstacles set in place by the matron in charge.

Finally, in 2006, Marlyn McCants, director of the Department of Juvenile Services, brought in Deron Patin as the center’s new manager. Staffing changes were made and a new accord was agreed upon. Detention center teens and their teachers were to be allowed more access to their library. McCants interceded on behalf of the EBRP Library to ensure teen staff would be allowed to make routine visits to booktalk items from the collection and weed as needed. Last, and perhaps most important, of the new directives, teens were to be allowed to check out materials from their library. Prior to 2006, Bibles were the only books allowed in their rooms.

By the time I came on board in August 2007, the dysfunction of the early years was over. Teen Services had full

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access to the detention center library and visited every two weeks. Before each visit, we would comb through library donations looking for up-to-date teen-appropriate materials, but to be honest, the pickings were slim. At that time, there were no designated funds for the deposit collection. An appeal was made to the Library Board of Control detailing our service to the JDC and the need for better materials. In 2009, the Board approved a line item in the teen department collection budget specifically for the purchase of juvenile detention center materials.

With that, we were off and running. For two weeks in March of 2009, we closed the center's library and teen staff took part in the "Big Weed," purging several hundred old, torn, and inappropriate titles. We discarded everything from out-of-date reference books to children's picture books. Titles from the *Magic Tree House* and *Choose Your Own Adventure* series were removed and replaced with Orca Soundings, sports books, and other hi-lo titles. Urban fiction series like *Drama High* and *Bluford High*, as well as fresh titles from Coe Booth, Walter Dean Myers, and others went on the shelves.

Weeding the collection, I realized the donated materials were indicative of an unintentional prejudice on the part of librarians and well-meaning citizenry. Much of the collection had consisted of easy readers, *I Spy* books, and children's picture books. We were guilty of assuming that most of our incarcerated teens were primarily illiterate. Thinking back on my first few visits, I was embarrassed to remember passing over M. T. Anderson's *Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing* or Ned Vizzini's *It's Kind of a Funny Story* in favor of quick reads like *Fear Street* and *The Guinness Book of World Records*. No wonder we found it difficult to entice the teens to check out books! However, once the collection was updated, the teens finally began to show an

interest in their library, and circulation has risen significantly. Manager Deron Patin took notice and put in place a reward system, allowing teens with good behavior to visit the library on any given day; teen library staff need not be present.

Our library system places a great emphasis on our annual summer reading program. All service areas, children's, teens, and adults, provide programming for the public. We believe that the incarcerated teens should not be left out, so each summer I arrange for a performer to visit the juvenile detention center. Such programs have included Middle Eastern drumming, a poet/rapper, and Native American storytelling.

Department of Juvenile Services Director Gail Grover believes that our outreach efforts play a vital role in the education of their teens, not just through reading resources but also through exposure to the outside world. In a recent conversation, Grover stated that our efforts enable her teens to "travel beyond the bars" that lock them in.

To that end, our librarians strive to establish a connection with the incarcerated teens we're visiting. Every talk begins with the question "who has a library card?" We go on to explain how to get one and tell them about our thirteen branches, each with a teen department waiting to serve them. We emphasize that we are there to help them get back on track with homework resources and we encourage them to participate in our teen programs. (Admittedly, they look disinterested until we mention video games; go figure!) We tell them about our library exit packets waiting for them in their lockers. Upon their release, they'll receive a packet filled with information about the library, bookmarks for Text-A-Librarian and online databases, a coupon worth \$5 at the library book store, a "fresh start" coupon to erase any fines they might have on their account, a mood pencil, and a free book (we want to keep them

reading!). We do everything we can to get across to them that we *want* their business. And every once in a while, it works: we'll get a visit from a teen asking if we remember them and telling us what they read when they were on the inside.

Those are the successes we work for. We hold the memories close to remind ourselves why we leave the safe, clean confines of our libraries and enter the world of lockdown.


Preparing the teen staff for visits to the Juvenile Detention Center library has not been as difficult as one might imagine, but the process took a while to evolve. The practice of sending staff out in groups of three was already in place when I took over teen services. (We booktalk to schools in groups of three as well. Tag-teaming has proven effective in holding our teens' attention.) New librarians were paired with seasoned staff and sent forth.

It was my own first visit to the JDC that illuminated the need for some sort of training. To access the library, one must go through four hallways with locked doors on each end. Although I was mentally prepared for doors locking behind me, I was surprised by my physical response. As we waited between each locked hallway, I became more and more claustrophobic; I had difficulty breathing and my palms became sweaty. Luckily, the other librarians talked me through it. I made several more visits before I could go through the process without feeling tightness in my chest.

In 2007, the roster of librarians willing to go to the JDC was relatively small. Teen staff was excused for claustrophobia; others were frightened to be in the same room with the incarcerated teens. I realized that if I wanted my staff to serve all teen patrons, I needed to get a handle on the fear factor. I invited Deron Patin, manager of the detention center, to speak to the teen librarians about safety issues and guidelines for visiting. He explained that there are

# GEEK OUT WITH THE SURVIVORS

by Amanda Havard




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numerous cameras throughout the building and they are monitored at all times. He clarified further that detention center teens are never present in the library without at least one guard, and he went on to reassure staff that they have measures in place to keep us safe. Patin also discussed dress code, reminding us not to wear expensive jewelry, long earrings (which could be grabbed), and low-cut or revealing clothing. I now use Patin's information as a teaching tool to prepare new staff for their first visit. They go out with an experienced team to observe the talks, which lessens their anxiety level. They are then eased into interaction with the teens by recording the titles checked out and tracking the number of teens we visited with that day.

In all the years we've been serving the JDC, there has only been one incident. It was a minor dust-up between two young men and the guards had it under control immediately. Once the two were removed from the room, the librarians continued with their booktalks. The fact that my staff chose to stay and finish out the afternoon demonstrates how far they've come.

Now, librarians looking to work in teen services are treated to a full explanation of our outreach to the JDC. I have learned that it is best to discuss this aspect of the job right up front, beginning with my own experience and walking them through a typical visit. I talk about the schedule rotation and explain that visits to the JDC are an integral part of our duties. In this way, potential librarians may make an informed decision as to whether they are willing to work within the standards I've set for my staff.

While library school may not prepare us for the grim reality of teen lockdown, it does teach us that all patrons have a right to be served. I then build on that commitment to service and mentor my staff, teaching them to look into the eyes of our teens, respect the person they see, and try their best to foster a connection one teen at a time. **YALS**



**P**art of our charge as young adult librarians is to serve as advocates and asset builders for our tween and teen patrons. One way to fulfill these aspects of our professional responsibilities is through the cultivation of active Junior Friends groups. A Junior Friends group is a TAG (Teen Advisory Group) or TAB (Teen Advisory Board) taken to that next level. While a TAG or TAB typically advises the library on teen programs and collections, the Junior Friends take an active organizational and financial role.

I work at Uniondale Public Library, a heavily utilized public library located in the suburbs on the South Shore of Nassau County, Long Island, New York. In 1996, an industrious librarian by the name of Nancy Bertrand took the initiative and, with a \$500 grant from the now defunct Chemical Bank, started the Junior Friends of Uniondale Public Library. When Bertrand left the library, the Adult Programmer Stacey Smith-Brown took over the duties of supervising these teens. In 2004, I was hired as the young adult librarian and the job of supervising the group was added to my list of duties.

Uniondale is a multicultural community comprised of a majority of African-American and Hispanic working and middle class families. The teens who are members of the Junior Friends come from the community, and the programs that they choose to do for the most part reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community. For example, this year, Hispanic members of the Junior Friends made a valid point that the group has never celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, even though Uniondale's second largest ethnic demographic is Hispanic. I gave the go-ahead for the group to start planning their first "Latino Heritage Night," a celebration of the various countries and cultures within the Hispanic community.

# Junior Friends Groups

## Taking Teen Services to the Next Level

*By Syntychia Kendrick-Samuel*

The efforts of the Junior Friends group have brought widespread recognition to the group. In August 2011, the group as a whole was honored with a citation from the Town of Hempstead by Councilwoman Dorothy Goosby for their years of community service. In 2009, *Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)* honored the Junior Friends with the MVP (Most Valuable Program) runner-up title for their annual Kwanzaa Feast and Craft

program. The program involves the teens presenting a dramatic segment (original plays written by the teens) explaining the meaning of the seven principles of Kwanzaa: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). After the dramatic portion, the Junior Friends make a craft with the children present, and those in attendance are invited to partake in the

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delicious food and drink donated by the Junior Friends, which is the feast portion of the program. VOYA noted the program's "teen involvement . . . and the long-time success . . . in reaching across cultures to a diverse audience."<sup>1</sup>

Teen members have found their experience as Junior Friends most rewarding. One high school senior shared that "it broke me out of my shell . . . everyone was nice and welcoming." When describing her volunteer work, a sophomore said, "It made me love kids." An eighth grader said in regard to his volunteering as a reading mentor that "it gives experience for teaching." The group has even encouraged one teen to set her sights on librarianship. A high school senior and the current Junior Friends president stated, "Junior Friends is the first step of many to reach my goal of [becoming] a librarian." Another longtime Junior Friends member and graduating high school senior reflecting back on her years in the group said that the group has "helped me discover myself, my heritage, and my potential." Lastly, a Junior Friends alum and Howard University junior expressed his feelings about his years in the group this way: "Junior Friends was a great tool to use to build leadership skills and interpersonal skills as well as become a positive role model for younger children in the community."

## The Teens' Role

### Ownership and Responsibility

The young adults in my library's Junior Friends group upon joining are given a sense of ownership. They have to fill out a membership form and pay a nominal annual membership fee (\$1). Every year the group has nominations and elections for president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and three directors. Each

officer upon election is given a list of duties and is expected to carry out the responsibilities of their office. Officers are also expected to take the lead in volunteering for events and in setting a good example for their fellow Junior Friends in regard to their behavior at the library. As the adult and library liaison, I oversee the monthly meetings, but the president and vice president are the ones who run the meetings. This requires them to utilize their developing leadership and managerial skills to run an orderly meeting, using the agenda as an outline and maintaining the group's focus.

### Volunteering

At my library, almost all volunteers have to be members of the Junior Friends. This is a great thing. Nowadays, most students have to do community service for varying reasons. Restricting volunteer opportunities to the Junior Friends means teens must join the group and come to the meetings to sign up for community service. This has led to some great experiences for these young adults. An example is the "Together We Read" program, which pairs elementary students with Junior Friends members for one 30-minute session per week. This program is now in its fourth year and I've seen some great things happen from the teens helping children practice reading. For example, a Junior Friend named Ashley worked with a first grader who had very poor reading skills, and she made it obvious that she didn't like reading. Over the weeks they slowly but surely read *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, and when they finished the book, the little girl loved the story. She told Ashley that it "was her favorite book." In fact, a few of those younger children upon entering sixth grade have joined the Junior Friends because they want to follow in the footsteps of their mentors.

### Program Sponsorship

The Junior Friends sponsor annual programs, which helps strengthen their commitment to the library. The programs are coordinated by the Junior Friends and me or another librarian. Members of the group will do what is necessary to put on a successful program, including weeks of rehearsals, making goody bags to be handed out to children after programs, folding flyers, and more. Successful programs have included talent shows, a Black History Month performance, and the aforementioned Kwanzaa Feast and Craft and Latino Heritage Night.

### Fundraising

Sometimes when people think of fundraisers, what comes to mind is a huge gala with a lot of sparkles and buzz, but the Junior Friends take a more grassroots approach. They sell refreshments (provided by involved parents) after their programs such as the talent show or the Black History Month program. Library administration also allows them to have passive candy sales by placing the items on display at the circulation desk.

The Junior Friends have also hosted a car wash behind the library. The car wash raised about \$100, but more importantly, the teens had fun and got a chance to bond with each other while washing cars. Money from the Junior Friends' fundraising activities goes back into the library. In the past, the group has purchased furniture pieces for the teen area of the library and donated funds to the library's "Reading is Fundamental" program.

### Relationship with Friends of the Library

On paper, the Junior Friends are listed as a subdivision of our Friends of the

Library (FOL) group, but the adult Friends recognize the importance of the teens making decisions as a group and having a sense of empowerment. They allow the Junior Friends to have their own checking account, but designated members of the FOL are the ones with the authority to write checks from the Junior Friends' account. The officers of the Junior Friends attend the bimonthly FOL meetings on a rotating basis, which allows for communication between the two groups. There is also a parent liaison from the FOL whose main function is to attend the Junior Friends' meetings and to support the Junior Friends and their endeavors.

## The Library's and Your Role

### Your Supervisor/Administration's Role

A librarian who called me from a neighboring library was attempting to revitalize her TAG. This young woman was expected to do the nearly impossible: run a TAG meeting on the floor of the children's room while working alone with only a clerk as her backup. In contrast, my supervisor recognizes the importance of our Junior Friends group and understands the need for them to have an organized meeting with a librarian present. She demonstrates this understanding by scheduling two librarians to work at the youth services desk the night of the Junior Friends' meetings, thus allowing myself to oversee the meeting (held in the library's meeting room). Meeting attendance for the Junior Friends usually ranges from thirty to forty teens plus another five to ten people (younger siblings and parents).

A good supervisor will also see the Junior Friends as a source of volunteers for

library programs. In my situation, my supervisor uses the Junior Friends at her children's programs. The head of adult reference at Uniondale will also tap into the Junior Friends' pool of volunteers when needed. Using the teens to help out at the library is a sign of recognizing their value and importance as a group.

If you are in a situation where you feel that you alone are shouldering the burden of cultivating a vibrant Junior Friends group, initiate a discussion with your supervisor. Share the pros of having a Junior Friends group. Explain that it is important for you to have your supervisor's support if you are going to be successful in your endeavor. The cooperation of your supervisor is essential if you want an organized group that will have a lasting impact on library services.

Remember to adhere to library policy. Once your group starts having events or doing other great things, of course you'll keep a visual record of them. However, before you post them to the library's blog or social media page, please make sure that you have an administration-approved model release policy in place. If there isn't a policy, ask your director about it, and if it's taking a while to get one, tactfully ask and ask again. In the meantime, post those wonderful pictures in the library so that your patrons can see the great work that your Junior Friends are doing.

### Record Keeping

Record keeping can become tedious, but it is a necessary function. I'm responsible for advising the teens to sign in when they volunteer, and I have to keep track and a tally of each person's volunteer hours. I'm also constantly requested to write recommendation letters for college and scholarship applications, which takes time, but I rarely say no. I would suggest creating a volunteer sign-in book, which will help you to keep track of volunteer hours. A

spreadsheet or database containing the names and addresses of current members should also be kept. Every time a new person joins the group, I add their mailing information to a file of labels on my PC. This is necessary because I mail out meeting reminder postcards every month, and the labels are utilized for this purpose.

