

Helping Libraries Meet the Needs of Diverse Teens 2011 Final Report



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I. About the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is a national association of over 5,300 librarians, library workers and advocates whose mission is to expand and strengthen library services for teens and young adults. Through its member-driven advocacy, research, and professional development initiatives, YALSA builds the capacity of libraries and librarians to engage, serve, and empower teens and young adults. YALSA is a subspecialty of the American Library Association (ALA), a 501c3 organization that is the world's largest and oldest library organization.

II. Summary

Multiple studies show that teens are reading less often and fewer of them are obtaining critical literacy skills; in addition, today's generation of teens is the most ethnically diverse ever. With the support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, YALSA provided needy libraries with mini grants to purchase up-to-date, age appropriate materials published in the community's predominant language and to provide programs and services to teens. Additionally, YALSA created Spanish language resources, including lists of recommended reading, which libraries distributed to teens and their parents/caregivers. YALSA capitalized on two well established initiatives, Teen Read Week™ and summer reading programs, to implement the mini grant program and distribute the Spanish language materials.

Beginning in early 2011 YALSA opened up a round of applications for librarians to apply for one of 20 summer reading mini grants, worth \$1,000 each. A task force comprised of YALSA members with experience in planning and delivering summer reading programs vetted 60 applications and chose the 20 winners. Grantees received training via a conference call and a webinar, and throughout the summer interacted with YALSA staff and each other via an interactive online space in ALA Connect. At the end of the summer, grantees participated in a conference call to reflect on the successes and challenges they met.

In the spring of 2011 YALSA also opened up a round of applications for librarians to apply for one of 10 Teen Read Week mini grants, worth \$1,000 each. A task force comprised of YALSA members with experience in planning and delivering Teen Read Week programs vetted 35 applications and chose the 10 winners. Grantees received training via a conference call and a webinar, and are interacting with YALSA staff and each other via an interactive online space in ALA Connect in preparation for Teen Read Week, which will be celebrated October 16 – 22, 2011.

In the summer of 2011 YALSA opened up a round of applications for librarians to apply for one of ten Teens' Top Ten sets, worth approximately \$400 each. The Teens' Top Ten is a teen choice award, where teens vote online for their favorite books. A task force comprised of YALSA members with experience in young adult literature vetted 24 applications and chose the 10 winners. Grantees will receive their sets of books in time for Teen Read Week.

As these activities were taking place, YALSA was also developing resources to support grantees as well as the larger library community. An article about meeting the needs of Spanish speaking teens appeared in the summer issue of YALSA's journal (see Appendix D for the article). YALSA worked with an ALA Affiliate, REFORMA, to develop a list of recommended reading for Spanish speaking teens and then printed and distributed 250,000 of them (see Appendix C for an image of the pamphlet). YALSA also created an interactive space on its wiki where individuals could share information about summer reading at http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Summer_Reading. Lastly, YALSA worked with a developer to create a free iPhone app to help teens, parents and educators easily find recommended books for teens. The app is set to launch during Teen Read Week (see Appendix B for a mock-up).

Giving needy 60 libraries in 21 states (see Appendix A for a map) the chance to purchase resources and implement programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of their community's teens helped make strides toward ensuring the teens develop key literacy skills and the opportunity to take advantage of the many resources libraries offer for personal and educational use. The expected outcome of this program was that more teens in the communities of participating libraries, especially those from diverse backgrounds, have access to appropriate resources and visit their libraries regularly to borrow reading materials and avail themselves of other services the library offers.

III. Results and Impact

Goals & Accomplishments:

Goal #1: Increase the ability of needy libraries to identify and provide age and language appropriate reading materials to the teens in their communities.

- Nearly 10,000 teens at 20 separate locations visited their library and read books and other materials as part of the grant-funded summer reading programs
- Provided funding, through grants and via the purchase and distribution of Teens' Top Ten winners, for libraries to purchase age and language appropriate materials (10 grants out of 24 applicants)
- Created the first ever iPhone app focused on teen reading (launches during Teen Read Week Oct. 16 – 22, 2011), which will be modified to work with other platforms, including Droid (see Appendix B for a mock-up)

Goal #2: Make it easier for libraries to provide services and resources to Spanish speaking teens.

