young adult library services

VOLUME 14 | NUMBER 1 FALL 2015

THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIES FOR AND WITH TEENS

INSIDE:

CORE PROFESSIONAL VALUES FOR THE TEEN SERVICES PROFESSION
SOCIEDAD LATINA: THE HEART OF MISSION HILL
LA COMMONS’ NEIGHBORHOOD STORY CONNECTIONS
AND MORE....

YALSA
Young Adult Library Services Association

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About This Cover
All of the articles in this issue of YALS demonstrate how libraries and youth development organizations are acting for teens and moving into the future outlined in YALSA’s “Future of Libraries for and with Teens: A Call to action” report. You can read the report and learn more about YALSA’s efforts to support library staff working with teens as they plan future-forward initiatives at www.ala.org/yaforum.
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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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Manuscripts
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What Does #act4teens Mean?

• Community engagement that takes library services geared-to teens and their families from inside library buildings to community partner sites.
• Finding and filling the gaps in college and career readiness opportunities for teens and their families.
• Developing 21st century skills such as design and critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, project management, and leadership.
• Giving teens the chance to learn from experts and mentors in areas in which the teens are most interested.
• Providing opportunities for youth voice.

In the world of 2015, it’s imperative that libraries embrace ideas such as those listed above, and integrate them into their support of teens and their families. This issue of YALS strives to help library staff #act4teens by focusing on community organizations that work for and with teens and that embed youth voice in everything they do. A perfect example of this is the article coauthored by Raymond Ortiz and Laura Simoko about the work of Sociedad Latina in Boston’s Mission Hill neighborhood. Laura is the grants manager, and Raymond is a 16-year-old youth leader at that organization.

Jenny Asarnow from Seattle-based KUOW RadioActive Youth Media project tells how teens that take part in their workshops, sometimes held in libraries, produce radio segments that are often aired nationwide on NPR stations. Building community and youth voice through art and story is what Beth Peterson tells readers about in her article focusing on the work of LA Commons. Make sure not to miss reading the recently released YALSA “Core Professional Values for the Teen Service Profession.” The full document that presents a set of forward-looking values for those serving teens is included in this issue. And, don’t miss the article by Kim Dare on the work that the YALSA Cultural Competence Task Force recently completed. In that article you’ll discover a wide array of resources to use in your library or educational institution.

Some big news at YALS: the Editorial Advisory Board is working on a new framework for the journal, which will lead to a better alignment between YALS and YALSA’s “Future of Libraries for and with Teens: A Call to Action” report (http://bit.ly/yalsa_futures_report). The changes were approved by the YALSA Board at the 2015 Annual Conference (http://bit.ly/yalsa_yals_future). You can always keep up with YALS via the YALSA blog at: http:// yalsa.ala.org/blog. That’s where you will find photos and audio and video that complement the contents of this issue. YALS
From Status Quo to Status GO!

This past year or so has been one of big changes for me. I have a new job and a new role in YALSA—I am now the association’s president! These personal milestones have made me think about libraries and change. I have had to let go of the status quo in my life, and it’s time for libraries to do the same when it comes to serving teens.

No More Status Quo

Traditionally, we have spent a lot of time figuring out how to get teens into the library. When we can, we visit schools, work with existing teen partners, try to think of creative programs to host in the library, put flyers up around town to advertise them, and so on. We are evangelists who go out and tell people about all the materials and services that libraries will provide if people come to visit them. Then we go back to the library, wait for teens to come to us, and we’re more than happy to serve those who do. But what about all those teens that can’t, or won’t, come to the library? Don’t they need and deserve libraries, too? Yes! And in order for libraries to stay relevant in the 21st century and for us to fulfill our duties as library staff, we need to go beyond the library walls and meet the teens where they are. We need to change the status quo.

Flipped Teen Services

How do we do that? By flipping the traditional teen services model. Instead of creating teen programs and services and then going out and trying to drum up interest in the community, we need to first get into the community, find out what teens need by engaging with them and the community partners that serve them, and then design programs and services for and with teens. If this is a new approach for you, it may seem like a lot of work, and initially that could be the case; however, the payoff is huge. Not only can your work be more meaningful and rewarding, it’s likely that the teens in the community will end up being better served by the library.