### No Pushovers Allowed

The librarian I talked about earlier also mentioned that in the past her TAG volunteers would decide to extend their volunteer shifts without her say-so. This is a big no-no. As the young adult librarian, you are their advocate and biggest cheerleader at the library, but you still need to maintain a professional relationship with limits and boundaries. Proper boundaries can help to alleviate any unnecessary stress as you supervise your group. I'm firm with the teens that if they sign up for a set time and if they need to switch that, then they need to get an okay from myself or another colleague first.

In addition, if they sign in for a shift, they must sign out for the time to be counted. One young man's mother was very upset that I had only two hours on record for her son, but I tried to explain to her that he didn't sign in and out, so I had no record of his time. I was out on maternity leave when he volunteered; if I had been at work, I probably would have advised him of this before it reached the point that it did. This past summer this same young man religiously signed in and out of the attendance book—lesson learned.

At the meetings, yes, the teens run it, but I'm there for a reason. I interject when necessary and I'm ever vigilant that any sort of negative behavior or words aren't allowed. Trust me, the kids will respect you for it, especially when they know that you are genuine and sincere in your words and actions.

### Notable Junior Friends Groups and TABs

Below is a list of a few Junior Friends groups that are active and well organized. I suggest that readers visit these libraries' websites for more information and tips.

**Chili Public Library, Rochester, New York, <http://www.chililibrary.org>**

The librarian who runs this group is extremely well-organized. The group is small, but they are very active, and the librarian posts their agenda and minutes online.

**East Greenbush Community Library, East Greenbush, New York, [www.eastgreenbushlibrary.org/teens/15-teentag](http://www.eastgreenbushlibrary.org/teens/15-teentag)**

I found this library to be unique because they have both a TAG and a Junior Friends' group. Usually, one finds either one or the other, but this gives teens a choice as to what type of group they'd like to join.

**East Meadow Public Library, East Meadow, New York, [www.eastmeadow.info](http://www.eastmeadow.info)**

This library has a TAB for young adults grades 8-12 and a Tween Board. The teen TAB is limited to fifteen people. According to the library's website, selection for the TAB is based on a commitment to improving young adult services. Separating the tweens from the teens is another nice idea, if that's what works best for your particular library. Limiting the TAB adds a measure of prestige to the group for the ones chosen. Their methods seem to work; East Meadow is the next town over from Uniondale, and I have seen firsthand the vibrant, exciting teen services that they offer to their patrons.

**Gates Public Library, Rochester, New York, [www.gateslibrary.org](http://www.gateslibrary.org)**

Technology is used in a smart way to promote membership for the Junior Friends of Gates Public Library. There is an online application, and the achievements of the Junior Friends are listed online, which is great for public awareness about what the group does.

**North Merrick Public Library, North Merrick, New York, [www.nassaulibrary.org/nmerrick](http://www.nassaulibrary.org/nmerrick)**

This is another local TAB group, and the teen librarian makes great use of social media to promote TAB activities and to communicate with TAB members.

query your local teens about how they feel about starting a Junior Friends group. Perhaps the teens would prefer a TAB or TAG; if that is the case, then give your youth what they want. If your teens are excited about the possibilities and opportunities that come with their membership in a group that has a major impact both organizationally and financially at the library, then go for it! Every library's culture and atmosphere is different, but each of us dedicated young adult professionals can do the best we can to get our teens involved. Hopefully, some of these points will prove beneficial to my colleagues in starting or reinvigorating their Junior Friends groups. YALS

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### Appreciation

Every year, I tally the volunteer hours, and the library generously purchases gifts for our volunteers as a token of appreciation. The gift received depends on the amount of hours volunteered. In addition, the parental liaison from the Friends of the Library to the group is always given a gift as well. Our current liaison, Elsie Souffrant, is always giving her time to bake cookies, make candy, or assemble gift baskets that we use at our fundraisers. The Friends of the Library have also established a scholarship open to graduating Junior Friends and library

employees; this is also something to consider for your library. I have worked under the leadership of two directors at Uniondale Public Library and both have always been supportive of Junior Friends' activities. Many times the current director will come to their programs, and she consistently lets the teens know that their efforts are appreciated.

### Conclusion

Would you like to start a Junior Friends group at your library? Get active and

A wise Jedi once said, “You’re going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view.” More and more, this axiom comes to mind as we work with librarians to improve our services to teens. Realizing that many of the things our teens do that drive us crazy are not, in themselves, bad behaviors and, more to the point, that engaging in those behaviors does not mean these are “bad teens,” can be liberating. Equally important is coming to understand (or perhaps remember) that everything we observe and perceive (in this case about our teens) is refracted through the lens of our own experiences, assumptions, and prejudices. Our teens enter our libraries with the weight of their individual worlds on their backs, often even heavier than their overstuffed backpacks. As librarians, we meet those teens with our own invisible baggage weighing us down. Is it surprising, then, that our teens think we are picking on them or being unreasonable? Or that we think our teens are being deliberately difficult or equally unreasonable? Much has been said in self-help circles about the futility of trying to change other people; the trick, then, is to understand where we—and our teens—are coming from and, when we need to, change our own perceptions and expectations to best serve our teens.

To be clear, we are not suggesting that everyone put on a happy face and blithely ignore what is going on if our libraries erupt into chaos. Put simply, many of the behaviors we are confronted with are, at the least, unacceptable and sometimes even criminal. These are the things that need to be dealt with clearly, quickly, and consistently. Our teens need to know what will not be tolerated in our libraries, and we’re talking about the biggies here—fighting, bullying/harassment, arson, and destroying property—and what the consequences will be for engaging in those behaviors. These

# They Don’t Leave Their Lives at the Door, But Neither Do We

## Changing Our Minds about Changing Teens’ Behaviors

*By Vikki C. Terrile and S. Michele Echols*

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are the things everyone on staff must be willing to confront and to bring to other authorities beyond the library when necessary. But we have heard everything from talking to drug dealing to laughing to sex in the bathroom described as “out of control” teen behavior. It is the vast category of “the other stuff” that our teens do in the library that we need to step back from and consider if there are other ways to view what is going on.

If we went by the laments we have been hearing lately from librarians, educators, adult library patrons, parents, seniors, strangers in stores—basically adults everywhere—we would have to conclude that teens today are behaving worse than they ever have before. This, of course, is not true, and seems to us to be the age-old attitude of adults bemoaning “these kids today” supercharged by the ease of using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to share what teens are doing with the entire world. Thus, the things that teens have always done with their friends—the risk-taking, novelty-seeking, peer-pleasing, often just plain dumb behaviors new research shows actually lead to more successful adults—which were once kept within the teen subculture, carefully hidden from the judgment of parents and authority figures—are now broadcast for all the world to see. At the same time, our entire society continues to experience dramatic changes in the ways we communicate, use public spaces, and interact with each other.

When we also consider the stresses of unemployment, home foreclosures, food insecurity, and the many other struggles families are facing because of the economic downturn of the last few years, it is not surprising that our teens may be feeling anxiety or other emotions that can lead to inappropriate behavior in our libraries. Or could it be that we, equally stressed out, are simply experiencing a shorter collective fuse? Like our teens and

their families, we are experiencing and suffering with the economy; we are overworked, our libraries are short-staffed, and for many of us, the fear of layoffs and closures is always in the back of our minds. We have spent the last few years in a near-constant attack on public service and public servants so it is no wonder that we are sometimes short-tempered or exhausted. Add to this the stresses of our own home lives and other, less obvious factors that influence our interactions with teens. We are all only human, after all, and it is our humanity, flawed and imperfect as it is, that makes us good, caring librarians for our teens.

Let's take a moment to consider where we as individuals are coming from. Consider age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic and/or racial background, religion, and political leanings—everything. Can we take a step back to consider the feelings each of these identifiers calls forward in us? Pride, perhaps, or maybe shame (maybe even that weird mix of both at the same time!). Can we step even further back, far enough to consider how these things impact how we interact with our teens? If we do this exercise honestly, with real candor and bravery, we will find that we all have little dark pockets of prejudice we are not especially proud of. It is very difficult to confront these prejudices, whatever they may look like, without feeling defensive or angry, even in the privacy of our minds, but it is essential that we acknowledge them in ourselves so that we do not act on them with our teens in damaging ways.

So when a teen engages in a behavior in our libraries, are we reacting to the behavior or to the teen? Would we be okay with that same behavior from a teen who was part of another racial or ethnic group, for example, or who didn't have green hair and piercings? In addition to our personal prejudices and experiences, there are broader power dynamics happening in our

libraries and communities that affect how we work with our teens. For example, does our staff reflect the community our library serves? Are our teens seeing people in authority and people in roles of “expert” who look like them? Or are our teens getting a subtle message that *the other* (whatever it may be) is in charge? Again, it can be difficult to become aware of this and, once we see it, to not respond with knee-jerk denial or defensiveness. But if we cannot put ourselves in our teens' shoes to look at the library through their eyes and try to see what our teens are seeing, how can we ever hope to serve them well?

When teen behaviors become problematic in our libraries, whether for staff or for other library users, it is important that we do more than simply react; it is equally essential that we do not take an isolated incident as proof that we have out-of-control teens. If one teen or group of teens has a bad day, we shouldn't expect that this is a sign of anything more than that one bad day. In the moment, out on the floor, we often don't know exactly what is causing the changes we perceive in our teens' behavior in the library. Sometimes, it is just that a new group has graduated from the children's room and is testing their (and our) limits. Sometimes, it is clear that there is one ringleader egging everyone on. Many times, however, the causes remain a mystery. *Until we look for the solution.*

How can we figure out if there really is a problem with our teens and, if so, from where it may be emanating? By *talking* to people, starting, of course, with our teens. We should always be talking to and engaging with our greater community; we need to be good neighbors. Having these ties to the community means that we have both allies and resources when real problems do arise, as well as a more holistic perspective to help us figure out when behavior changes in our teens are just a fluke or a symptom of something more

serious. Too often, we approach our teen behavior problems as though they are happening in a vacuum. Logically, if teens are acting up in the library, they are acting up in other places, too; we just need to walk beyond our front doors and engage with the community to know this.

At the same time, armed with this information, we should always be reviewing our service to make sure it works for our library users. Most of us have left the shushing days in the dust and many libraries have policies that allow cell phone conversations and eating and drinking in our libraries; these are just some of the ways we have changed to keep up with changes in society. All of our libraries have policies, some written, some unwritten, the same way our communities have laws and norms. Our teens are expected to behave in accordance with those policies, laws, and norms. Often, we insist that the teens obey rules they don't know exist and/or that we don't expect adults or kids to obey. For example, we are *always* on the teens about making too much noise but we can somehow make allowances for screaming babies and irate adults.

Sometimes, a given situation calls for bending or breaking the rules; from a customer service (or just plain *human*) perspective there are many occasions when not following procedure really is the right thing to do. We cannot help but worry as we hear about teen services across the country that somehow we as a profession have come to associate stinginess with authority. We want the teens not to take advantage of us, so we withhold a great many things—extra pens, loose-leaf paper, our approval. That fear that if we give them an inch, they will take a mile is so pervasive it totally warps our perspective. Why are we so afraid that they (teens or anyone we serve) are going to “put one over on us”? We see this especially when we talk about serving our most underserved populations,

including teens, and people who are incarcerated or experiencing homelessness; as soon as we make an exception to a policy, someone, who fancies themselves the library police, is there with a warning that “those people” are trying to play us. Well, really, so what? Isn't it better to be too generous in our service than too tightfisted?

When it comes to handling questionable teen behavior in the library, we have to decide for ourselves what we are willing to live with. What—given the limits of our spaces and our staffs—can we agree is not worth fighting over? Many of us, even as adults, can tend toward obstinacy, especially if we feel we are being treated unfairly. Teens (who often *are* treated unfairly) can be especially likely to dig in their heels and continue a behavior knowing they have been asked to stop, as a way to gain a sense of power they often can get in no other way. Then, as we realize the control of the situation is firmly in the hands of our teens, we react by digging in our own heels, determined to defend ourselves, our rules, our positions, often beyond reason.

We are well aware that what we as youth librarians can live with may be much more than our managers, directors, other coworkers, and other library users can accept. This can be both a difficult burden for us as well as an excellent opportunity. What often lurks behind adults' low tolerance for teens and their behavior is *ephebiphobia*, the phobia or fear of teenagers or youth. What is interesting about fear is that it is often described or defined as the *perception* of danger or *belief* that something is dangerous. This reinforces our assertion that much of our response to teens is more about *us* than them. Many of our supervisors, coworkers, and other adults have little interaction with teens; they believe what they see on the news, the kinds of atypical behaviors that breed fear.

We are reminded of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* when the young witches and wizards learn to best a boggart—a creature that manipulates fear—with laughter. Being able to laugh about our teens (but not laugh *at* them) requires a big step back sometimes. Like any personal struggle, it is difficult, when stuck in the middle of a problem or conflict with our teens, to see the bigger picture. Being able to take a deep breath and a step away (literally or figuratively), divorcing ourselves from the emotion of a situation, can be hugely beneficial. In many ways, when we are struggling with inappropriate or difficult teen behaviors in our libraries, we end up reacting much the way the teens are—straight from emotion.

Father Gregory Boyle, who has worked with “homies” and “homegirls” in the barrio of East Los Angeles for decades, writes about being able to delight in our youth (and the world around us). We hope that most of us have come to working with teens because of a call to it, a sense of rightness and joy. We must remember to recognize our teens as people, as children of the universe (substitute your own spiritual perspective here) who have walked their own paths of experience. We often don't know what is happening in the lives of our teens when they are not in our libraries, and if we approach them with a sense of acceptance and compassion for them *no matter what*, we will do them (and ourselves) a great service. So let's glory in the work our teens are doing to find their way and figure out who they are. Our teens are breathtaking! We just have to remember to look at them that way and then make sure other adults have a chance to see them that way, too.

Providing our teens with chances to demonstrate how wonderful and not frightening they are can help ease adult reactions to teens' behaviors and even some of the behaviors themselves. Consider having your teens meet with your director

or speak at a board meeting; work with them ahead of time to help them research and prepare their speeches or questions. We often just talk about how great our teens are to everyone who will listen (and some folks who don't have a choice!). We are advocates for our teens; we need to act as such.