- Created and distributed 250,000 recommended reading pamphlets for Spanish speaking teens to 5,000 libraries via a mailing to Teen Read Week registrants and attendees at the REFORMA conference (see Appendix C for an image of the pamphlet)
- Awarded 20 grants for summer reading programs (out of 60 applicants) and 10 grants for Teen Read Week programs (out of 25 applicants)

- Directly trained 30 library staff on best practices in serving teens who speak English as a second language summer reading and Teen Read Week™ and subsequently made training materials freely available online:
 - <http://connectpro87048468.adobeconnect.com/p317nvbjfo/>
 - <http://connectpro87048468.adobeconnect.com/p2ne0rlg6ld/>
- Created free resources for all libraries to take advantage of, including two webinars, a free downloadable pamphlet and materials posted on YALSA's wiki http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Summer_Reading
- Published an article in the summer issue of *Young Adult Library Services* with information and resources to help librarians meet the needs of Spanish speaking teens (see Appendix D for the article).

Method

YALSA utilized its existing communication channels, including its web site, blog, email listservs and Twitter feed to promote the mini grant opportunities. Press releases about the funding opportunities were distributed widely to the library community through ALA's Public Information Office.

Grant applications were forwarded to specially appointed YALSA member taskforces, who vetted the applications and chose the winners based on an established set of criteria. All grantees went through two initial training sessions: one via conference call and the other via webinar. For the duration of the project, grantees communicated with one another and with YALSA, as well as exchanged ideas and resources, through a specially created online community.

YALSA also tapped member experts to create online resources and a list of recommended reading for Spanish speaking teens. The online resources were promoted through YALSA's existing communication channels.

Resources, including the pamphlet of recommended reading, were disseminated to attendees at the 2011 REFORMA Conference, which promotes library services to the Spanish speaking, via an exhibit booth staffed by YALSA's Membership Coordinator. Resources were also disseminated to all 4,000 librarians who registered to participate in Teen Read Week.

Results/Outcomes

In a time when many library budgets have been cut, YALSA, through the support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, was able to help 60 libraries in 21 states maintain or even expand their services and resources. YALSA members expressed repeatedly that they appreciated the opportunity to apply for the mini-grants, and those who received the grants commented that the reading and literacy activities they carried out with the teens would not have been possible otherwise. The \$1,000 grants were significant enough to have a sizable impact on the libraries that received them. In some cases, the grant doubled their existing teen services budget. Libraries were able to provide programs that they otherwise could not afford. Rosalee Pituch from the Rebecca M. Arthurs Memorial Library in rural Brookville, PA reported that "it was a thrill to have a well-known author come to our small-town library. Individual teens were able to speak privately with the author and share their dreams and ideas."

Libraries used the grant funds to purchase much needed reading materials as well as provide programs, such as author visits. Monica Wood from Longview Public Library in Texas reported that “the graphic novel budget is miniscule and we always have so many more teen requests than we are able to fulfill. The grant really helped us beef up our collection and we had huge interest generated among the teens.” Graphic novels are often popular with struggling readers and readers who do not speak English as a first language, because the images help readers interpret the text.

While the overall goals were to increase the ability of libraries to provide materials, services and resources to targeted groups such as Spanish speaking teens, several libraries did see some unintended outcomes, including changing teen perceptions of libraries, which led to increased use of the library in general, not just for the duration of the grant program. Nearly every participating library reported an increase over last year’s teen participation in their summer reading program, and one library reported a significant 140% increase. Erin Steinsultz from Benton Public Library in Illinois reported that “...the biggest success was changing the perception of the library among some teens. The library is now a great place to meet with your friends, to hang out, to find fun activities and reading materials. I hope we have made readers and library users for life.” Darby Wallace at the Jackson County Library in Arkansas had a similar experience. She reported that “the teens who attended the program enjoyed every minute. They stayed in the library long after the programs concluded, came back on other days to volunteer to help with programs for younger kids, and even came back on days when there was nothing scheduled.”

Other interesting outcomes were reported also reported by grantees:

- “Our biggest accomplishment was proving that we could circulate e-readers to teens. The staff could handle the check out process, the teens were excited to get the e-readers, and nothing was lost, damaged or stolen.” -- Donna Block, Niles Public Library in IL
- “I think the greatest accomplishment of our summer reading program was reaching teens who don’t normally get excited about reading.” – Morgan Higgins, North Shelby Library in AL

In terms of the results from YALSA’s perspective, the initiative helped position YALSA as responsive to the needs of members and the library community during a difficult time. The continued economic difficulties have put a real strain on libraries’ ability to meet the needs of their community. As a result of libraries’ financial hardships, YALSA, whose main source of revenue comes from this community, also felt the economic impact. The grants YALSA was able to offer through the funding provided by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation enabled YALSA to provide needed support to libraries that we would not otherwise have been able to do.