Getting Started

Here are three steps you can use to get started:

1. Find out whom ALL the teens in your community are—not just the ones who are regular library users
2. Determine what the needs and interests of these teens are
3. Connect with appropriate community organizations and resources to plan, deliver, and evaluate services for and with teens that meet these needs and interests

For instance, my library system recently created a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual (LGBT) Services Committee to help address the needs of LGBTQ patrons and staff in our communities. Our committee, of which I am a member, connected with the Los Angeles LGBT Youth Center, a local shelter and haven for homeless LGBTQ youth. A few days after we toured the center, we were invited to participate in their youth-organized resource fair and carnival, whose theme was “Tea and Shade.” At the event we registered about 30 of the attendees for library cards, which we gave to them on the spot, told them about all of the library’s online resources, and asked them what services and materials they would like to see at the library. We also gathered donations from staff, friends, and library colleagues to help replenish the Center’s outdated bookshelves with modern YA lit featuring LGBTQ characters, which the staff and youth had requested. We’re also helping those teens apply for grants to attend our Career Online High School, a fully accredited online high school degree and career certification program. At the resource fair, we connected with many other local agencies that provide various resources to the teens in the community, and we’re looking forward to joining forces to expand our collective impact.

Luckily, you don’t have to start from scratch. YALSA has resources to help you, and you can find them at: http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/After_School_Programs.

It’s Up to You and Me and YALSA

Read this issue for more inspiration—the articles and columns are designed to give you what you need to move into the community

(continued on page 6)
Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession

Forward

These core values were developed in 2013–2014 by the Professional Values Task Force of YALSA. Members of the task force were Sarah Debraski, Meg Finney, Gretchen Kolderup, Amanda Murphy, Lalitha Nataraj (Chair), and Vivian Wynn. YALSA’s Board of Directors adopted the guidelines on June 27, 2015.

This document includes nine core values that define professionalism for those who work for and with teens through libraries. Additionally, this document provides examples of sample indicators for practices that resonate with each value. Potential users of this tool include library administrators, teen services library staff, and faculty at graduate schools of library and information science. The tool is not intended to provide a measure of the skills and knowledge that an individual must have in order to be successful in teen services; rather, the Core Professional Values are viewed as fundamental underlying principles that guide the decisions, actions, and behaviors of library staff working with and for teens. The Core Professional Values complements the ALA’s “Code of Ethics”. The Code outlines a broad moral standard for individuals working in libraries, whereas the YALSA values provides further context for those who work for and with teens. “Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values” (available at http://bit.ly/proptcv) was consulted when developing this document. YALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Values...</th>
<th>Value is...</th>
<th>A person practicing this value...</th>
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</table>
| Accountability | Active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations, and actions of the job, including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence teens, the profession, and the community | • Responds to teen needs  
• Seeks and responds to feedback from multiple sources  
• Acknowledges and accepts the consequences of one’s actions  
• Adheres to codes of ethics, standards of practice, and other policies that govern the profession, including those created by ALA and YALSA  
• Communicates regularly with others about work-related actions  
• Strives for continuous improvement  
• Maintains membership in professional organizations |
| Collaboration   | Fosters relationships within the library and within the community in order to best serve teens | • Works with other departments within the organization to create a holistic approach to serving teens  
• Fosters partnerships with schools and other community organizations that serve youth  
• Leverages the talent, expertise, and resources available in the community |
## Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Compassion</strong></th>
<th>Strives to identify with others’ experiences. Shows concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellence</strong></td>
<td>Consistently uses current knowledge and theory while understanding personal limits. Integrates judgment and the teen perspective. Embraces advancement, challenges mediocrity, and works toward development of new knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>Recognizes and respects the wide variety in people’s heritages and lived experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation</strong></td>
<td>Approaches projects and challenges with a creative, innovative mindset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Communicates effectively, both verbally and nonverbally, with others, taking into consideration individual differences in learning styles, language, cognitive abilities, etc.
- Builds and maintains knowledge of teens’ social, emotional, mental, and physical development and how they shape the teen experience
- Strives to understand teens’ lives from their perspective in order to create genuine connections
- Places the needs of teens above one’s own
- Provides services for and with underserved and underrepresented teen populations
- Demonstrates investment in the profession
- Participates in collaborative practices to promote high quality outcomes
- Demonstrates high levels of knowledge and skill in all aspects of teen services
- Engages in acquisition of new knowledge throughout one’s career
- Shares knowledge with others
- Demonstrates emotional intelligence and processes emotional information to navigate the social environment
- Demonstrates mastery of soft skills including social norms, communication, language, personal habits, interpersonal skills, supervising people, leadership, etc. to ensure successful interactions with a range of stakeholders, including supervisors, teens, and community partners
- Projects a professional image, including suitable appearance/dress, use of correct manners and etiquette, effective communication, and appropriate personal behavior. Recognizes that different situations can call for different dress, behaviors, speech, etiquette, etc.
- Builds knowledge in order to understand the backgrounds and lived experiences of those in the community the library serves, especially when they differ from one’s own
- Respects and fosters a diversity of viewpoints
- Recognizes and refrains from acting on one’s social, cultural, gender, and sexual biases
- Confronts harassment and bias among one’s self and others
- Welcomes, values, and creates a safe environment for and with teens of all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and those with different abilities and identities
- Includes teens in library decision making
- Creates meaningful, skill-building volunteer and leadership opportunities for and with teens
- Recognizes teen expertise and creates ways for that expertise to be shared
- Develops, tests, and evaluates new ideas
- Pushes the boundaries of what the library is and what it does for and with teens
- Maximizes resources to provide the best library services and experiences for and with teens
- Recognizes that learning comes from failure and experimentation
- Demonstrates a willingness to take calculated risks to improve teen services
### Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Professional Duty</th>
<th>Social Responsibility</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Upholds strong moral and ethical principles. Acts truthfully, fairly, and without ulterior motives</td>
<td>Committed to meeting one’s professional obligations, to serving the profession, and to positively influencing the community</td>
<td>Promotes the mutual trust between the profession and the larger public. Responds to societal needs as they relate to teens and libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Puts patrons/library above personal interest or gain</td>
<td>• Pursues continuing education opportunities regularly</td>
<td>• Can articulate the teen perspective when friction arises between adults (patrons or staff) and teens in the library</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Maintains confidentiality</td>
<td>• Keeps abreast of teen issues and library trends</td>
<td>• Seeks opportunities both inside and outside the library to speak up and act for teen services rather than waiting to be asked to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adheres to the highest standards of the profession, including those articulated by ALA and YALSA</td>
<td>• Contributes to the library community and supports the growth of other librarians and library workers</td>
<td>• Advocates for the educational, developmental, and recreational needs of teens, especially as they relate to library services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Articulates and internalizes stated ideals and professional values</td>
<td>• Promotes policies that support the needs and interests of teens and their families</td>
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<td>• Resolves dilemmas with respect to a consistent set of core values</td>
<td>• Advocates for changes in laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines that affect the ability of libraries to deliver excellent library services for and with teens</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is trustworthy</td>
<td>• Promotes community volunteerism</td>
<td>• Promotes community volunteerism</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Takes responsibility to be an integral part of the library and community</td>
<td>• Provides leadership in the community</td>
<td>• Provides leadership in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chooses employment situations that are congruent with the profession’s values and ethical standards</td>
<td>• Participates in collaborative relationships with other youth service providers and the public at large</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acts on the basis of professional values even when the results of the behavior may place one’s self at risk</td>
<td>• Ensures the blending of social justice and economic efficiency of services</td>
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**from the President** *(continued from page 3)*