When there really is a behavior that we simply cannot live with but that is not grounds for more serious intervention, there are several ways to address it. The first is a practice borrowed from educators—behavior modification. This is arguably one of the most difficult skills for new teachers to master and it really does take practice. For those of us without an education background, taking the time to understand behavior modification practices can be helpful to approaching our service to teens. An essential tenet of behavior modification is that we are trying to change the *behavior*, not the person. This is a huge distinction and one we often miss; how often do we categorize our teens into our “good kids” and our “bad kids”? Kareen Smith of the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota's College of Education describes the basic principles of behavior modification as follows:

1. Behavior is controlled by *antecedents*, events which occur before a behavior is exhibited, and
2. By consequences, that is, events which occur after a behavior is exhibited.
3. These antecedents and consequences can be changed in order to increase or decrease the chance that a given behavior will continue to be exhibited.
4. Behavior, appropriate as well as inappropriate, is learned.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of the antecedents is important to consider; we often wait too long to intervene in a situation with our teens, missing that turning point, the place where you can change the direction of a

situation and prevent it from getting worse. Also, something many teachers do that can be adapted to the public library is to have their students “create” the rules for appropriate behavior as well as what the consequences for violating those rules will be. The trick, of course, is that the teacher or librarian knows all along exactly what behaviors they want to manage and will guide the teens to include them while they are working together. With this strategy, teens gain both ownership of their space and a full understanding of what is expected of them.

Programming is also an effective way to manage teens' behaviors, including those emanating from troubles at home or school or which are more serious than being loud or disruptive. Effective programming for teens does not require as many financial resources as we may think. What it required is being strategic and having a desire to help teens overcome the societal barriers they may face. Great programs can begin by instituting a youth-led advisory council to discuss current topics and issues that concern our teens. This process of “meeting teens where they are and uplifting them to greatness” is often used in youth development and social service arenas but is also relevant for librarians working with teens. Also, we believe that most of our teens want and need adult guidance but that it must be the kind that understands them as individuals rather than groups them into one classification.

A great resource for programming that is often underutilized is partnerships. Partnering with local community-based organizations (CBOs) and government agencies can be advantageous in many ways and to everyone involved; it can also bring programming into our libraries at no cost to our own shrinking budgets. For example, most of our local governments have prevention programs for youth focusing on gang involvement, drug abuse,

or teen pregnancy; in addition, there are a growing number of CBOs that specialize in youth development springing up in many communities. Both CBOs and government agencies have trained staff members who can visit our libraries to provide free programs for our teens and/or trainings for our staff. At the same time, by working with our libraries, CBOs and government agencies can access teens they may not otherwise see through their programs. According to the Wallace Foundation, “coordination across city agencies can help municipal officials take full advantage of the expertise, resources and capacity that exist in multiple departments, from parks and recreation to local libraries,” and, as we see it, vice versa.<sup>2</sup> As librarians, we are often regarded as a resource and source of expertise for out-of-school-time and other youth-serving programs, and collectively we truly can make a difference.

The best advice we have ever heard about working with teens was pretty simple: *be kind to yourself*. We all approach our work with dedication, passion, and commitment but, like the airline passenger who needs to put on her own mask before she can help anyone else, if we don't care for ourselves, how can we serve and advocate for our teens? We have to be able to laugh at ourselves and to forgive ourselves when we are not as patient or kind as we would like to be. We need to remember to take time for ourselves, even just a few minutes a day to relax and recharge, to remember why we work with teens and why we care so much it sometimes hurts. We are always amazed and touched at how caring our teens are toward us when our librarian disguises slip and our human selves show through. Knowing that they value us, flawed and imperfect as we are, should help us be able to value ourselves just as much. YALS

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# 10 Steps To Creating a Cutting-Edge STEM School Library

*By Marina Leigh Duff*

**N**ow is the perfect time to update your school library into an engaging STEM learning zone, which will quickly become the academic nucleus of your school campus. Your cutting-edge STEM library program will be one of many to advance our traditional school libraries as they embrace the sciences and effectively respond to a zeitgeist in which young scientists and mathematicians are flocking toward STEM reading material. Fortunately, teacher librarians keep abreast of educational trends and are skilled at gathering STEM resources that support school curricula, state standards, and nationwide learning initiatives. For the past few years, there has been an increasing push for student

development in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to respond to the growing need for preparation and advancement in these career fields. Fortunately, a teacher librarian can create an effective STEM program in any school library with the usual funding and extra dedication.

We must recognize that to enter STEM career fields, students must first become successful in STEM classrooms. Just three years ago, the congressional report "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education: Background, Federal Policy, and Legislative Action" stated that the United States ranks "28th in numeracy and 24th in science literacy; thus, we are not

producing enough STEM graduates.<sup>1</sup> These numbers indicate a significant deficit in the math and science classroom; because librarians support teachers' curricula, this number also shows that librarians could create more opportunities to support STEM instruction. The school library is a large classroom with resources in all subject areas, but there must be an emphasis on the areas where students need extra tutoring, primarily math and science. Plus, technology and engineering education is often dependent upon math and science proficiency. Whether new or seasoned, librarians have the knowledge and skills to educate students about STEM and increase these math and science test scores. I have learned from several others in the field and taught myself many strategies that promote STEM awareness on a secondary school campus.

Librarians should embrace this opportunity to use their advanced training to support STEM learning and to show how essential libraries are in the digital age. In her 2009 article "Jumping onto the Bandwagon: New Librarians Navigating the Science/Technology Librarianship," engineering librarian Nedelina Tchangalova proposes that a STEM librarian can learn much about science resources without having content knowledge.<sup>2</sup> In other words, a librarian does not need a science background to run an effective STEM library, so defenestrate your fear of science and embrace the opportunity to make your library a lab of learning. She urges librarians to develop their roles as "information specialists." An information specialist can do any of the following ten steps toward creating a cutting-edge STEM library. I am always refining my STEM library at the Los Angeles Unified School District's Young Oak Kim Academy.<sup>3</sup> As you read these ideas, remember that each library is unique and only the librarian knows what will work best for his or her patrons.

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## 1. Highlight Existing STEM Resources

Create more signage to maximize visibility and draw attention to your current STEM sections. In nonfiction and reference, the 500s and 600s should have specific signage, that is, “Dinosaurs,” “Buildings,” and “Fractions.” In the periodicals section, have an area designated for STEM-themed magazines and newspapers. Consider including *National Geographic*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Current Science*, and *Wired*, among others. Create colorful and intriguing STEM book displays. For example, I currently have the parts of a PC on display in my glass case with labels of each computer part and their function, for instance, “Motherboard: This part connects all parts of the computer together.” Ask your teachers to give you samples of their STEM projects to display in your library. Some libraries have a lot of STEM resources, but patrons are not aware of them because they do not see them immediately when they walk through the door. Consequently, one must increase STEM signage and displays to attract people to these resources. As you have read, one does not have to purchase more STEM resources before transforming their space into a STEM library. Start with what you have and then begin soliciting suggestions from other stakeholders.

## 2. Request STEM Resource Recommendations

Ask students and staff, especially math/science teachers and instructional coaches, to recommend STEM books, periodicals, databases, and online program subscriptions. Most importantly, obtain STEM nonfiction books on topics that interest teens. In my library, some valuable

STEM titles include the following: *Every Bone Tells a Story* by Jill Rubalcaba, *Mr. Lincoln’s High-Tech War* by Allen Thomas, *Collapse! The Science of Instructional Engineering Failures* by Kristin Cronn-Mills, and *Kiss My Math* by Danica McKellar. Accordingly, seek out STEM books that promote project-based learning, experiments, and careers such as *Goal!: Science Projects with Soccer* by Madeline P. Goodstein and *Blood and DNA Evidence: Crime-Solving Science Experiments* by Kenneth G. Rainis.

To find out about more STEM titles, keep a “STEM Book Suggestions” box near the circulation desk for additional patron input. You can also contact other STEM librarians to ask them for recommendations. Another option is to review the last page of *Library Journal*, which displays a list of the most checked out fiction and nonfiction books for the month. Scan that nonfiction list for engaging STEM books. In an article titled “School’s Nonfiction Problem (True Story),” the *New York Times* Week in Review staff write, “Students don’t know enough about the real world because they don’t read nonfiction, and they can’t read nonfiction because they don’t know enough about the real world.”<sup>4</sup> Promoting more nonfiction reading is not just a matter of supporting STEM; it is a matter of teaching our students to understand the world by exposing them to relevant, critical texts that impact their immediate lives.

## 3. Emphasize STEM in Your Book Orders

Most school librarians work with one or two library book vendors such as Follett or Permaabound. Meet with your vendor’s representative about developing your library’s STEM collection and, thus,

including a STEM emphasis in your next large book order. Provide this representative with your staff’s requests, students’ requests, and students’ reading levels so that you may acquire the most appropriate and wanted STEM books. Obtain reading levels from the English teachers or by using data from Renaissance Place’s Accelerated Reader program.<sup>5</sup> The STEM books one chooses should accommodate students’ literacy needs and should focus on the technology, engineering, and mathematics books because there will typically not be as many in these sections as there will be for science. Buy three to five copies of popular STEM nonfiction books, so students can have more access to the content, and so they can engage in literature circles. STEM nonfiction can be appreciated, analyzed, and discussed just as meaningfully as fiction books. Students will retain more information if they are given opportunities to discuss this print material in academic settings with teacher guidance.

## 4. Keep Up with Trends in Technology

Begin creating this technology-rich environment by designing a stellar library website where you can list credible STEM online sources and organize them appropriately. Consider including links to the California Science Center website ([www.californiasciencecenter.org](http://www.californiasciencecenter.org)), NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory website ([www.jpl.nasa.gov](http://www.jpl.nasa.gov)), and Facts on File’s *Today’s Science* database, to name a few popular ones.<sup>6</sup> Make your STEM library as technology-rich as possible with software and hardware. Not only should you acquire as many desktop computers, laptops, and printers as you can, but also ask for an LCD projector, photocopy machine, iPads, iPods, and

audiobooks. In addition, make sure to have stable internet access so students can easily get to your online programs such as Accelerated Reader and ALEKS, a numeracy development program.<sup>7</sup> Teach your students how to use these programs during your orientation and at follow-up visits. It is also a great idea to start a library website, Blogger site, TeacherTube channel, and/or Visual Bookshelf to make your program more hip and interactive. In addition, two neat technology literacy programs are “Computers for Youth,” which provides a free PC desktop computer with training to all students’ families, and “Mouse Squad,” which is a technology class where a group of students learn how to run tech support on campus.<sup>8</sup> Invite this class to disseminate technology literacy in the library through student-led presentations.

## 5. Provide a STEM-Themed Library Orientation

All the science classes should participate in this “STEM Library Orientation.” Show students that science classes are welcome in the library space. At this library orientation, present information about your library’s resources using STEM examples, materials, and exercises. Show them where to find STEM fiction books, nonfiction books, reference guides, magazines, websites, databases, displays, and programs. Then have a “Resource Hunt” activity for part of your presentation in which student teams look for specific STEM books in the library, an article from Facts on File’s *Today’s Science* database that relates to their science curriculum, and a science book to check out that day. Before the orientation’s end, they should have accessed every type of STEM resource available.

## 6. Present STEM Book Talks

Pick out STEM nonfiction and fiction books to share with your students. For example, tell them about biographies of famous mathematicians and use books such as *Euclid: The Famous Geometer* by Chris Hayhurst and *Pythagoras: Pioneering Mathematician and Musical Theorist of Ancient Greece* by Dimitra Karamadides. It is best to do these booktalks with math classes so they can gain exposure to engaging books about math heroes as well as fractions, decimals, and word problems. Pick out as many math fiction and nonfiction books as possible to help make that subject come to life: *Science Verse* and *Math Curse* by Jon Scieszka are fun picture books that are good for beginning your booktalks. Choosing these types of STEM books will help your math teachers be more active participants in your STEM library program. In addition to presenting your own booktalks, show student-created booktalk videos online such as ones you may find at the Digital Booktalk website (<http://digitalbooktalk.com>).<sup>9</sup> Provide students with a worksheet to create their own STEM digital book talk. The more students read and share about STEM books, the more popular they will naturally become, as word of mouth is a great book promoter among secondary school students.

## 7. Communicate STEM Resource Reminders Regularly

There are so many ways to disseminate information about your library program: newsletters, website posts, announcements at professional development meetings, posters, bulletin boards, and “traveling libraries.” Teachers and students need to

be reminded of what STEM resources are in the library because this is still a new focus. Therefore, add a “STEM Highlights” section to your newsletter, put a news ticker on your website that promotes STEM awareness, and update your “STEM News” bulletin board frequently. Additionally, find out what units teachers are currently on and then handpick a “traveling library” of resources (books and audiovisual materials) to send to their classroom for a month. In essence, you bring the STEM library to them! No matter what unit they are teaching, add STEM nonfiction books that connect with the topic and learning goals. I suggest making a form where teachers can specify the following requests for their traveling library: unit topic, number of books and audiovisuals needed, date of delivery, length of time to use, and reading level range. In addition to expanding your STEM library outside the library walls, it is also a good idea to bring STEM people inside in meaningful ways.

## 8. Invite STEM Guest Speakers

Make connections with authors, public librarians, scientists, technologists, engineers, and mathematicians who are willing to present to young people about their college background, career experience, and perhaps how libraries played a role in their success story. Young adult authors and public librarians appreciate the opportunity to share their publications and programs with students. YA fiction writer Anna Hays gave a writing workshop to my students last year after we purchased a set of her books *Portia’s Ultra Mysterious Double Life* and *Portia’s Exclusive and Confidential Rules on True Friendship*, both of which are about a girl psychoanalytic detective. Librarian Loren Spector from

the nearby Felipe De Neve Library visits my school regularly to share new events at her library branch and to give special book talks about her STEM resources. In addition, sending an e-mail to family and friends looking for STEM guest speakers will generate good leads for connecting with people in STEM fields. I am currently arranging a visit from network engineer Ben Walker to explain his steps toward becoming a professional technologist. Students need role models in these fields who enjoy sharing their wisdom, so help make these personal connections. When possible, align these library visits with academic holidays, for instance, invite a computer programmer to visit your school for Teen Tech Week to do some guided technology-focused activities. Bring STEM education into your library through STEM experts who can make the sciences exciting. A convenient way to get guest speakers into your library is to invite math and science teachers on campus to present their STEM journey to students during their conference period. This also encourages more teacher involvement in your STEM library program.

## 9. Encourage Parent and Community STEM Involvement

Let parents and other community members know that you are transforming the school library into a STEM library, why you are doing so, and how they can help their children access STEM resources. Reach these important people through presentations, newsletters, fliers, meetings, and calls. After I complete my STEM library orientations, I invite my students' parents and guardians to a special orientation so they can also understand how to use the STEM library. Visit your school's parent center regularly to update

them on your library's resources, needs, goals, and successes. Many parents are eager to assist you and spread the word about library updates. Furthermore, they can be just as fascinated with STEM as their children.