Additionally, the initiative helped YALSA establish stronger ties with state library agency youth consultants, who are important stakeholders in the library community. Historically, this group has focused a significant portion of their work on summer reading programs. This initiative not only gave YALSA a good reason to reach out to these individuals, but it also helped raise the profile of YALSA from this group and increase awareness about our mission, services and resources. As a result, YALSA now offers quarterly free webinars to the youth consultants as well as a free monthly newsletter, which have been well received by many of the youth

consultants. Several of them have taken the step to join YALSA as a personal member and to become active in the organization through committee service. Stronger ties with these state level stakeholders can only help YALSA increase its impact.

Selected Media Coverage:

- www.ktsm.com/local/two-el-paso-library-branches-receive-summer-reading-grants
- www.shelbycountyreporter.com/2011/06/07/good-news-keeps-coming-for-county%E2%80%99s-library-system/
- www.elpasotimes.com/news/ci_18519069
- <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/news/ala/rev-summer-reading-20-grants-yalsa-and-dollar-general>
- <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/news/ala/twenty-librarians-receive-yalsadollar-general-summer-reading-grants>
- <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/news/ala/ten-librarians-win-teen-read-week-mini-grants-yalsa>
- <http://ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/news/pr.cfm?id=8140>

IV. Lessons Learned

- **For YALSA:**
 - **Training:**
 - The online community was an efficient means for YALSA to communicate with grantees; however, not all grantees were comfortable with using this social media tool, so some basic training on how to use it would be helpful to incorporate moving forward.
 - Overall, the grantees indicated that their greatest need was help with marketing and public relations. In the future, a specific training session for each of these topics, as well as more robust resources in the online community would be helpful so that libraries can effectively promote their services and programs in the community in order to reach more teens and their families.
 - **Data gathering:**
 - For the purpose of measuring impact more precisely, it would have been helpful to ask for specific numbers, instead of ranges.
- **For Grantees:** many grantees reported that they needed to plan further ahead, including beginning their marketing sooner. More than one grantee reported that the funds allowed them to try a new program or service in their library, which was well received by the teens, so they were encouraged to try more new things.

V. Financial Statement

Activity	Description	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
10 mini grants for Teen Read	At \$1,000 each	\$10,000	\$10,000

Week			
20 mini grants for summer reading programs	At \$1,000 each	\$20,000	\$20,000
Pamphlet of recommended reading for Spanish speaking teens	250,000 pamphlets, in packets of 50, distributed to 5,000 libraries	\$12,500	\$13,600
Training and materials for 30 grant winners	Includes development of 2 webinars, 3 conference calls and mailings of 30 resource packets	N/A	\$1,000
Sets of 2011 Teens' Top Ten titles purchased and shipped to libraries	10 books each to 10 libraries at \$375 per library	\$3,750	\$4,000
iPhone app, free to users, that will enable teens, parents and educators to easily find appropriate recommended reading	database development, app design and launch	\$9,000	\$13,000
Media Outreach	Mat release to newspapers for Teen Read Week	\$3,000	\$3,000
Travel	For YALSA representative to attend the REFORMA conference and promote the Spanish language resources	\$750	\$1,040
Office expenses	Supplies, photocopying etc.	\$600	\$101
Staff	Processing grant applications, marketing efforts, training and support for grantees, etc.	\$5,213	\$5,213
Grant Management		\$6,231	In kind

TOTAL: \$70,954

VI. Sustainability Plans

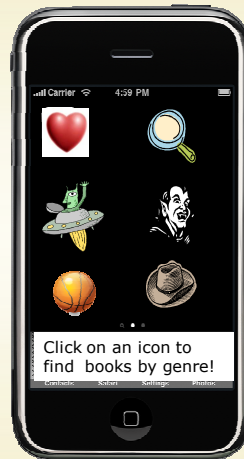
- **Resources:** many of the resources created during this project will live on and have already been made available to the library community and/or public, including:
 - Webinars
 - iPhone app
 - Wiki resources
 - Downloadable pamphlet of recommended reading
- **Funding:** to further the program and YALSA's reach, there are options to explore for obtaining funds to support this effort, including:
 - Seeking foundation support
 - Seeking corporate support
 - Setting aside a portion of existing YALSA funds, such as interest from the William C. Morris Endowment, to help fund the effort

Appendix B

iPhone App Mock-Up (to launch during 2011 Teen Read Week)