and serve teens successfully. If you, or your supervisor, needs convincing that getting out into the community is imperative, check out YALSA’s new “Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession.” If connecting with a diverse population of teens seems daunting, read Kim Dare’s article about building cultural competence skills. If you need ideas on where to look in your community, read up on the work that LA Commons, RadioActive, and Sociedad Latina are doing. And lastly, don’t forget about the YALSAblog where you can read about my presidential initiative, “3-2-1 IMPACT! Inclusive and Impactful Teen Services.” Together we can transform teen services and help the nation’s 42+ million teens have a brighter future. YALS
Getting Started—Five Tips on How to Get Started Writing with YALSA

1. Talk to a member of the Publications Advisory Board (http://bit.ly/yalsa_committees)! We are always looking for fresh ideas and can put you in touch with the right people, whether you want to write a book, submit an article, or become a writer for one of YALSA’s official blogs.

2. Think big: are you an expert in an area of services for and with teens? Why not write a book about it?

3. Think small: if the idea of writing a whole book makes your stomach drop, consider contributing a chapter to an edited book, writing an article about YALSA’s work for the I Love Libraries website or American Libraries (AL), or writing an article for YALS. Or, for instant gratification, submit a guest post to the YALSA blog or The Hub.

4. There’s no secret handshake or magic password when it comes to writing for YALSA—the only thing stopping you from getting started is, well, you! If you have an idea, you may be just who we are looking for.

5. If you decide not to publish with YALSA, please encourage your friends and colleagues who have relevant expertise to do so.

Why? Five Reasons You Should Write with YALSA

1. When you publish with YALSA, you get the full support and expertise of the YALSA office, including resources, contacts, opportunities to present at conferences and facilitate webinars, and the help of the Publications Advisory Board whenever you need it.