## 10. Publish Library Data for All Stakeholders

Be transparent about your numbers to staff, students, parents, and community members. Whether the numbers are high or low, your staff and students should know how they are contributing to library book circulation and literacy success. Let them know how many books circulate each month, how many reading quizzes are passed each week, and how much fine money is generated to purchase new materials. Share this data in multiple ways: newsletters, e-mails, bulletin boards, and monthly reports to your principal. This data can help justify your funding requests to develop your STEM library.

In summary, starting a STEM program in your school library begins with a thorough identification of the STEM resources that already exist in your library. Once you know and label what you have, then it is time to obtain additional STEM resources, especially ones that are in high demand from your user populations. In a school library, it is essential to get input from your faculty and students before making large purchases. Your trusted book vendors are also great at filling in your collection needs with quality resources. As you obtain more resources, remember to develop your online presence as well. STEM websites and databases are key to our students' technology literacy. Keep STEM alive all year long by giving STEM orientations, having STEM booktalks, inviting STEM guest speakers, and

promoting STEM through your vibrant signage, engaging books displays, and exciting newsletters. Always share your library data to celebrate your success and expose your areas of challenge. STEM is an area of challenge for most schools and libraries that we may tackle together.

If we want STEM to grow in our schools, librarians need to plant the seeds in libraries today. STEM will thrive in schools if supported beyond the classroom walls. Librarians can provide excellent STEM instruction in all content areas by giving students guided access to engaging STEM books, magazines, websites, databases, experts, and programs. This access not only meets the needs of our young scientists, technologists, engineers, and mathematicians, but also it could spark untapped interest from our young historians and writers. Many students do not know the meaning of the acronym STEM, let alone its academic value. This needs to change, and it can start in school libraries. As I stated earlier, the librarian knows what the school needs. Every opportunity to support STEM should be taken if librarians intend to stay connected to curriculum, standards, and initiatives that prepare students for STEM college majors and careers. Let us deracinate our library programs from our humanities focus and re-plant our mission with a STEM-centeredness, watering it each day with ideas from students, requests from teachers, and feedback from our community. [YALS](#)

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The youth of today are the future of tomorrow. Many adults do not take teens seriously enough, figuring they care more about celebrities and the next reality TV series than real-world issues. But many teenagers today realize climate change is an issue that will hit them in the face as adults if they don't take strides to make changes today. They believe that getting into nature and not being so wasteful is important in their lives.

For evidence, check out Teens Turning Green, a student-led movement started in 2005 in the Bay Area of California that has now spread nationwide. Members of Teens Turning Green are devoted to education and to advocating environmentally responsible choices for themselves, their schools, and their communities. Teens Turning Green created Project Green Challenge, aimed at giving students thirty simple steps to become greener in thirty days. Their Project Lunch is a local effort, which could be applied at other schools around the country, bringing schools nutritious, local, organic, and unprocessed foods, as well as education. Check out their online site for toolkits and resources to help implement in other locations: [www.teensturninggreen.org](http://www.teensturninggreen.org).

Librarians can easily get involved in these activities by providing students a location to meet, resources to assist teens, and educational experiences to help them research and apply knowledge to a real-world project. Whether at a school or a public library, librarians can offer many other small and large environmentally sustainable projects and programs to teens.

## Seeds, Gardens, and Libraries

Ever heard of the Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library? It's the first of its kind to

be housed within a U.S. public library. The library's cofounder and coordinator, Rebecca Newburn, offers some ideas on how this unique library's concept could be implemented with youth in other libraries. Her Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library can assist others in getting started with the idea: check out their website's "Create a Library" page: [www.richmondgrows.org/create-a-library.html](http://www.richmondgrows.org/create-a-library.html), or contact Rebecca Newburn (who helped come up with some of the green ideas you see in this article) at [richmondgrows@gmail.com](mailto:richmondgrows@gmail.com).

Teachers in the local community can integrate saving seeds into their curriculum, such as through a biology class—a natural fit when studying

genetics—or history class, as saving seeds has been an integral part of the development of cultures over the last twelve thousand years. If you have a local community or school garden, have students save seeds and then share with the community through a school seed library. Students can research the seed and the plant and then create signage educating people about seeds, the plant, and their history. A speech class can create a marketing campaign for this project, also educating people on proper seed saving requirements and techniques. Newburn mentions that her local school garden, Hall Middle School in Larkspur, California, is organized by regions of the world, including Lost Crops of the Incas,

# Green Teen Programming

*By Beth Filar Williams*

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**BETH FILAR WILLIAMS** is the Distance Education Librarian at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is an active member of the Green Library Group and campus Sustainability Committee and has presented and written articles on greening libraries over the past several years. Beth holds a degree in geography from the Johns Hopkins University and an MLS from the University of Maryland. Previously, she worked as a library consultant for a consortium in Colorado supporting all types of libraries, and she has also been a map librarian and a middle school librarian. She blogs at <http://greeningyourlibrary.wordpress.com> and is @greenyourlib on Twitter.



MesoAmerica, Mediterranean, and more, so that each area has plants that originated in that part of the world or have been integrated into cultures of that region. The students learn about the plants, their uses, and how to save seeds from (or propagate) those plants.

A community or school garden is another great place to start. A librarian is always relevant in researching the plants and gardening information for the region. If a garden is too large a task to take on, try placing potted plants in a reading area. Use local, native plants, and include informative signage. Or simply have a plant-a-tree event with teens. Your garden or plant area can be a lovely meeting spot or reading spot. If a garden is created, teens can learn about growing foods and herbs and maybe even sell items from the garden to raise money for a trip, event, or purchase for a teen area of the library. If the library uses potted plants, why not have a plant sale and sell cuttings? For an example of a successful teen gardening program, check out Cornell Cooperative Extension Green Teen Community Gardening Programs ([www.ccedutchess.org/4h/green-teen-community-gardening-program](http://www.ccedutchess.org/4h/green-teen-community-gardening-program)), and don't miss their blog post highlighting youth and urban gardens across the country (<http://blogs.cornell.edu/gblblog/2010/03/02/youth-urban-garden-inspiration>).

### Crafts

There are an unlimited number of crafts for teen programming. Altered books are a fun creative project using discarded books. Cut out pieces of the book, use other recycled or discarded materials, and create a piece of art, perhaps with a message or a theme. Book covers could be made into a purse or notebook. The book jacket could be fashioned into a gift bag. Books could be used to create a bench or table. Let the teens be creative and see what they

develop. Simple recycled birdhouses can be created by cutting up a large plastic bottle, decorating it, and then stringing it up and filling it with birdseed.

### Teens Educating Others

Teens can take leadership roles in environmental activities. They can interview an environmental organization or person and record the interview, and then upload it to the library's teen podcast site or blog. Maybe teens would like to form a green team at the school or public library and run events or blog about green activities. The group could even look at doing an energy audit of the library, adopt a local stream or road to clean, or create videos to educate their community on being green. A wonderful example is the student-run Jasper Sustainability Club in a high school in Canada. Check out their inspiring videos at [www.youtube.com/user/JasperSCY](http://www.youtube.com/user/JasperSCY).

### Embed a Green Message

There are many existing teen programs into which librarians can embed green-themed ideas. When thinking about a program, try to find a way to give it an environmental spin. At my library, I created a large, ten-module research-to-writing tutorial and embedded a green theme. Each module opens with a video of students acting out the research process with the theme of recycling on campus, and that theme is continued throughout the tutorial. Additionally, your teen book club could have a green-themed reading and discussion. A film night could highlight an environmental issue, perhaps with a local expert to discuss how to apply lessons learned in your own community.

"Budget Friendly Ideas for Teen Read Week Programming" by Catherine Barone, offers many ideas that can be tweaked for a green focus.<sup>1</sup> For example,

using Voicethread.com, a free online site where users can post pictures and record their voices, the library's teen group can create an environmentally sustainable or nature-related story with original artwork and voiceover narration that can then be hosted on the library website. Perhaps several stories could be created and voted upon, with a winner receiving a green-themed prize. Librarians can also use Glogster.com, a site where teens create online posters with graphics and text, asking teens to post about a sustainable activity they promote or simply why they care about the future of their Earth.

### Fun Stuff

How about hosting an eco-fashion show event, or even a fundraising event, where teens use only recycled materials to create fashions? Competitions are also a fun way to get teens into environmental activities. The national Recyclemania.org competition for college campuses, where schools compete to see which institution has the highest recycling rate or can collect the largest amount of recyclables per capita, collect the largest amount of total recyclables, or generate the least amount of waste per capita, can be applied locally between schools or libraries. Some colleges offer a "Landfill on the Lawn" competition where volunteers wearing biohazard suits tackle a dumpster's worth of trash to see how many pounds of recyclable materials were headed to the landfill. Perhaps a comparison of trash in various schools can be arranged to see who has the least trash.

Green Awards is another idea for a positive spin on those being green. Teens could nominate a fellow teen for his or her environmental work and honor this "greenest teen" on the library website or at a yearly awards ceremony. The documentary *No Impact Man*, along with its creator's blog (<http://noimpactman.typepad.com>), can also engage youth, as

Colin Beavan has inspired a lot of people to reduce and track their personal environmental impacts. Perhaps showing the film to kick off a No Impact Month would encourage teens to get involved.

## Careers

Teens may not always be thinking about the future, but they are the perfect age to be inspired to strive for a green career. Green programming done by libraries can have a real-world reach, especially if you bring in green experts in your community to demonstrate, speak, or engage students on a topic. Libraries can also take it to the next level by hosting career days. School and college libraries are particularly well equipped because of their connection to a larger group of educators, but public libraries can partner with a local school or

organization to create programs with a focus on careers. Teens can take an active role in career-focused events by interviewing participants and presenters, blogging about possible careers with their thoughts, and posting information and resources, gathered with help from their librarian, for all teens to discover. Organizations such as the Green Corps (<http://www.greencorps.org>), which provides green job training for youth, can be explored for other ideas, as well as being suggested or promoted to teen interested in this line of work

## Conclusion

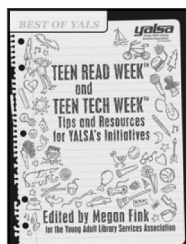
Librarians who work with youth have fantastically creative ideas to engage

teens. Start thinking about how to embed environmental messages and concepts into much of what is already being offered. Talk to your teens about their feelings and interests related to nature and the environment. Most of these ideas are not only good for the environment, but fun too! Empower them to get involved and learn. Teens are ready and willing to be environmental stewards once they have education and support. *YALS*

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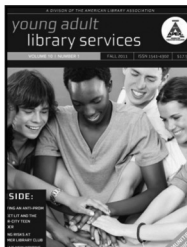
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## Finding Their Way How Geocaching Is an Adventure for All, Including Teens

*By Priscilla Suarez and  
Jennifer Dudley*

If the mere mention of the term “geocaching” has you searching through an online dictionary to find its meaning, then lemme break it to you, you are definitely a muggle. If you have heard the term “geocaching” before and are not quite confident about what in the world that techie-sounding word could

mean, then you are a muggle. If you have ever considered the possibility of geocaching but have not been adventurous enough to do so yet, then yup, you’re still a muggle. If you have no clue as to what a muggle is, shame on you; have you not picked up a *Harry Potter* book before?!

**PRISCILLA SUAREZ** forms part of the McAllen Public Library team, working at the Palm View Branch Library as a teen coordinator where she works with Hispanic youth. She has previously been published in the *Texas Teens Read!* manual and *ALA’s Cool Teen Programs under \$100*.

**JENNIFER DUDLEY** received her Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Texas at Pan American and is looking forward to starting coursework towards her MLS. Surrounded by books growing up, she seemed destined to continue the path and has worked at the Lark Branch of McAllen Public Library for ten years. She enjoys creating teen programming with one of her favorites being “This Ain’t Yo Mama’s Bookclub.” She lives in South Texas with her husband, two cats and a dog.

Not that this is an article about the realms of the *Harry Potter* world, not at all. But if you are a geocacher, you definitely get the point. And if you’re completely lost before we have even gotten started on the topic, don’t worry, it happens all the time.

You do not need to concentrate on the four cardinal directions just yet. Simply read on and learn more about this mysterious, but not really secretive, network of technology based on hide and seek hunts many teens—and librarians just like you—are becoming a part of.

### To Begin With, What in the Heck Is Geocaching?

Although geocaching is a sport generally unheard of, it has been around for over a decade with almost half a million geocaches hidden worldwide. Most would describe this adventure as a modern hybrid between a scavenger hunt and a treasure hide and seek. Though, what you are looking for is not a treasure you will get to keep, or anything materialistic, for that matter . . . but at least you can boast online about your geocache finds.

Geocaching is an outdoor activity that uses a GPS (Global Positioning System) device to not only seek but also hide waterproof containers referred to as cache that are hidden all around the world. Many have compared this sport to other activities, including benchmarking, trigpointing, orienteering, treasure hunting, letterboxing, and waymarking.

A GPS device obtains signals from satellites and can be used for many purposes, including finding currently updated maps, finding walking or driving directions to random destinations, finding current traffic conditions,

discovering popular destinations (restaurants, stores, etc.), and accessing alternative routes.

With a GPS system, anyone familiar with using a map, following directions, and using the internet has the potential to become a geocacher. Yes, that means you too. And, once you have become a geocacher, you can officially declare that you are no longer a muggle of the geocaching realms.

## What Exactly Is a Muggle?

You'd think that teens are the only ones who would enjoy referring to others as muggles, but that is not the case. Take for example, us two adults way past the point of puberty referring to you as a muggle, just to emphasize that is what you are in the world of geocaching.

In the world of Harry Potter, a muggle refers to those people who are non-magical. So, when it comes to geocaching, a muggle refers to those who are mere spectators to someone's geocaching adventures and have no clue as to what is actually occurring. In other words, a geo-muggle is a non-geocacher. According to geocaching.com, geo-muggles are "mostly harmless," but that can be disputed.

## Now That You Know What a Muggle Is . . .

You're probably wondering how teens get involved in this high-tech sport that you're not exactly sure you know how to partake in yourself. It might sound overwhelming because usually anything that sounds techie has the potential of being so, but geocaching isn't as difficult as it may sound. As long as you have a GPS-enabled device, know the

four cardinal directions and have access to the Internet, and then you're all set.

The excitement of treasure seeking is something that lasts a lifetime. Geocaching is a great activity for teens to become involved with because not only will it give them practice using coordinates and reading a map, but it may also have them researching to discover details about the local geography and history of the area they will be geocaching in.