Free Resources via Mobile Phones

- Mobile phone application featuring recommended reads for teens
 - 75% of all teens have cell phones
 - 68% of Hispanic teens have cell phones
 - 90% of parents have cell phones



Pamphlet of recommended reading for Spanish speaking teens (250,000 printed and distributed)

LEE

por el gusto de leer

Existe una gran cantidad de libros para adolescentes, pero ¿cuántos de ellos reflejan al joven, su cultura y su vida? Disfrute de los libros en esta lista, libros que reflejan una gran variedad de experiencias de jóvenes latinos/as, desde inmigrantes cuyas familias han vivido en los Estados Unidos por generaciones hasta los mas recientes. Estos libros fueron escogidos por expertos bibliotecarios de REFORMA, la asociación nacional que fomenta el uso de bibliotecas y servicios de información para latinos e hispanohablantes y también por YALSA, la asociación de servicios bibliotecarios para adolescentes.

Desea más información o más títulos? Diríjase a los siguientes lugares:

- www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists
- www.ala.org/yalsa/best
- www.ala.org/yma
- <http://yalsa.ala.org/thehub>

Aunque estos títulos fueron seleccionados para jóvenes de 12 a 18 años, y muchos fueron ganadores de premios, algunos de ellos cubren una amplia selección de diferentes temas en la lectura y madurez. Aconsejamos que los adultos tomen un papel importante y ayuden a los adolescentes a seleccionar los libros que sean los mejores para ellos y sus familias.

There are lots of books about teens, but how many are there that reflect you, your culture, and your life? Enjoy the books on this list, which depict the experiences of a wide variety of teens from a variety of Latino/a backgrounds, from new immigrants to those whose families have been in the United States for generations. The books on this list were carefully chosen by a few smart librarians from REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, and YALSA, the Young Adult Library Services Association.

Looking for more books or more info on teen reading? Check out these websites:

- www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists
- www.ala.org/yalsa/best
- www.ala.org/yma
- <http://yalsa.ala.org/thehub>

While these books have been selected for teens from 12 to 18 years of age, the award-winning titles and the titles on YALSA's selected lists span a broad range of reading and maturity levels. We encourage adults to take an active role in helping individual teens choose those books that are the best fit for them and their families.

In English >>>

<<< En Español

Young Adult Library
Services Association
50 E. Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611
yalsa@ala.org
1-800-545-2433, ext. 4390
www.ala.org/yalsa

With thanks to the Dollar General Literacy Foundation for funding this project 8/11

Annual Teen
Read Week of 16

DOLLAR GENERAL
LITERACY FOUNDATION

Your World, Your Books/ Su Mundo, Sus Libros

Calcines, Eduardo F. *Leaving Glorytown: One Boy's Struggle Under Castro.* Arbitrary arrests, starvation and forced separations are endured by Cuban people as the Communist regime became more oppressive. Readers of this memoir gain an insight into the loving closeness Calcines shared with friends and family, and understand his mixed emotions when his family was finally granted their visa. **Culture:** Cuban.

Cervantes, Jennifer. *Tortilla Sun.* When her mother signs on to do a graduate school research project in Costa Rica, twelve-year-old Izzy Roybal must spend the summer with her maternal grandmother in New Mexico. Kept from information about her mother's Mexican-American roots and her Anglo father, Izzy is impatient to learn the truth. **Culture:** Mexican American, Biracial/Bicultural.

De La Peña, Matt. *I Will Save You.* After his mother kills his father and herself, Kidd lives in a group home and runs away at 17 to work at a beach, where he meets and falls in love with Olivia. His ex-best friend Devon shows up, blaming the wealthy for all of the problems in the world. Devon wants to kill all of them—especially Olivia. **Culture:** Mexican American.

Ferrer, Caridad. *When the Stars Go Blue.* Soledad loses herself in her roles as a dancer. She and Jonathan, an avid musician who shares the same musical intensity, embark on a romantic summer adventure performing with a competitive drum and bugle corps, with Soledad playing the role of *Carmen*. As the summer draws to an end, another suitor vies for Soledad's attention, bringing her stage role into reality and her career as a dancer in jeopardy. **Culture:** Cuban American.

González, Christina Díaz. *The Red Umbrella.* After Fidel Castro's Communist revolution in Cuba, 14-year-old Lucía's parents decide to send her and her younger brother Frankie alone to the United States until they can obtain exit visas for themselves. **Culture:** Cuban.