2. Give back to get back! Publishing with YALSA helps the Division reach its financial goals and fulfill its mission.

3. Writing for YALSA is an excellent way to establish a name for yourself in the field of teen services.

4. You have great ideas! You’ve had exciting experiences! You’re on the cutting edge! Right? Maybe you’ve overcome an insurmountable problem or come up with a creative way to solve a long-standing conundrum. It could be something your peers would be interested in learning about.

5. We work in libraries, which means sharing information is one of our specialties! Publishing with YALSA is your chance to be a creator, rather than just a consumer.

What We’re Looking For—Five Tips for Getting YALSA’s Attention

1. Write about a subject (or subjects) that is significant to library staff who serve teens—one on which you have a unique perspective or voice.

2. Think about building on a previous work—we’re always looking for editors to put together updated editions.

3. If you serve on a YALSA committee, write about the work your group does. Writing and publishing is frequently an important part of a committee charge.

4. Whatever you do, find a way to include new information, new insights, and new approaches, and try not to duplicate an existing work (from any publisher).

5. Think about your audience—the deeper and broader your audience, the more people you reach. Will your idea appeal to school librarians? Teen services specialists? Library generalists? Parents? Teachers? Out-of-school providers?

The Next Step—Three Tips for Contacting the Right People So You Can Get Writing

1. Use the Publications Advisory Board to find the perfect outlet for your idea. Ask us questions—it’s what we’re here for. The Chair’s contact information is online: http://bit.ly/yalsa_committees.
If you’re ready, fill out the online form (http://bit.ly/yalsa_volunteer) found via YALSA’s “Get Involved” (http://bit.ly/yalsa_getinvolved) web page to let us know which publishing opportunity you’re interested in.

Depending on your specific interest, feel free to contact these individuals directly:

- JRLYA Member Editor: yalsaresearch@gmail.com
- The Hub Blog Member Manager: yalsahub@gmail.com
- YALSA’s Communications Specialist, Anna Lam: alam@ala.org (for book-length publications and the e-news)
- YALSAblog Member Manager: yalsablogmanager@gmail.com
- YALS editor: yalseditor@gmail.com

The Book Proposal—Six Tips for Submitting a Stunning Book Proposal

1. Send an informal proposal to the Publications Advisory Board Chair (http://bit.ly/yalsa_committees)—a paragraph or two is all we need. We’ll be happy to give feedback and help you complete a formal proposal when the time comes.
2. Make sure the subject or topic is clearly and adequately defined, and provide a rationale as to why this topic, and your approach to covering it, warrant a book-length work.
3. Clearly identify your audience for the publication.
4. Include the intended purpose of the manuscript in your proposal. Is it a major reference work? How-to guide? Survey of literature? Workbook? Bibliographic essay?
5. Make sure the content aligns closely with key YALSA documents, including the association’s guidelines, core professional values, strategic plan, and “Future of Library Services for and with ‘Teens’ report.
6. Writing samples (whether it’s a sample chapter or previously published material) are always welcome!

Book Publishing—Seven Tips for Writing a Book with YALSA

1. Organize your work! Include an introduction, helpful breaks (chapters, subsections, paragraphs), and a conclusion.
2. Provide a clear, logical, convincing, and interesting text.
3. Write for the audience—the level or formality will vary based on who you are trying to reach.
4. Appropriately adapt manuscripts that were originally prepared for another purpose (e.g., speech, research proposal, grant report, or dissertation).
5. Use standard English and avoid acronyms and jargon, and follow The Chicago Manual of Style for spelling, punctuation, and note citation style.
6. Provide effective documentation: footnotes, bibliography, references, statistics, etc.
7. Explain and interpret tables, graphs, formulas, and illustrations.

Shorter Writing—Twelve Tips for Writing an Article for YALS or Blog Post for YALSAblog or The Hub

1. YALSAblog posts should be short pieces that help to expand knowledge, raise provocative issues and questions, or explore personal experiences with an eye toward the relevance these experiences have for all library staff serving teens.
2. Blog posts for The Hub highlight topics, news, trends, and resources relating to collections and content creation for teen services.
3. YALS has more space than blogs, so look to the journal when you want to write longer, more in-depth pieces that demonstrate how libraries and community agencies are moving forward with the ideas in YALSA’s “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action” report.
4. Think new: do you have a program, set of outcomes, or community engagement strategy that others might be interested in learning about?
5. Think improved: are you doing something traditional in a new way?
6. Gotta have it: what would make all library staffers’ lives easier?
7. Service to all: are you doing something in a school, detention center, homeless shelter, rural, urban, or other underserved environment?
8. Turning it around: we all have programs or services that don’t work. Don’t let others make your same mistakes; write about what you wish you had done differently. Or, did you take a failure and turn it into a success? That could be an article, too.
9. Stats and surveys: research can be appropriate for all of YALSA’s publications, but don’t rule out an article about how you measured success and outcomes in your program or service.
10. Teen input: did one of your teens sponsor an amazing community service initiative? Would a teen like to write about an experience with a YALSA-sponsored program or resource?
11. Mentoring: can you think of advice that new library staff would find useful?
12. Remember, an important aspect of successful writing is meeting deadlines and responding to changes and questions quickly.
Finally—Seven Things to Remember

1. What you want (to see your ideas and experience in print) and what we want (to see your ideas and experience in print) are the same thing!

