

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Annual Conference, Chicago  
July 9-15, 2009**

**Topic:** RBA: Readers' Choice List

**Background:** At the 2009 Midwinter Meeting Board members were charged with exploring three issues surrounding YALSA's current portfolio of selected lists, including: 1) Are YALSA's lists, as they are now, meeting the needs of our members? 2) Is the current level of member engagement in the development of the lists adequate and appropriate? 3) Is the current system of disseminating the finalized lists adequate? Based on Board feedback, YALSA's Executive Committee has developed the following general proposal to partially address these concerns. Additional details will be provided on-site.

**Action Required:** Action

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**YALSA Best Books for Teens – People's Choice**

**Rationale**

The establishment of a readers' choice list would address many concerns and needs in YALSA, including:

- The 2008 Member Survey indicated that members wanted more ways to be involved virtually in YALSA. This list would provide as many YALSA members as possible with opportunities to participate virtually in the selection of materials for YALSA lists.
- Selection committee members have repeatedly raised concerns about the adequacy and the efficiency of the selection process, including workload issues around the increased number of titles being published in YA literature. Creating a list that opens up participation to a wider audience, results in replacing the burden of reading many titles from a small member group to a large diverse membership base.
- The Board has been concerned that the way lists are developed and delivered are no longer meeting members' collection development and readers' advisory needs in today's 24/7 world. Members have indicated that annual lists are not timely enough. A list that utilizes technology to quickly share and disseminate information would address this concern.

**Overview**

This proposal outlines a process to provide all YALSA members with the opportunity to participate in selection of the best books for teens published during a 12-month-period. Through sponsorship of this list, YALSA aims to provide more members with the chance to get involved in development of the tools teens and adults use to select reading titles. The

final list will be published on the YALSA web site, blog, social networking sites, print journals and other appropriate venues.

## **Proposal**

Establish a YALSA's Best Books for Teens: People's Choice list will be administrated virtually and open to all YALSA members as a member benefit. This new list will serve as the YALSA resource for identifying the best books for young adults published in the previous 12-month period. This proposal outlines a timeframe and process for the implementation of the Reader's Choice list.

### **Process**

- Nominations will be made by category (e.g. sci fi, fantasy, historical, romance, humor, mystery, horror, biographies, etc.). Both YALSA members and non-members will be encouraged to nominate titles.
- Titles nominated will be published between December of the prior year and November of the current year.
- Any title that receives nominations by at least 25 members will make it to the final round.
- Final voting will take place by electronic ballot throughout December of each year. Only YALSA members will be eligible to participate in the final vote.
- Final list will be made up of the top 5 vote getters in each category.
- The YALSA Best Books for Teens: People's Choice list will be announced at ALA's Midwinter Meeting each year.

### **Technology**

- Initial nominations will be sent via a web-based form or surveying tool
- Final voting will take place using a web-based surveying tool such as Survey Monkey.
- YALSA will want to develop a web presence for the YALSA Best Books for Teens: People's Choice list that provides information about the list, links for nominating and voting on titles, and partnering opportunities. This site may also provide access to widgets and applications to be used on social networks for promoting and voting for titles.

### **Administration**

- Nominations will need to be vetted in order to make sure that titles meet the criteria for publication date and age level.
- Initial nominations will need to be counted to guarantee that a minimum number of 25 nominations are received for each title included on the final ballot.

### **Marketing**

YALSA's Communications Specialist will work with members to advertise the list via the Division's social networks, blogs, print publications, web sites, e-lists and other appropriate avenues both within and without ALA. The Division may also look for opportunities for publicizing the list with Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week partners.

### **Timeline**

Pending approval by the YALSA Board, YALSA will create a task force to develop policies and procedures for implementation of the list. This document will be completed by the Fall Executive meeting for approval by the YALSA Board in November 2009. Once approved, the President-Elect will appoint members to a virtual member group who will begin work Feb. 1, 2010 and whose job will be to oversee the nomination and voting process. This will make it possible to launch the People's Choice list at Midwinter 2010 and open nominations for the first annual list in February 2010.

### **Evaluation**

Following the first year of the YALSA Best Books for Teens: People's Choice, the member group tasked with implementing the first year of the list will provide a report to the Board with recommendations for improvement, including but not limited to the process used for nominations and final balloting. This feedback will provide information necessary to make refinements to the list development process.

Following the second year of the list implementation, a larger evaluation will be initiated, and YALSA members and non-members will be surveyed in order to learn about both their involvement in the list development process and their use of the list once it's made available. This feedback will help YALSA determine to what degree it has met the goal of including more members in the process and improving the quality of and delivery method for readers' advisory and collection development materials YALSA provides to its members and the library community.

### **Proposed Action**

Adopt the concept of a Readers' Choice list and direct the YALSA President to create a task force to establish policies and procedures, with the goal of having a draft document for the YALSA Executive Committee to review in October 2009.