Hijuelos, Oscar. *Dark Dude.* In the 1960s, Harlem teen Rico runs away to avoid military school and hitchhikes to Wisconsin. As he tries to adjust to living in a rural setting, Rico tries to find himself and, while doing so, falls in love and becomes at peace with what life has to offer him. **Culture:** Cuban American.

Lopez, Diana. *Confetti Girl.* Middle school is not going well for Lina and her best friend Vanessa. Lina's recently widowed father buries himself in his books while Vanessa's recently divorced

mom creates endless supplies of *cascarones*, confetti-filled eggs. The girls hatch a plan to set up their parents and pursue their own love interests with not-so-successful results. **Culture:** Mexican American.

Miller-Lachmann, Lyn. *Gringolandia.* During the political upheaval in 1980s Chile, Daniel's family flees to the United States, where he assimilates into a new life playing guitar with a rock band and dating. When his father is released from prison and years of torture, Daniel discovers that his soccer- and fun-loving father has been replaced by a paralyzed, bitter man. **Culture:** Chilean American.

Perez, Ashley Hope. *What Can't Wait.* Marisa dreams of studying engineering at the University of Texas and struggles to balance her schoolwork with family responsibilities that include babysitting her niece and working at a supermarket in her Houston neighborhood. **Culture:** Mexican American.

Resau, Laura and Maria Virginia Farinango. *The Queen of Water.* Based on Farinango's youth as a servant in Ecuador, seven-year-old Virginia is sent to a family that abuses her and breaks their promise to pay her and give her an education. Lively and ambitious Virginia learns to read, escapes the household, returns to her family, and works her way through high school and to a better life. **Culture:** Quichua, Ecuadorean.

Restrepo, Bettina. *Illegal.* Nora's father leaves Mexico to search for work in the United States, Nora, her mother, and her grandmother struggle to make sense of their loss as the three women live in poverty awaiting. When the letters and money stop coming, Nora decides she and her mother must go to Texas to find her father. **Culture:** Mexican.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *The Dreamer.* Through vignettes real, embellished, and imagined, readers observe the twelve-year process in which young Neftalí Reyes resists his tyrannical father's goals for him and grows into the world-famous poet Pablo Neruda. **Culture:** Chilean.

Stork, Francisco X. *Marcelo in the Real World.* Sheltered in a special school for much of his life, Marcelo Sandoval's father insists his son spend the summer before his senior year working at his father's law firm so he can learn to live in the "real world." Marcelo learns about love, lust, and the costs of making moral choices. **Culture:** Mexican American.

Books Available in Spanish/ Libros en Español

Allende, Isabel. *La Ciudad de las Bestias, El Bosque de los Pygmios, El Reino del Dragón de Oro.*

Alvarez, Julia. *Antes de ser Libre*

Blundell, Judy. *Lo Que Vi y por Que Menti*

Castillo Ortiz, Héctor. *Sexo [Entre]: Jovenes: Preguntas y Respuestas*

Clasicos de Humor: Chejov, Saki, Mansilla, Fray Mocho, Twain, Guiraldes

Collins, Suzanne. *Los Juegos del Hambre, En Llamas, Sinsajo*

De Todo Corazon: 111 Poemas de Amor selección de José María Plaza

Gallego García, Laura. *Memorias de Idhún*

Sierra I Fabra, Jordi. *El Caso del Falso Accidente*

Meyer, Stephenie. *La Saga Crepúsculo: Crepúsculo, Luna Nueva, Eclipse, Amanecer*

Ochoa, Anabel. *Mitos y Realidades del Sexo Joven*

Reyes, Yolanda. *Los Años Terribles*

Ruiz Zafón, Carlos. *El Principe de la Niebla*

Santos, Care. *Inseparables para Siempre*

Smith, L.J. *Crónicas Vampiricas: Despertar, Conflicto, Furia, Invocación, Damon El Retorno, Damon Almas Oscuras*

Suplicy, Marta. *Sexo para Adolescentes*

Vargas, Gaby y Yordi Rosado. *Quíbole con Tu Cuerpo, el lígúe tu imagen, el sexo, las drogas y todo lo demás: un libro para niñas, chavas, chicas o como quieras llamarles*

Vargas, Gaby y Yordi Rosado. *Quíbole con Tu Cuerpo, el lígúe tus cuates, el sexo, tu familia, las drogas y todo lo demás: manual de supervivencia para hombres*

Appendix D

Article about meeting the needs of Spanish speaking teens that appeared in summer 2011 issue of YALSA's journal, *Young Adult Library Services*