2. YALSA pays book authors competitive rates, with a variety of possible compensation options.

3. Publishing a book with YALSA means you have a contract with YALSA and are working directly with YALSA’s Communications Specialist, Anna Lam (alam@ala.org). ALA Editions and Neal-Schuman are not YALSA. Working with either of those imprints means you are working with ALA, which is separate from YALSA.

4. When you publish with YALSA, you also get the full force of the association’s marketing and publicity, including online sales, catalogs, conference appearances, and all kinds of cool author incentives. Never underestimate the power of a YALSA Author badge ribbon!

5. YALSA understands that you have options when it comes to publishing, and if we haven’t convinced you to work with us yet, we’ll be more than happy to keep at it. Just contact YALSA’s Communications Specialist or the Publications Advisory Board and we’ll give you even more reasons why publishing with YALSA is truly the way to go.

6. When we say we want you, we mean it—YOU! And possibly the person sitting next to you. We’d love to see about working with both of you.

7. As Toni Morrison said: “If there’s a book you really want to read but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.”

(YALSA Publications Committee 2009; Revised 2015—YALSA Publications Advisory Board)
Cultural competence is a phrase we’re hearing more and more lately. When I was asked last September to chair YALSA’s newly established Cultural Competence Task Force, I had a vague idea of what the term entailed and the role of libraries in the area of cultural competence. As I continue to work with the wonderful group of librarians who make up the Task Force, I see daily just how important it is that library staff lead the charge in intentionally fostering a culturally competent environment.

A Bit of History
YALSA established the Cultural Competence Task Force in recognition of the findings and recommendations of the “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action” report. Data in that report showed that libraries are serving teen patrons who come from widely varying backgrounds. The proposal (available at http://bit.ly/yalsacctfbrdprop) for the Cultural Competencies Task Force, which was approved by YALSA’s Board of Directors during the 2014 Annual meeting, noted that diversity includes “ethnicities, sexualities, cultures, income and education levels. [Teens] face a wide range of social issues including immigration, homelessness, abuse, pregnancy, and bullying. Many have mental health needs or have a disability. Libraries need to be a place where teens feel welcome and respected no matter who they are. Teens need to see themselves reflected in library collections, programming, space and staffing and be able to find support and resources.”

Coming from one of the most diverse school districts in the country (Fairfax County, Virginia), I couldn’t wait to sink my teeth into work that would help librarians create opportunities that recognize and benefit from our varied backgrounds. Fairfax County Public Schools is the 10th largest school district in the United States; with 196 schools and centers serving almost 187,000 students. At the end of the 2014 school year, 17.2 percent of students in the district were enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Language classes (with over 170 world languages spoken at home); 28.2 percent of our students qualified for free and reduced lunches; and 13.8 percent received special education services.

Each member of our Task Force was selected because of a passion for connecting with teens from a variety of backgrounds. Liz Bast and Yesica Hurd are middle school librarians from the Milwaukee and San Francisco Bay area, respectively, each serving diverse populations. Heather Hopkins, in Colorado, has a background in taking the public library outside of its physical walls and meeting youth where they’re comfortable. Sarah Park Dahlen is an assistant professor of library and information science at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, and is active in raising awareness about diversity and social justice in children’s literature. Angelique Kopa, from Maryland, has expertise in collections and acquisition. Monnee Tong works with youth in San Diego’s public library. Our different cultural backgrounds and areas of expertise have allowed us to learn a great deal from each other, and if the virtual nature of the Task

KIM DARE is a high school librarian in Herndon, Virginia. She received her MS in Information Sciences from the University of Tennessee in 2006. She is an avid reader and reviews for School Library Journal and other publications.
Force and the fact that we’re spread across time zones make it a little difficult to find a common Google Hangout time, that’s a minor inconvenience.