## What Would a Teen Be Doing with a GPS Device?

Obvious question. We knew you'd bring out the tough questions! Something else that's obvious and you certainly must have noticed: many teens carry a smartphone nowadays. Through smartphones, teens have access to free GPS and geocaching apps in their marketplace. Once these apps are downloaded onto their phones, teens can easily type in their geocache destination to receive navigations and maps directing them to their desired geocache search. In other words, they simply use their phone.

Other types of GPS devices teens might use are handheld receivers, outdoor receivers, and sports receivers. We recommend trying out the GPS as a group for first-timers because it might take some practice to become acquainted with for those who have never used a navigational device before.

## How To Get Started with Your First Geocache

A web search for geocaching will point you to various free member sites with more details on this sport, as well as with

detailed maps of caches hidden worldwide. A couple of popular and easy to use sites are [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) and [www.opencaching.com](http://www.opencaching.com).

Searching for caches online is fun to map out, especially when the idea of cache seeking becomes a stakeout to keep muggles out of the loop. Not that muggles are "the bad guys," but when people are curious as to what you are searching for, they might end up snooping around after you're gone and move or take a cache from its original position—which is a bad thing. Once a cache is "disturbed," other geocachers will have difficulty finding it when it is not located at its proper coordinates. When caches are moved from their coordinates, obviously this changes the coordinates in which they will be found.

A cache generally consists of a container with a logbook that geocachers will use to sign in. Sometimes it has a trinket or "treasure" that geocachers can look at, but not remove or keep. Many caches with trinkets have a history or story behind them and are of sentimental value to its owner. Stories behind your finds can be read online once the geocacher has logged into their online account to report a found cache.

Different types of caches include the typical cache (must include a logbook for visitors to sign in their names), multicaches (after finding the first cache, the seeker will then go on to discover coordinates for other caches . . . a logbook will usually be included with the last cache), and mystery or puzzle caches (the seeker will have to solve a puzzle to find the appropriate coordinates of this cache), among many others.

Some caches may be found in hard-to-reach places such as underground spots or on top of roofs or treetops, while others are visible but can be easily overlooked when one isn't particularly searching for it. They also come in various shapes and sizes, some smaller than your pinky fingernail and others the size of your car.

When going on a hunt, it is wise not to use your fanciest clothes because you might end up hiking, climbing, jumping, digging, or crawling to reach your cache.

With all the thousands of caches out there, the challenge is on!

### Geocaching Terminology Is Fun To Use around Muggles!

Not only are you using abbreviations and slang words, but most people won't understand what you are saying. Some of our favorites, which we found on the [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) website are BYOP (Bring Your Own Pencil), CITO (Cache In Trash Out . . . which also happens to be an environmental approach to geocaching, cleaning up the area you have visited for a cache), Ground Zero or GZ (when you have reached the exact location of a cache), Muggle (taken from the *Harry Potter* series, and is referring to someone who's not a geocacher), and TFTC (Thanks For The Cache, which is usually written into the logbook when a geocacher has truly enjoyed the cache).

### Books To Promote!

The best part about geocaching is that you can easily incorporate many books to fit into the theme of road trips, outdoor sports, technology, vacation destinations, photography, and treasure hunts, among others. Our favorite books to share are *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Geocaching* by the

staff of [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com), *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives: An All-American Road Trip*. . . *With Recipes* by Guy Fieri and Ann Volkweil, *Local Treasures: Geocaching Across America* by Margot Anne Kelley, and *4-H Guide to Digital Photography* by Daniel Johnson.

You can also easily set up a display with geocaching resources available at your library, such as atlases and maps.

### Add a Craft and Add a Personality to Your Program

While introducing teens and other muggles to the world of geocaching, have them prepare a craft that could come in handy in their endeavors. Crafts you might have teens prepare include personalized geocaches and logbooks.

To prepare the personalized geocaches, provide teens with old containers (such as Pringles pop cans, peanut butter jars, or water bottles) and have teens decorate them with glitter, permanent markers, tempera paint, or other art supplies. Don't worry about this being too much of an expense because you will most likely be using materials that are already handy at your library. Likewise, for the logbooks, teens can decorate notebooks using old magazines, construction paper, glue, glitter, paint, and more. These books will serve as their personal logbook or journal for keeping track of their geocaching experiences.

### Not Your Typical Approach to Technology for Teens

Sure, technology can be found in sports, what with score boards, announcement speakers, lighting, televisions, and such. But when one thinks of sports, one doesn't generally think of an activity concentrated around technology. It is pretty safe to say that when one thinks of an activity focusing on technology, one imagines a teen sitting in front of a computer screen playing online games that challenge their minds. Doesn't sound too sporty-like. But then again, times have changed.

With geocaching, you will see those teens in front of a computer researching their caching destinations, but you will also later have them in the outside world and will be getting them out of their seats for a bit of sunshine. You are providing teens with a manner in which to combine the best of both worlds, technology and recess.

Additionally, introducing teens to the world of geocaching not only allows them to learn techniques and tricks of using navigational devices to coordinate their finds but also provides them with a challenge they can share with their families, as well as letting them know about resources readily available at their local public and school libraries that are not traditionally used for educational outings.

In short, don't be a muggle! Get your library and your teens to give geocaching a try. YALS



We all know that teens and cell phones are a ubiquitous sight in our libraries and our communities. Usage has grown tremendously and continues to move in an upward direction. In October 2010, Nielsen reported that “94 percent of teen cell phone subscribers self-identify as advanced data users, turning to their cell phones for messaging, Internet, multimedia, gaming and other activities like downloads.” Usage by teens has increased fourfold and is the largest jump among all age groups. According to Nielsen, “Teens are not only using more data, but they are also downloading a wider range of applications. Usage of the mobile web has also surpassed activity on pre-installed games, ringtone downloads and instant messaging.”<sup>1</sup>

YALSA’s first annual Teen Tech Week (TTW) took place in 2007. Since then, YALSA has made an effort to highlight the different ways that librarians are using technology to provide teen programs and services. Over the years, I have read with interest about technology projects and I knew that I wanted to somehow use technology to highlight books and promote reading to teens during the 2010 Summer Reading Program.

So it was with this aim in mind that I created a mobile website that featured booklists for middle school and high school students. We like to call the mobile site an “app” because it was styled to look like an app and utilized some basic graphic effects to make the user feel as if it was more than just an ordinary website.

The mobile site also gives users access to a directory of our 54 member libraries, access to the online catalog, and access to their library account. It works very well on Apple and Android mobile devices.

## The Planning

I knew that I wanted to reach teens in a mobile environment. At the time (January

2010), I had personally owned an iPhone for about a year, and loved it. It was easy to use, and frankly, it was a lot of fun. There were many apps available for it and many of them were either free or inexpensive. While Google’s Android operating system for smartphones was released in 2007, there were still few phones available to use it and few apps to download. I knew that *some* teens had iPhones and I also knew that the market would only grow over the next year or two for both Apple *and* Android products. I wanted to reach out to teens on the devices that they were currently using, and could also be using in the future - an emerging market.

I did a search of the app store for anything related to libraries and pulled up less than five choices, none of which were any fun! I wondered, where was all the fun stuff? I really wanted to create a book-based app for the iPhone. However, that was

easier said than done. I knew nothing about how to develop an app and knew that it would be difficult to do and get it approved by the Apple Store, which has a very stringent acceptance policy for apps. It was a daunting project. My colleague, Mike Morea, Manager of Electronic Resources for our library system (who handles our IT projects) was willing to help, although he also had no experience with any of the programs available to create an app. We looked at several tools that were available at that time, some of which were still in beta: Sweb Apps (<http://www.swebapps.com>), MyAppBuilder (<http://myappbuilder.com>), BuildAnApp (<http://www.buildanapp.com>), eBookApp (<http://ebookapp.com>), and GameSalad (<http://gamesalad.com>). Many of them required a big learning curve and, even though I had allocated funds for this, many of them were beyond my budget.

# Creating a Mobile Booklist “App”

*By Renee McGrath*

**RENEE MCGRATH is the Manager of Youth Services for the Nassau Library System in Uniondale, NY. In her position, she is responsible for consulting, advising, and supporting the youth services librarians that work in the 54 member libraries of Nassau Library System. She has presented at local, state, and national library conferences on many topics related to serving children, teens, and their families in a public library. She has served as a member of the Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults Committee and is currently serving on the Newbery Award Selection Committee.**

In June 2010, I attended a webinar with Tutor.com on social media. We talked a lot about how we were using the new 2.0 tools to promote our libraries to teens. They also highlighted a number of libraries who had great teen blogs or websites. After the webinar, some of us stayed on chatting. Mary Hastler, from the Harford County Public Library, talked about her “app” that they had created for the library. I was deep in the midst of my research and feeling more discouraged as the days went by. It was already the start of summer and I had not found anything that I thought would work for me.

I was really impressed with Harford’s “app.” I asked Mike to take a look at it. What he found was that their “app” was really not an application but a mobile website. I had a little experience with them – my daughter’s school, Adelphi University, had just rolled one out, and some of the shopping websites I liked were beginning to experiment with them too. Mike thought that we would be able to model our site after Harford’s. That was really good news and surprising! It really looked like an app to me and functioned very much like one too. The best news was that I wouldn’t have to develop an app from scratch nor would I need to get approval from the Apple Store. As a bonus, it seemed to work well on both Apple and Android platforms. This would also allow us to gain all of the advantages of a mobile platform while simplifying the development and maintenance process. I was really excited to get started.

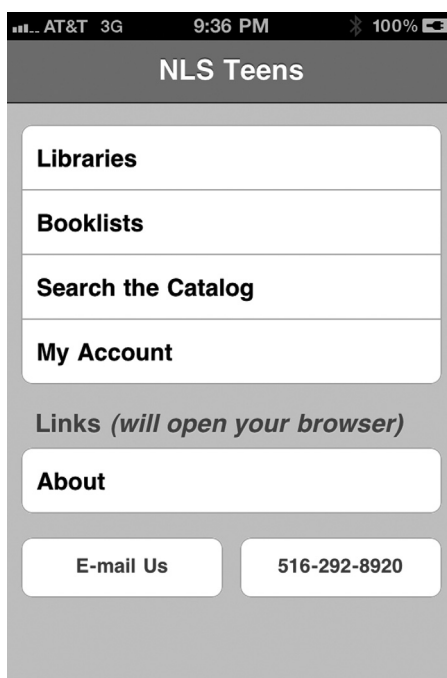
I had just completed a big project of updating all of our graded booklists for children and teens, so I had a brand new middle school and high school booklist. I went the traditional route and printed and sent copies out to our libraries. I also put the booklists on our traditional website so that an individual library could print more when needed. But I saw this as a way to promote reading and books through technology, something that I knew we had to start doing. It would also be an easy way to and revise and update the lists as needed.

Mike built the mobile website by using Harford’s model and creating the html files that we would need. He took the two booklists and collected the URLs for the printed book records in our ILS. He also checked if we owned the e-book or e-audiobook version in our Overdrive collection. All of the books were entered in html in such a way that a user could select a book off of the list to view the details, or they could flip through each book one at a time.

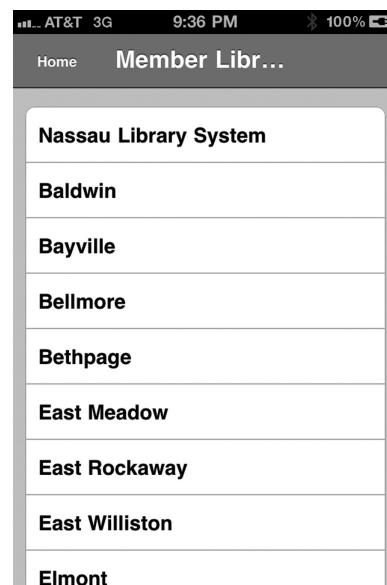
In addition to the booklists, I created an html directory of our member libraries. The directory provides users with each library’s hours, address, phone number, and website. Each of the 54 libraries sets its own hours, so it took a lot of time to compile the individual data. However, this file doesn’t need a lot of revision.

To access the mobile website for the first time, you need to open a web browser on a smartphone and type in the address: [www.nassaulibrary.org/teenreads](http://www.nassaulibrary.org/teenreads).

This will open a screen that looks like this:



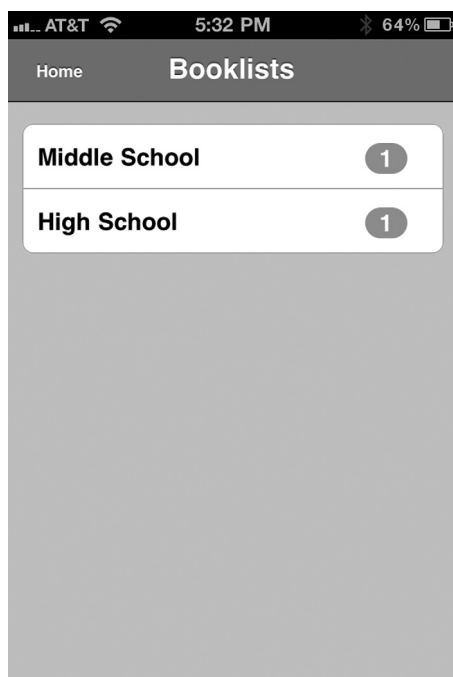
As you can see, the four main choices are Libraries, Booklists, Search the Catalog, and My Account. To access the website in the future, you can add an icon to your home screen which will open the site to this screen.



If you click on “libraries,” it brings you to an alphabetical list of all 54 member libraries.



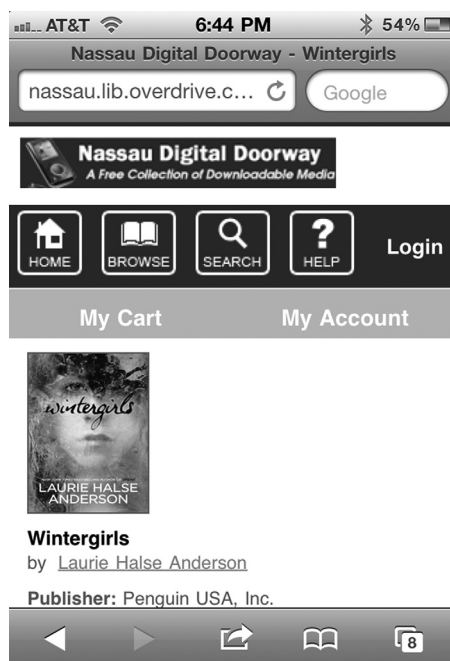
Choose Baldwin, and you are taken to a screen that has the library's hours, address, phone number, and website. From this screen there is one-touch ability to call or e-mail the individual library. The address link brings you to a google map of the location. This is a good example of how easy it can be to change and/or revise information. We kept a copy of the html file with everyone's summer hours. So, depending on the time of year, we flip the files to reflect summer or regular hours.