The Work of the Task Force
Although I’ve been a member of YALSA for years, the Cultural Competence Task Force was my first foray into participating on a YALSA committee or task force, and I was impressed with the very structured approach that YALSA takes to helping all members prepare and be successful. The beginning of the term involves some tutorials that cover expectations for working within the group, and the Board provides a specific list of objectives for the task force to accomplish over the assigned term. Each task force is assigned a Board member as a liaison so that, as questions arise, we have a point of contact to the larger organization.

One of the things that each of us had to make a deliberate effort not to emphasize as we were beginning our conversations was collection development. Especially with the rise of the We Need Diverse Books campaign and the ever-growing booklists that feature characters who are of color, or GLBT, or disabled, or incarcerated, or all of the above, it is easy to see ourselves as culturally competent if we are buying books that reflect wide teen experiences. But true cultural competence goes beyond the books that make up a library’s collection. Cultural competence is the recognition that each of us is shaped by our culture. It is also an appreciation of diverse cultural backgrounds through our interactions with others. This appreciation should be evident in our programming choices, our awareness of specific needs within the communities that we serve, and our efforts to connect with teens inside and outside of the walls of the library.

Our Products
A key focus of the Task Force is to develop a toolkit that brings together existing and new resources for librarians who are looking to deepen their own cultural competencies. This toolkit includes an overview of what cultural competencies are; information on why it is important for librarians to develop cultural competencies; examples of best practices; information on how cultural competencies tie into school curriculums and connected learning; and suggestions for conducting outreach to connect with community groups that can help libraries strengthen cultural competencies. At the time of this writing, the toolkit is not quite ready; however, you should find it on YALSA’s website by the time YALS has gone to press.

The Task Force knows that there are many areas related to cultural competence in which library staff would like to make a difference. We are starting to help provide resources in those areas through podcasts on the YALSAblog. In May, members of the Task Force interviewed Patrick Jones about his extensive experience with bringing library services to juvenile detention centers. You can listen to the podcast at the YALSAblog (http://bit.ly/yalsablog_jonesccinvtr). Over the summer, we posted an interview (http://bit.ly/yalsablog_heurtasccinvtr) with Ady Huertas, Teen Center Manager for San Diego Public Library’s Central Library, about her work with REFORMA and the Children in Crisis Task Force.

Focusing on cultural competence may make library staff think they have to take entirely new approaches to programming; however, you don’t need to neglect cultural competence in the more traditional programming that you do. Are African American girls participating in your Teen Tech Week activities and your maker spaces? Check out our YALSAblog post entitled “Cultural Competence and the Maker Movement” (http://bit.ly/yalsablog_cc_maker) for ideas on how to draw in more than the traditional geeks. Are you seeing the same faces at your summer reading/learning programs and Teen Read Week, or are you reaching out to a broader spectrum of teens with a variety of formats and a diverse selection of authors and titles and styles?

If you are not convinced that your teens are facing issues like homelessness or incarceration or language barriers or bullying over gender identity, our Task Force members developed a great infographic that gives a snapshot of today’s teens. You can find it on YALSA’s website by searching Teen Demographics or going to http://bit.ly/yalsai_demographics. If the statistics surprise you and you want to get a better idea of how you currently score in the cultural competence area, test yourself with the Harvard Implicit Bias Test, found at Collective Impact Forum’s website (http://collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/eqity-resources).

We offer two wikis for those of you who enjoy reading or contributing content. Serving Diverse Teens @ Your Library (http://bit.ly/yalsa_srvngdiverstees) has been around for several years, but we’ve added a lot of new content to ensure you have the most up-to-date resources for serving African American teens, Asian/Pacific American teens, Chinese American teens, Latino teens, teens with disabilities, teens in foster care, GLBT teens, homeless teens, and other traditionally underserved groups. The newer wiki, Cultural Competence (http://bit.ly/yalsa_ccwiki), brings together articles, training links, research, and other resources that will allow you to incorporate cultural competencies more fully into your library practices.
One such training link is from Amita Lonial, Learning Experiences Manager at Skokie Public Library, who facilitated a wonderful webinar in June called “Cultural Competence in the Library” that you can access through YALSA’s eLearning Library (YeLL!) at http://bit.ly/yalsawebinars.

While the work of the Cultural Competence Task Force is close to completion, we hope that these tools encourage conversations about how we can ensure that every teen feels welcome and represented by the library. We all want to do the right things for our patrons; building our cultural competence skills just allows us to do those right things a little more deliberately. 

YALS
KUOW’s RadioActive Youth Media

By Jenny Asarnow

You Can Do It: RadioActive Interviewing Workshop

After brief introductions, we gather youth in two concentric circles, so that each participant is facing a partner. We prompt them with a simple open-ended question to ask their partner, such as “how was your weekend?” However, there’s a catch. The youth have to be “bad listeners.” After the youth have a chance to practice their (often hilarious) bad listening skills, we debrief by asking reflective questions such as “what did your partner do to show they weren’t listening?” “How did it feel to not be listened to?” “How did it feel to be the one not listening?” This reinforces that not listening doesn’t feel good to either participant, and sets the youth up to listen actively in the next round of our activity.

The second time around, the youth practice being good listeners. Again we prompt them with an open-ended question, such as “what’s your favorite place in the world?” We ask them to stick to one topic for one to two minutes, challenging them to practice asking follow-up questions. After several rounds of this, we listen to a couple of short interview clips that illustrate what to do and what not to do in an interview. In the discussion that follows, we ask the youth to share
Resources to Learn More

Why This Teen Stopped Hiding Her Dad’s Abuse

FB Conversation about Noel’s Story

Stories from a Two-Day Workshop with Farmworker Youth in Mt. Vernon, Washington

RadioActive Explores Minority Representation with Hari Kondabolu
(RadioActive podcast)

what interview starters and stoppers they noticed while listening to the clips. Typically, youth come up with such interview starters as open-ended questions, follow-up questions, and treating the interview subject with respect.

From there, it’s time to put this knowledge into practice. Since our program emphasizes the use of professional radio technology, we pass our handheld digital audio recorders and teach youth how to use them. However, you could just as easily ask youth to use their own smartphones to record their conversations. Regardless of what equipment youth are using, we emphasize two technical skills: holding your microphone about six to eight inches from your subject’s mouth, and wearing headphones. If you’re recording audio and not wearing headphones, it’s just like taking a photo without looking through the viewfinder. You might get something good, but you never know.

Now, youth divide into pairs and interview one another for five to ten minutes each, typically using this prompt: “What’s a challenge in your life that you’ve overcome, and how did you overcome it?” (If you have more time, you could prompt youth to brainstorm alternative open-ended questions to ask each other.) Finally, we reflect on the whole process and find out what youth learned. Typically, they reflect that interviewing is fun, but it’s hard to stay on one topic the whole time. This often leads to a discussion about preparation, and youth reflect that next time they do an interview, they want to prepare more questions ahead of time.

That’s what a one-hour RadioActive workshop looks like. Want to do more? Consider devoting a season of after school or summer time to an audio journalism or podcasting workshop. RadioActive holds an intensive six-week introductory workshop at KUOW’s studios every summer, and 12-week after-school workshops in the spring and fall at locations throughout the Seattle area, with a focus on geographic areas with less access to high-quality arts programs. (See a sample agenda and calendar for RadioActive workshops at the end of this article.)

This fall, we are partnering with the Seattle Public Library’s Columbia Branch to offer our 12-week intensive after-school workshop for six youth ages 16 to 18. By the end of the program, each participant will complete a professional-quality radio story, such as the kind you might hear on NPR’s Morning Edition or All Things Considered. All of our students’ stories will be featured on KUOW.org and will be archived by the Seattle Public Library. Many will broadcast on KUOW’s airwaves, reaching tens of thousands of listeners. Each participant will receive a $375 stipend for the work, ensuring that this workshop is accessible to all youth. At the end of every RadioActive intensive, we celebrate with a community listening party open to friends, family, and the public.

Each participant in a RadioActive intensive creates a story on a topic of choice. In fall 2014, an intro workshop student, Noel Gasca, chose to tell her story about a young woman, Ivy Jacobsen, who had decided to stop hiding her father’s sexual abuse. Noel knew Ivy from high school. Ivy had graduated a couple of years earlier and had given a graduation day speech about the abuse she’d experienced. Now, Noel interviewed Ivy, chose clips from the interview she wanted to include, and wrote a script to tie the narrative together. She went through several rounds of edits with me, her editor, and was supported by a staff mentor as well as a story partner, a fellow participant in the workshop. Noel carefully fact-checked each aspect of Ivy’s story. She interviewed Ivy’s mother and former teacher to get more perspectives on what had happened. She found a recording of Ivy’s graduation speech and layered the audio into her story. She voiced her script in a studio and mixed it all together. Then we posted her story online. Within 24 hours it had gone viral, with more than 100,000 views. One listener wrote on KUOW’s Facebook page, “Thank you for sharing this story of courage, strength, and hope, as it’s inspiring for people of all ages to end abuse in their lives.”