If you choose *Booklists* from the main screen, you will get a choice of either the Middle School or High School booklist.



The High School booklist is seen here. You can scroll through a list of the 48 titles. This makes accessing the booklist from any point very easy.



Choosing *Wintergirls* brings you to this screen. There is a picture of the cover and a short annotation. There is also a link to search the catalog to see which library owns it, and (if we own them) a link to check out either the e-book or e-audiobook from our Overdrive collection.

I'm willing to share the html file with anyone who would like it. It will give you a template from which to start your own mobile site. I've had great feedback on the mobile site and it's also led me to develop goals for the future for this type of project. I'd like to find ways to:

- Promote it to librarians and the teens they serve.
- See more activity on the site.
- Find more librarians integrating teen booklists into the mobile sites they develop.

Our mobile site has been a really good first step in reaching out to teens on the devices that they use. Now we have to keep the momentum going. And I'd still like to develop a book-based game app. :) YALS

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# Cyberbullying and Teens

## What YA Librarians Can Do to Help

*By Denise E. Agosto,  
Andrea Forte, and  
Rachel Magee*

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As most young adult (YA) librarians know, many of today's teens spend nearly as much time interacting online as they spend interacting in the physical world. Teens use social media to extend the activities taking place in their face-to-face social lives: socializing online with friends, family, and romantic interests; discussing music, fashion, movies, and schoolwork; and fulfilling intellectual curiosity. Above all, social network sites (such as Facebook and Twitter) and other forms of mediated communication (such as texting via cell phones) provide teens with shared spaces for interaction and communication with known—and sometimes unknown—groups of people.

There has been a lot of coverage in the popular press about the prevalence of social media in teens' lives, and a lot of this coverage has depicted social media environments as dangerous places where sexual predators and criminals lurk in wait of innocent young victims. The result has been widespread panic among teachers, parents, and even some librarians, who worry that these environments are unsafe. With the intention of "protect[ing] children from sexual misconduct," the state of Missouri has even gone so far as to make it illegal for teachers and students to interact via social media.<sup>1</sup>

However, hype and data sometimes tell divergent tales, and in reality, the risk of encountering sexual predators and pedophiles in online social networks has been found to be relatively small.<sup>2</sup> As a whole, research is converging to suggest that although there are indeed privacy and security risks associated with social media use, they are not markedly higher than the risks of most everyday activities in the offline world.<sup>3</sup>

Although the risks of encountering sexual predators via social media are relatively small, a much more widespread threat to teens' online security is online aggression by their peers, or "cyberbullying." Cyberbullying is increasingly common online, and its harms are very real. In extreme cases, it can lead to reduced academic performance, emotional distress, reduced self-esteem, and a range of other negative mental and physical health effects. Severe and sustained cyberbullying attacks have even been linked to increased incidence of adolescent suicide.<sup>4</sup>

With their focus on digital information resources and on technology education, public and school librarians are well positioned to help reduce the occurrence of cyberbullying among teens. This article will explain what we know from the research about cyberbullying and what YA librarians can do to help stop it.

## What Is Cyberbullying and How Frequently Does It Occur?

Just as the activities that take place in social media environments are extensions of teens' face-to-face daily social interactions, cyberbullying is an electronic extension of more traditional face-to-face bullying practices. Perhaps the most useful definition for YA librarians is the one suggested by Nancy Willard of the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use (<http://csriu.org/>).<sup>5</sup> She has defined cyberbullying as "being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies."<sup>6</sup> She also provided a useful typology of eight categories of specific cyberbullying behaviors:

1. **Flaming**, or engaging in arguments using angry and offensive language.

2. **Harassment**, or sending repeated frightening and/or offensive communications.
3. **Denigration**, or posting false information to try to damage a person's reputation or relationships.
4. **Impersonation**, or pretending to be someone else online and causing mischief using the stolen identity.
5. **Outing**, or revealing another person's secrets or embarrassing information online.
6. **Trickery**, or tricking someone into revealing private information and then revealing it online.
7. **Exclusion**, or deliberately excluding a person from an online group.
8. **Cyberstalking**, or using online media to stalk and frighten someone.<sup>7</sup>

YA librarians should familiarize themselves with these eight types of aggressive online behaviors and watch for them in their interactions with teens.

As for the question of how frequently cyberbullying occurs, it's nearly impossible to pin down an exact rate of the frequency of cyberbullying, both because definitions of cyberbullying vary and because many—even most—incidents go unreported. Researchers have reported wide variance in rates, from 4 percent to 46 percent of online youth experiencing or engaging in cyberbullying.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of the exact rate, it is safe to say that most active users of social media will at some point encounter aggressive behaviors online.

## Which Teens Are the Most Likely to Become Cyberbullying Victims?

In general, teens who are at risk in other areas of life are the mostly likely to engage in cyberbullying, either as victims or as cyberbullies themselves. At-risk teens are those "who face major ongoing challenges

related to personal mental health and disruptions in relations with parents, school [employees], and/or peers."<sup>9</sup> This claim is supported in the research literature. Based on a review of the cyberbullying research, Biegler and boyd concluded that teens who are likely to be bullying targets in the offline world are in fact the most vulnerable in online environments.<sup>10</sup>

Engaging in risky online behaviors also leads to increased cyberbullying victimization. Sengupta and Chaudhuri found that a range of demographic and behavioral characteristics are correlated with the likelihood of experiencing cyberbullying (aggressive behavior by a previously known antagonist) and harassment (aggressive behavior by a previously unknown antagonist).<sup>11</sup> Significant risk factors include "the amount of information [teens] disclose in the public domain, the way they use the Internet (privately or publicly), and the manner in which they interact with people online."<sup>12</sup>

## Which Teens Are the Most Likely to Become Cyberbullies?

Just as the victims of aggressive behaviors are typically the same teens both online and offline, the same is true of cyberbullying perpetrators. For the most part, teens who exhibit aggressive and antisocial behaviors in the face-to-face world are more likely to engage in aggressive and antisocial behaviors online. For example, Ang and Goh found lower levels of empathy to correlate with increased incidences of cyberbullying activities.<sup>13</sup> Decreased empathy has also been correlated with increased face-to-face aggressive social behaviors. Based on a meta-analysis of the broader field of cyberbullying research, Tokunaga concluded that psychosocial, affective, and



academic problems are the strongest predictors of cyberbullying victimization.<sup>14</sup> The strong connection between online and offline bullying tendencies means that to be the most effective, cyberbullying and traditional bullying education and intervention programs should be combined, and they should focus on identifying and helping teens with social, emotional, and academic problems.

### What Can Librarians Do to Help?

Researchers generally agree that educating young people is key to increasing their online safety and privacy, and this is particularly true for cyberbullying prevention.<sup>15</sup> As Anderson and Sturm wrote: “Educating teens about cyberbullying can help victims realize that the aggression is not their fault. Future cyberbullying can be minimized if they learn how to recognize the attacks, how to deal with them, and how to stop the bully from contacting them in the future.”<sup>16</sup> YA librarians can provide active assistance in reducing cyberbullying among teens by setting up formal and informal cyberbullying workshops, classes, and other educational interventions.

In general, intervention programs should emphasize prudent online disclosure of personal information, positive online social interaction, online empathy, and the importance of good communication channels for reporting online aggression. More specifically, it’s important to teach teens several things:

- *That threatening messages, images, videos, and other materials posted online as jokes or games can become dangerous or damaging to others.* Teens should be taught to avoid posting or sending any potentially threatening content, even in jest, and they need to understand that such actions could lead to school

suspension, revocation of public library privileges, or even arrest.

- *Never to share their account passwords with anyone other than their parents or guardians.* Even the closest of friends sometimes have arguments with each other, and angry friends can use each other’s accounts to post or send embarrassing, untrue, and even unlawful material in their friends’ names.
- *To limit the amount of personal information they post online.* Personal information gives potential bullies fodder for aggressive behaviors and increases the security and privacy risks of online interactions.
- *To periodically review their privacy and safety settings on their social network sites, cell phone, and other social media accounts, generally choosing the most restrictive settings.* The companies that host these services often change their safety and security policies, and users need to know at all at times just how much of their personal information is publicly available.
- *How to take appropriate action if they witness threatening behaviors online.* Willard suggested that adults should “develop effective teen ‘bystander strategies’ to encourage teens to provide guidance and assistance to peers and report online concerns to adults.”<sup>17</sup> Peer witnesses, or “bystanders,” can be highly effective in reducing or stopping cyberbullying, provided that they know how best to intervene.
- *About the importance of reporting cyberbullying attacks to appropriate adults.* Schools and libraries should appoint staff members as officials for reporting and dealing with aggressive online behavior, and appropriate policies for handling cyberbullying incidents need to be in place and communicated to faculty, students, and staff at all levels. For

attacks that occur at home, teens should be encouraged to report incidents to parents/guardians, school officials, librarians, or other responsible adults.

Educating teens is key to reducing cyberbullying, but educating parents, teachers, administrators, and other influential adults is also important. Again, as experts in technology and technology education, school and public librarians are well positioned to provide this kind of education in the form of in-service workshops, after-school classes, and public education programs through public libraries.

### Laws and Policies Regulating the Reporting of Cyberbullying

Although the best defense against cyberbullying is educating teens beforehand to prevent it from occurring in the first place, when online aggression does occur among teens, most librarians are required to report it. Laws and policies requiring school and public library employees to report cyberbullying vary from state to state and from institution to institution, but the general trend is toward stronger requirements. In New Jersey, for example, the new “Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights” requires all New Jersey public schools to adopt detailed anti-bullying policies, to provide staff education and training, and to follow strict new requirements for reporting all online and offline bullying incidents.<sup>18</sup> It’s important for YA librarians to be familiar with relevant local laws and policies and to know what official actions must be taken when these incidents do occur.

### Education Is Key

Widespread education about the kinds of dangers that young people are likely to

encounter online is a critical need, and librarians, parents, educators, and teens themselves need to be a part of this conversation. Ironically, policies like the Missouri effort to isolate young people from teachers and other adults may be leaving young people more vulnerable to aggression. And critics of the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights say that it goes too far and will serve to inflate even small incidents that would best be handled through conversations with students.

The true effects of these new pieces of legislation remain to be seen, but both the Missouri and New Jersey laws address online aggression after the fact. More effective and much more beneficial for teens is focusing on eliminating online aggression *before it occurs*. As Boyd and Marwick explained:

Interventions must focus on positive concepts like healthy relationships and digital citizenship rather than starting with the negative framing of bullying. The key is to help young people feel independently strong, confident, and capable without first requiring them to see themselves as either an oppressed person or an oppressor.<sup>19</sup>

School and public librarians are perfectly positioned to become positive, preemptory forces in the struggle to end cyberbullying and other online aggression among teens. It all comes down to educating teens and key adults to become smarter, safer users of social media and to respect each other—and themselves—online.

## Program Ideas and Inspiration

Here are some ideas for cyberbullying programs in both public and school libraries:

StopBullying.gov has a wealth of resources for those interested in developing

programs and initiatives aimed at preventing bullying and cyberbullying. This organization's Stop Bullying Now campaign includes a Teen Leaders Toolkit ([www.stopbullying.gov/teens/stand\\_against\\_bullying/youth\\_leader\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.stopbullying.gov/teens/stand_against_bullying/youth_leader_toolkit.pdf)), which could be used to introduce these concepts to your teen advisory board or teen volunteers, and to provide them with a potential project structure to raise community awareness. Suggested projects include a video or public service announcement (a potential tie-in for Teen Tech Week), a mural, or a skit, or a play. If a full project might be difficult to complete, engaging your teens in a discussion about how to recognize bullying and cyberbullying and how to respond, and then writing a group pledge against bullying, could be a great start.

Similarly, the Centers for Disease Control have the STRYVE project, described online at [www.safeyouth.gov/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.safeyouth.gov/Pages/Home.aspx). STRYVE stands for Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere, and it takes a public health approach to preventing violence. This project includes videos that discuss several issues: "Look for Warning Signs," "Understand Youth Violence," and "Protect Your Community." These videos are available online at [www.safeyouth.gov/Training/Pages/Training.aspx](http://www.safeyouth.gov/Training/Pages/Training.aspx). These videos could serve as a framework for a community-wide program for teens, their families, and other invested community members to start a wider discussion.

StopBullying.gov also includes an evidenced-based program guide ([www.stopbullying.gov/community/violence\\_prevention/index.html](http://www.stopbullying.gov/community/violence_prevention/index.html)). This is a list of programs with an approach based on research findings, and it can provide models for local programs. A number of these structured anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying programs are coordinated for educational settings, and some charge for materials. Consider contacting your local

schools to see whether they are using any of these approaches, or getting your school's administration on board to investigate these as an option. This can be an important step in developing a community response to bullying and cyberbullying.

At a larger community level, one inspiring approach comes from Monroe County in New York. This community developed a Bullying Prevention Task Force that included parents, educators, law enforcement officials, mental health professionals, and other invested adults.<sup>20</sup> This group conducted conferences and provided anti-bullying materials to teens, developed a website and conducted a local poster contest, with winners displayed on local billboards. Your library could hold a similar poster contest and display the winners in the building, but any of these elements could be adapted to your community depending on available time and resources.

If time and resources are in short supply, consider some of these passive program ideas. Share tips on how to prevent bullying on a handout or bookmark where teens can find them (see [http://stopbullying.gov/topics/cyberbullying/young\\_people/index.html](http://stopbullying.gov/topics/cyberbullying/young_people/index.html) for specific tips for teens on how to deal with cyberbullying). You could also consider book displays including books with characters who deal with bullying. The Pacer Center's Teens Against Bullying website has a list of reading for both middle and high school aged youth that provides inspiration, available at [www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/#/resources/heavy-reading](http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/#/resources/heavy-reading).

## Where to Go for More Information

If you are interested in learning more, consider some of the following resources. The National Crime Prevention Council

has a topic Web page on cyberbullying that includes resources for parents and teens, as well as reproducible tip sheets (accessible at [www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying](http://www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying)). It also provides a PDF document with statistics and tips for preventing cyberbullying before it starts ([www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/bullying/cyberbullying.pdf](http://www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/bullying/cyberbullying.pdf)). The Anti-Defamation League has an extensive site defining cyberbullying, linking to news stories about cyberbullying, and providing free materials and lesson plans ([www.adl.org/cyberbullying/](http://www.adl.org/cyberbullying/)). The Stop Cyberbullying ([www.stopcyberbullying.org/](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/)) site from Wired Kids has pages designed for young people ages in various age groups, as well as specific pages for parents, teachers, and law enforcement. Finally, We Stop Hate (<http://westophate.org/>) offers a collection of short videos featuring teens telling their bullying and social aggression stories to help other teens deal with bullying and related self-esteem issues.

YALSA's online resources can also be useful for librarians interested in finding ways to help teens become more constructive users of social networks and other technologies. For example:

- "Teens and Social Media in School and Public Libraries: A Toolkit for Librarians and Library Workers" ([www.ala.org/yalsa/handouts](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/handouts)) discusses the educational benefits of social media use in schools and libraries and provides librarians with tips for talking to teens, community members, and legislators about social media.
- "Social Media: A Guide for Teens" ([www.ala.org/yalsa/handouts](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/handouts)) is a printable, two-page overview of social media and of some of the privacy and security considerations that teens need to take into account when using social networks and other social technologies.

- "30 Positive Uses of Social Networking" ([www.leonline.com/yalsa/positive\\_uses.pdf](http://www.leonline.com/yalsa/positive_uses.pdf)) gives librarians suggestions for using specific types of social networks and other social technologies in library settings.

Finally, librarians might find several full-length books to be useful guides to incorporating social media into library programs and services. These include:

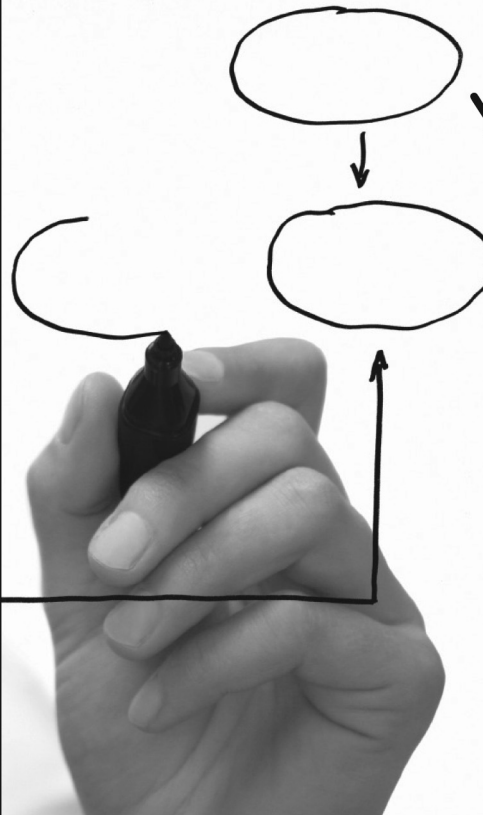
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## YALSA's Research Resources

- 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](http://www.tinyurl.com/yaresearchers))
- Apply for the \$1,000 **VOYA/YALSA Frances Henne Research Grant** ([www.ala.org/yalsa/awards&grants](http://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](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)



## STEM, Teens, and Public Libraries

### It's Easier than You Think!

*By Holly Anderton*

**B**efore delving into the assimilation of STEM in teen library services, it's important to establish exactly what STEM is. STEM is officially an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math. There are also other versions of the same concept floating around. For example, one might append "medicine" to the end of the acronym to create STEMM. Rhode Island School of Design created a website <http://stemtosteam.org>, to promote the idea of adding arts to the emphasis on STEM education. For the purposes of this article, we will consider STEM only, assuming that medicine fits into the broader term of science.

#### Why STEM?

STEM is in the national pedagogical zeitgeist, so promoting it in your libraries will keep you at pace with the national dialogue on education. Everyone, from Obama to Elmo, is talking about STEM these days. The White House's STEM coalition writes on its website: "In 2009, President Obama set an ambitious goal: to move U.S. students from the middle to the top of the pack in math and science achievement over the next decade."<sup>1</sup> Obama and Elmo are promoting STEM education because the United States currently faces a shortage of skilled

workers in the science, engineering and technology sectors.<sup>2</sup>

We know STEM is important to education, but thinking about STEM in the library can be daunting. We spend so much time on readers' advisory and working to make books appealing, but we don't always think about including web resources or nonfiction into our readers' advisory or other responsibilities. But even the most die-hard liberal arts majors need not fear. You don't have to have a Ph.D. in chemistry to better serve the teens, parents, and educators in your community who are hungry for STEM. You are supporting schools and parents by explicitly offering and promoting these resources.

#### How It All Started for Us

The teen staff of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh began our endeavor to consciously integrate STEM resources in 2009. The library applied for and received a generous grant from J.B. Finley Charitable Trust and Elizabeth Shiras Charitable Trust through the PNC Charitable Trust Grant Review Committee. The purpose of the grant was to build and promote the library's STEM nonfiction collection to better serve middle and high school students. This grant allowed us to purchase items for many different collections housed throughout the entire system. At the main library; the teen department; the Job, Career, and Education Center; and the film and audio department all collected materials within the grant parameters. In addition, all neighborhood locations received new STEM materials. We also had funds to add STEM resources to our website and to create print promotional materials, such as booklists and posters.

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**HOLLY ANDERTON** is the Manager of Teen Services at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh-Main. She is a past chair of YALSA's Intellectual Freedom Committee and is now working with her esteemed colleagues to facilitate Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's second STEM grant, generously donated by the Alcoa Foundation and the Anne L. and George H. Clapp Charitable and Educational Trust.



## Collections

Staff had one year to collect STEM items with the grant funds. The team chosen to collect had years of experience with nonfiction written for middle or high school audiences. Luckily, as the publishing industry has seen growth in young adult fiction, so has young adult nonfiction experienced growth. STEM subject books series such as *The Manga Guide to...* (with individual titles such as *Calculus* and *Electricity*) from No Starch Press 2009, and standalone titles such as *Why Pi* by Johnny Ball (DK Publishers, 2009) appeal to teens with their colorful graphics and website like graphic design. In our Job, Career, and Education Center, series such as *Careers in Focus* (Ferguson Publishers) offer a contemporary look at fields like chemistry, engineering, and the internet. The grant also allowed for the collection of nonfiction documentary DVDs on scientific and mathematical topics and career fields. These have been of use to local classrooms.

We recognized going into the project that STEM materials in library collections tend to become outdated quickly, and so the items will be reviewed with regularly scheduled deselection projects. Carnegie Library is also committed to continuing to seek additional grant funding to continue to supplement our materials budget in order to keep new STEM materials on the shelf.

## Web

The STEM web pages on Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Teens site were divided into subjects and careers. Topics were further subdivided by discipline area or career field. Twenty-four booklists and one DVD list are available, with titles such as "Science Fairs" and "Animal Careers." We also have web pathfinders with website lists under headings such as "For Girls" and "Pittsburgh STEM."

We often direct teachers and students to the web pages, and the URL (<http://carnegielibrary.org/STEM>), is listed on all related promotional materials. We work with our information technology department to track use of the pages. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Digital Learning Librarian leads a website committee made up of teen services staff from throughout the system, and together they are responsible for updating the web pages.

Our creative services department created a specific logo for STEM-related web pages and print promotional materials. Branding the grant-funded activities helps the new materials and resources stand out among other library initiatives. We created multiple types of printed pieces: a trifold booklist and a small bookmark with general information, as well as eleven- by eighteen-inch posters.

## Promotional Materials

Our creative services department created a specific logo for STEM-related web pages and print promotional materials. Branding the grant-funded activities helps the new materials and resources stand out among other library initiatives. We created multiple types of printed pieces: a trifold booklist and a small bookmark with general information, as well as eleven- by eighteen-inch posters.

## Grant Project Outcomes

- Because of our ability to purchase new and attractive STEM materials, the science and math subject books in the teen department saw a 50 percent increase in 2010. Circulation has remained steady in 2011.
- The project was featured in *School Library Journal's* September 2010 issue, as well as the fall 2010 edition of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh newsletter, *New Chapter*.
- In September 2010, staff sent STEM posters, along with fliers and booklists, to every public and private middle and high school in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.
- STEM brochures have been handed out at teen department events such as the Mayor's Youth Council's Paving the Pathway to the Future. This event featured a panel of admission and financial aid officers discussing the

college application process with high school students.

- The STEM web project and library materials were also the subject of blog post on <http://clpteensburgh.wordpress.com> in August 2010, a month that drew more than two thousand visits to our blog.
- The STEM web pathfinder was visited only an average of eight times per day in August 2010. After our *School Library Journal* article and materials mailing in September, visits shot up to about one-hundred per day. The pages most often visited include "Science Fair Resources," "STEM Careers," and "STEM for Girls."

## Easy Ways to Integrate STEM into Public Library Work

### 1. Booktalk STEM

The next time you visit a school, take a fun STEM-related book, like *101 Things You Wished You'd Invented—And Some You Wish No One Had* (Richard Horne and Tracey Turner, Walker and Co. Publishers, 2008), or *The Book of Potentially Catastrophic Science* (Sean Connolly, Workman Publishers, 2010). This will introduce students to the STEM resources at your library and let their teacher know you have a well-rounded collection.

### 2. Promote Your STEM Program to Educators and Parents

Include information about teen STEM books, resources, or programs in your library's newsletters and promotional materials that are directed toward adults. Visit your local schools' parents night, open house, or orientation with STEM information in tow.

### 3. Create STEM Booklists and Include STEM-Related Items in General Booklists

Creating booklists will help you learn more about the STEM books that you already own. Keep the lists close to the desk for easy reference, and be sure to annotate to generate user interest.

### 4. Advertise STEM Resources on Your Blog or via Other Social Media Tools

If you post regularly, you might devote a day of the week or month to STEM-related materials.

### 5. Apply for a Grant

As Linda Braun writes in her article "The Lowdown on STEM," with a "great variety of funding available, youth librarians have a good shot at finding a funding source just right for a teen project in development or on their library's wish list."<sup>3</sup> She recommends checking out <http://stemgrants.com>. A note on grants: because we, as librarians, are already stretched so thin, when you apply, try to get funding specifically for staff time.

### 6. Involve Other Departments, Employees, and Administrators in Your Organization

Create a STEM team or task force to generate ideas and act on them. Our field is teeming with liberal arts majors; find a

science mind to help you. Get support from your boss.

### 7. Involve Others in Your Community

In an October YALSA discussion on *ALA Connect*, Laura Mesjak shared her experiences in a community partnership with Northern Illinois University STEMfest. Her library held science fiction book discussions in conjunction with the university's STEM outreach program. She writes: "We read *Uglies* in June and learned about medical ethics, *Feed* in August and toured the psychology labs, and in October, we will be reading the graphic novel *Orbiter* and visiting the campus observatory!"<sup>4</sup>

### 8. Host an In-House STEM Program

Mathematician Scott Rickard recently created a TED talk about using math to create the world's ugliest music. Challenge your teens to create a similar piece of nonrhythmic music. In Braun's *American Libraries* article, she suggests gaming sessions, candy sushi projects, and digital content creation.

### 9. Remember to Build Slowly

You don't have to be a geeked out super-science genius librarian from day one. Work to start low-key, with one booklist, one small grant, or one small program, and then build at your own pace. STEM isn't

going anywhere, so there is no need to worry about changing overnight.

### 10. Most Importantly, Ask Teens to Help You!

There are science and math fans lurking all around your library. Recruit them to contribute their ideas on how to make science, technology, engineering, and math a stronger presence in your library. *YALS*

## References

1. White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, "Winning the Race to Educate Our Children," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/FY12-STEM-fs.pdf> (accessed Dec 6, 2011).
2. Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century: An Agenda for American Science and Technology, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*, (Washington, D.C. National Academies Press, 2008).
3. Linda Braun, "The Lowdown on STEM," *American Libraries* 32, no. 9/10 (Sept./Oct. 2011): 60, <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/columns/youth-matters/lowdown-stem> (accessed Jan. 18, 2012).
4. Laura Mesjak, discussion board post, "Is That STEM in the Teen Room?" <http://connect.ala.org/node/157208> (accessed Jan. 12, 2012)

**Bodart, Joni Richards.** *They Suck, They Bite, They Eat, They Kill: The Psychological Meaning of Supernatural Monsters in Young Adult Fiction.* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2012, ISBN: 978-081088-227-0, 300p, \$45.

This new entry in Scarecrow's *Studies in Young Adult Literature* series is structured around four categories of monsters: vampires, werewolves, zombies, and other supernatural beings. In her introductions to each section, Bodart expertly lays out the histories of these monsters, as well as the psychological meanings they have held and continue to hold on young people today, specifically the ways in which supernatural beings embody the teenager's condition of occupying two worlds at once.

The bulk of the book, though, is taken up by in-depth discussions of three to six novels or series featuring each monster. Bodart, the consummate booktalker, cannot help but bring out the best of these novels and make the reader instantly want to read as many as possible. And she has done some tremendous research, tracking down author interviews, blog posts, and more traditional sources to learn the back stories behind the novels.

Unfortunately, Bodart becomes so interested in the details of each novel that she never quite connects them to the more scholarly arguments in her introductions. This is not to denigrate her analyses: there is a serious dearth of material examining individual young adult titles in any depth, and these chapters are an excellent resource for anyone looking to go beyond journal reviews or Wikipedia. Nevertheless, Bodart seems to have written two separate books, each excellent in its own right: an examination of "the psychological meaning of supernatural monsters" in the introductions and conclusion, and a series of well-written reviews in the body of the text.

—Mark Flowers, John F. Kennedy Library, Vallejo, California

**Farrelly, Michael Garrett.** *Make Room For Teens! Reflections on Developing Teen Spaces in Libraries.* Santa Barbara, Calif. Libraries Unlimited, 2011, ISBN: 978-1591585664, 102p, \$40.

At first glance, *Make Room For Teens!* seems like it is going to be about the finer points of selecting furniture, shelving and decorations for a library's dedicated teen space. While it does address these points, this book also describes how to make teens feel welcome once there is a space for them in the library. The author acknowledges that no two teens, or library budgets, are the same. Farrelly discusses different teen archetypes and how librarians can make a comfortable space that suits each of them without giving in to fads. At the same time, the reader is shown

how to take advantage of either a dedicated teen space or a space shared with other departments, such as childrens or adult services. The information here is accessible, presented as though Farrelly is telling friends what he has learned during his years of library work, and the author writes with such enthusiasm for his subject that the title's exclamation point is well-deserved. There are enough practical points on creating space for teenagers in the library to convince an administrator while the pop culture references will keep youth services librarians reading. Sir, you had this reviewer at your first *Buffy* reference.

—Sarah Granville, Barborton (Ohio) Public Library

**Klor, Ellin and Sarah Lapin.** *Serving Teen Parents: From Literacy to Life Skills.* Santa Barbara, Calif. Libraries Unlimited, 2011, ISBN: 978-1598846935, 200p, \$45.

A useful resource packed with information and ideas, tested in the field, and helpful with developing and implementing successful teen parent programs.

This book offers library staff practical advice—complete with role play scenarios—for understanding teen behavior and communicating effectively with teens. There are suggestions for obtaining funding and collaborating with community organizations, as well as step-by-step methods for developing and implementing teen parent programs and establishing teen parent collections. Project and program templates for planning and presenting programs are provided with each program designed to help teen parents with building literacy, social, and parenting skills. Chapters are organized to give a topical overview and background discussion, along with examples of successful programs. Storytime outlines with bibliographies, simple fingerplays, feltboard stories and songs, plus reproducible activities, surveys and evaluations, are included for use with programming.

Although this book is aimed at library staff serving teen parents, the ideas and information can be used to develop programs for teens in general. The scope is broad in coverage and, while it does not provide in-depth information, the bibliographies offer excellent suggestions for extended programming. A highly recommended resource for public and school libraries.

—Cara Waits, Kyle (Texas) Public Library

**iParadigms, LLC.** WriteCheck. [www.writecheck.com](http://www.writecheck.com).

WriteCheck is an online product designed to improve students' writing skills by identifying grammatical errors as well as possible plagiarized content in a work.

Results were available quite speedily. However, reports had to be reopened several times before feedback appeared. This may lead some new users to believe documents are fine, which may not be the case.

The grammar check functions similarly to those found in most word processing applications. Distinct highlighting makes it easy for users to identify errors. Feedback on the check also appears on the report—users know about the error at a glance whether it be an article error or a problem with subject-verb agreement. While suggestions on grammar corrections are not provided, access to an online grammar handbook is available so that users can learn more about the error and make sufficient corrections.

One of the grammar check suggestions was questionable. For example, in the sentence, “They see friendships grow, relationships blossom, and lose people they care about,” grammar check highlighted the word “lose,” flagging it as “CONFUSED” and

stating very specifically, “You have used *lose* in this sentence. You may need to use *loose* instead.”

For those institutions seeking solely seeking a writing correction tool, a subscription to this site is not necessary. Most word processing grammar checks offer the same functionality and do not require an Internet connection.

The plagiarism check is more helpful. The document is checked for original content against an extensive database. The report provides a clear visual of unoriginal content that needs to be cited or paraphrased. In a test document, most of the quoted text was appropriately marked as being unoriginal content. An option to filter out quoted text is also available. Since its stronger feature is the plagiarism check, WriteCheck is strongly recommended for those institutions for which plagiarism is a great concern and a recurring problem.

—Jennie Depakakibo Evans, Carrollton (Texas) Public Library

YALS

## 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](http://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>.

### Promote the Best of the Best @ your library

As this issue mails, YALSA will be announcing its award winners at the Youth Media Awards at ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Dallas. The announcement will take place Jan. 23. In addition, YALSA will announce its selected book and media lists for 2012.

Beginning Feb. 1, visit [www.ala.org/yalsa/best](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/best) to find downloadable tools to promote winners at your library, part of YALSA's new Best of the Best! You'll be able to download customizable bookmarks featuring the winners of the 2012 Alex, Edwards, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey, and Printz Awards. We'll also offer press releases, which you can customize and send to local publications to let teens know that award winners are available at your library. You can also download logos to use on your website or in marketing materials in your library, spine labels to apply to titles that appear in the Best of the Best, and other tools to promote the awards, as well as the Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults, Best Fiction for Young Adults, Fabulous Films for Young Adults, Great Graphic Novels for Teens, Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, and Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers.

So check it out at [www.ala.org/yalsa/best](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/best) after February 1!

### Want to Find Teen Books? YALSA's Got an App for That

#### YALSA Debuts Teen Book Finder iOS App

Through funding from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, YALSA created a new iPhone/iPod/iPad app featuring its award-winning books and media! Dubbed the Teen Book Finder, users of Apple's iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad can find high-quality, books as recognized and selected by YALSA from the previous two years at the click of the button. The app was developed by Ora Interactive, a Chicago-based web development firm.

App users will be able to find recommended books through a featured list on the app's homepage or they can search by author, award/list name, title, year, and genre. App users can also find a copy of each book in a nearby library, create a list of favorite titles, or share books from the app that they've read on Twitter or Facebook.

The app debuted on January 25 at the Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee's 15th Annual Kickoff Reception and Technology Exhibition in Washington, D.C., with demos from teens at YALSA's exhibit booth. An Android version is planned for later in 2012.

The Teen Book Finder, which is distributed by the American Library Association, can be downloaded from the iTunes App Store in February.

### Join YALSA at ALA Annual Conference!

#### Early bird registration ends May 13

YALSA has big plans for Annual 2012—be part of the action in Anaheim this summer, June 21-26.

YALSA will offer two half-day preconferences on June 22: Details available at [www.ala.org/yalsa/events](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/events).

- **Books We'll Still Talk about 45 Years from Now** (Ticketed Event—\$129), 12:30-4:30 p.m. Participants in this preconference will explore the styles and themes of YA fiction through recent years and make educated guesses on which titles will have staying power.
- **Source Code: Digital Youth Participation** (Ticketed Event—\$89 for students, \$129), 12:30-4:30 p.m. This preconference will discuss the use of digital media to better learn its potential applications in the library and will teach participants how to work with teens on a virtual project

In addition, YALSA offers plenty of interesting programs (see the full list at <http://tinyurl.com/yalsaac12>) and ticketed events, including the 2012 Printz Reception, the 2012 Edwards Luncheon, the YA Authors Coffee Klatch and more.

Early bird registration ends May 13. Find more details about registration and housing at the ALA Annual Web site,



www.alaannual.org. For the latest details on YALSA's Annual schedule, visit the YALSA Events page at [www.ala.org/yalsa/events](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/events).

## 2012 ALA/YALSA Elections

YALSA's Nominating Committee has submitted the following slate for 2012. YALSA members will vote for president-elect, directors at-large, councilor, and for members of the Printz, Edwards, and Nonfiction committees.

Elections will be held March 19 to April 27, 2012. The 2012 election will take place entirely online. Details on the 2012 election can be found at [www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/alaelection/](http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/alaelection/).

### YALSA 2012 Slate

#### President-Elect

Mary Hastler  
Shannon Peterson

#### Board of Directors

Sarah Sogigian  
Candice A. Wing-Yee Mack  
Matthew Moffett  
Priscille Dando

#### Councilor

Steve Matthews  
Vicki Morris Emery

#### Edwards

Sarah Ludwig  
Barbara Moon  
Melissa McBride  
Julie Roach  
Lynn Rutan  
Kate Toebbe

#### Nonfiction

Jamison Hedin  
Scott Robins  
Molly Collins  
Karen Keys  
Renee McGrath  
Maria Gentle  
Dorcas Hand  
Shauna Yusko

#### Printz

Jennifer Lawson  
Gregory Lum  
Rachel McDonald  
Elizabeth Schneider  
Patti Tjomsland  
Sarah Wethern  
Emily Williams

## Build Your Professional Skills!

Update your skills, get leadership and networking opportunities and be a part of moving YALSA forward by joining one of our process committees or juries. President-Elect Jack Martin will be appointing committee and jury members to 2012 - 2013 process committees and juries that help the association advance its mission and the profession. Interested in being more involved? Read on to find out how.

### A Guide to Process Committees & Juries

YALSA has two types of committees: selection committees, which select specific library materials or choose YALSA's awards and process committees, which help carry out the work of the association. Process committees include:

- those that plan YALSA events, including initiatives and conferences, such as Teen Tech Week, WrestleMania Reading Challenge, and Local Arrangements
- those that help YALSA govern itself, such as Organizations and Bylaws, Strategic Planning, or Nominating;
- those that spread YALSA's messages, including Publications, Web Advisory, and Division and Membership Promotions; and
- many more.

### What to Know Before You Volunteer

Before you volunteer to serve on a committee or jury, you'll want to learn what the group does and what your responsibilities will be. You should contact

the chair directly, explain that you're interested in serving and then ask questions about what your involvement will entail. Names and contact information for all the chairs are available by clicking on the "Governance" link on YALSA's homepage.

On the YALSA Web site you'll also find information about each of the group's functions, size, and more. Just click on "Governance." Lastly, be sure to read through YALSA's Handbook, especially the sections that list responsibilities for committee members. It's online at [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa). Just click on "Handbook" from the left menu.

### Complete the Volunteer Form

To be considered for any committee or jury, you need to fill out a volunteer form. It is available online (go to <http://yalsa.ala.org/forms> and choose the process committee and jury volunteer form). When you fill out a form, please be sure to include the name of the committees or juries on which you'd like to serve. If you don't indicate a few that you're interested in, it is very difficult for the president-elect to find the best fit for you. If you already submitted a volunteer form, but either weren't appointed or missed the deadline for appointments for your particular committee request, your forms will be turned over to the next president-elect. Forms are only kept on file for one year, so it's important that you fill one out each year that you would like to serve on a committee or jury.

#### Timeline

Turn in your volunteer form between now and February 1. Look for an email confirmation from YALSA after you turn it in. The President-Elect will make the appointments after February 1. If appointed, your term begins July 1, 2012.

### The Fine Print

All of YALSA's process committees are virtual appointments, meaning you do not need to attend Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting to serve on a committee. Appointments are for either one- or two-year terms, depending on the committee or jury. Some groups are very popular and may receive dozens of

volunteer forms for just two or three available spots. Your membership in YALSA must be current in order for you to be eligible to serve on a committee or jury.

Questions? Please contact Jack Martin, YALSA's President-Elect, at [jackmartin@nypl.org](mailto:jackmartin@nypl.org) or YALSA's Membership Coordinator, Letitia Smith, at [lsmith@ala.org](mailto:lsmith@ala.org).

For other ways to build your professional skills and/or get more involved in YALSA, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/YALSAgetinvolved>

## Mark Your Calendars

### Geek Out @ your library® this Teen Tech Week

Make sure to register for Teen Tech Week! Registration for the annual event closes on February 6. This year's theme is Geek Out @ your library. The general theme for Teen Tech Week is Get Connected. Teen Tech Week 2012 will be celebrated March 4-10.

YALSA is a nonprofit organization that depends on its members for support. By registering, you are letting us know that technology literacy is important to you and your teen patrons. By registering, you are telling YALSA that this program is valuable and worth continuing.

## YALSA's Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults Seeks Manuscripts

JRLYA seeks papers for its Spring 2012 issue on the theme of Twenty-First Century Literacies.

The issue will feature articles focusing on different twenty-first century literacies. Possibilities include information literacy, traditional literacy, multicultural literacy, transliteracy, visual literacy, media literacy, civic literacy, or economic literacy, to name a few.

Contributors are invited to submit articles that focus on literacies from different theoretical, pedagogical, practical, policy and research perspectives. Guidance

can also be found in YALSA's National Research Agenda.

Please contact Sandra Hughes-Hassell, editor, at [yal saresearch@gmail.com](mailto:yal saresearch@gmail.com) to discuss submissions and use the author guidelines.

**Submission Deadline:** February 13, 2012

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**Submission Deadline:** February 13, 2012

## Kausch named YALSA's 2012 Board Fellow

YALSA's Board of Directors chose Carrie Kausch, Librarian at Osbourn Park High School, Manassas, Va., as its inaugural Board Fellow. Kausch will begin serving as Board Fellow in June 2012.

The YALSA Board Fellowship gives YALSA members an expanded opportunity to be involved in the leadership of the association. Each year one fellow will be selected from that year's pool of applicants. The selected candidate will serve a one-year term, from June to July of the next year, on the YALSA Board as a nonvoting member.

The fellow is expected to participate fully in the work of the Board including attending and participating in all face-to-face and virtual meetings and discussions. The Fellow will receive a \$500 stipend per

conference to help defray travel, registration, and hotel costs.

Applications to be YALSA's 2013 Board Fellow are available at [www.ala.org/yal sa/awards&grants](http://www.ala.org/yal sa/awards&grants) and are due by Dec. 1 each year.

## Submit Your Great Ideas

YALSA needs your Great Ideas — and you could win \$250 in cash! We're looking for creative assistance from YOU to help YALSA achieve its goals. Each year, the contest focuses on YALSA's Strategic Plan. Great ideas like yours will help YALSA achieve the goals of:

- Advocacy & Activism
- Research & Documentation of Best Practice
- Continuous Learning & Professional Development
- Member Recruitment & Engagement
- Capacity Building & Organizational Development

To apply, visit [www.ala.org/yal sa/awardsandgrants/greatideas](http://www.ala.org/yal sa/awardsandgrants/greatideas) and find out more information. Questions can be sent to Priscille Dando at [pdando@gmail.com](mailto:pdando@gmail.com).

## YALSA announces new national research agenda

YALSA published a new national research agenda on libraries and teens, updating its 1994 research agenda. The agenda is available online at [www.ala.org/yal sa/researchagenda](http://www.ala.org/yal sa/researchagenda).

The YALSA Research Agenda was developed by members of YALSA's 2010 and 2011 Research Committees. This group of library science educators, working in graduate schools of library science across the United States, surveyed the field to determine gaps in research and determine the questions that needed to be answered in order to fill those gaps. It also updates the agenda to reflect the many changes that have happened in teen services and libraries in the 17 years since the last update. **YALS**



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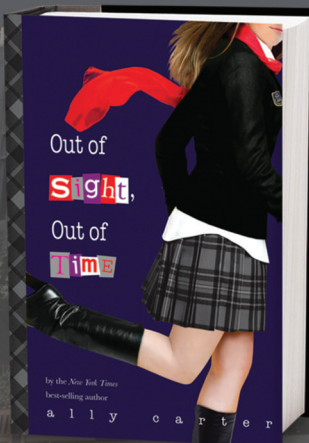
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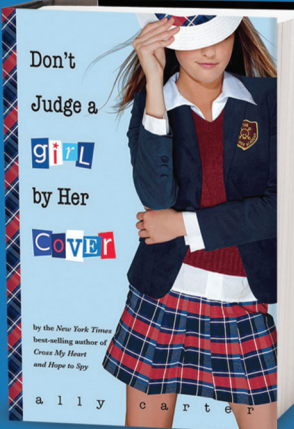
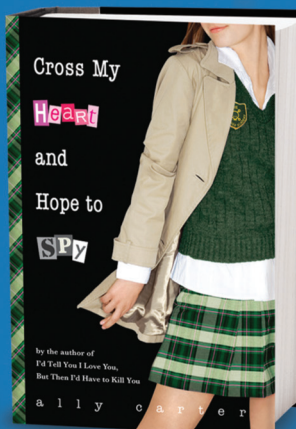
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