Being a witness to someone’s story changes your life. Telling your own story changes your life. Hearing stories changes lives. The first step is to listen. I encourage you to teach the youth you work with to listen, because that skill will open them up to hearing each other’s voices, and that will change their lives. YALS
KUOW’s RadioActive Youth Media Interviewing Workshop

Time: 45–75 minutes

Materials
- Computer and speakers
- Digital audio recorders and headphones (or ask youth to bring their own smartphones and headphones)
- White board or chart paper and markers
- Pen and paper for students

In this workshop, youth learn to identify active listening, and learn interview practices such as asking open-ended questions and follow-up questions. They practice using digital audio recorders and get to know other members of the group.

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>PREP</td>
<td>Gather materials</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Load these links to listen to:</td>
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<td>- Sigur Ros on NPR’s Bryant Park Project <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIMGPlH4XPo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIMGPlH4XPo</a></td>
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<td>- Clare Martin interviews a stranger at Seattle’s Pike Place Market as part of KUOW’s RadioActive Youth Media workshop <a href="https://soundcloud.com/kuow/radioactive-interview-example">https://soundcloud.com/kuow/radioactive-interview-example</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Optional)</td>
<td>Load these RadioActive stories to listen to:</td>
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<td>- For older youth only: <a href="http://kuow.org/post/why-teen-stopped-hiding-her-dads-abuse">http://kuow.org/post/why-teen-stopped-hiding-her-dads-abuse</a></td>
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<td>OPENING 5 MIN</td>
<td>Introduction to the workshop:</td>
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<td>5 min</td>
<td>“Today you’re going to learn to do an interview like a broadcast journalist does! We’ll talk about what kinds of questions you can ask to get interesting and informational answers. Then you’ll practice by interviewing a partner.”</td>
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<td>(Optional) “You’ll also learn how to use professional recording equipment for doing an interview!”</td>
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<td>“This workshop comes from KUOW’s RadioActive Youth Media in Seattle! They work with high school age students who make their OWN stories about the topics that matter to them. You can hear them at Kuow.org/radioactive.”</td>
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<td>Questions?</td>
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<td>BUILDING INTERVIEWING SKILLS 20–25 MIN</td>
<td>Rotating Circles</td>
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<td>10–15 min</td>
<td>“Before starting, we have to be comfortable asking and answering questions of each other.”</td>
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<td>[Standing] Divide the group into two and have one group form an inner circle, shoulder to shoulder, facing outward. The other group forms an outer circle facing inward. Everyone should be facing a partner.</td>
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<td>Give the group a topic to talk about with their partner: What was a highlight of your weekend? CATCH: Be BAD listeners.</td>
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<td>After 30 sec, direct people to stop and ask:</td>
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<td>- Whose partner was an excellent bad listener? What did the bad listener do?</td>
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<td>- How did it feel to not be listened to?</td>
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<td>- How did it feel to be the one not listening?</td>
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<td>Ask the outer circle to rotate once to the right, so each person has a new partner. Now we’re going to be GOOD listeners!</td>
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<td>Give the group a new question. 1 minute per question. The challenge is to stay on topic for the whole time. After each question, the outer circle rotates once to the right. Alternate which circle is asking the question.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tell me about your family?</td>
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<td>- What’s your favorite place in the world?</td>
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<td>- What is a challenge that you’ve overcome, and how did you do it? (2 min for this question—let both circles ask and answer)</td>
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The document contains a workshop plan for teaching interview skills. It starts with a brief introduction and example questions, followed by a practice session where participants are divided into pairs or groups and practice interviewing each other. The process includes rounds where interviewers and interviewees switch roles, and there are reflections and feedback sessions at the end. The goal is to teach students effective interview techniques and to facilitate group discussions and pair interviews.
**LISTEN TO A RADIOACTIVE STORY (OPTIONAL) 10 MIN**

10 min (if time) | Listening
---|---
- Listen to a story from KUOW’s RadioActive Youth Media workshop. This story was produced by a young person age 16 to 18. The youth did all of the interviewing, recording, writing, and audio editing (with the support of adult mentors).
- What parts of the story grabbed your ears?
- What questions do you have about how this was made?
- What do you think the person had to consider when interviewing?

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**RadioActive Youth Media Spring 2015 After-School Intro Workshop Calendar**

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<td><strong>Sun</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4:00–5:00 Lab time</td>
<td>4:00–5:00 Lab time</td>
<td>5:00–7:00 Editor meetings</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>5:00–7:00 Transcribing interviews, pulling cuts</td>
<td>5:00–7:00</td>
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<td>HW: Transcripts due Thurs.</td>
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<td>HW: Do additional interviews, rewrite your lede, pull cuts by Tues.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>4:00–5:00 Lab time</td>
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<td>5:00–7:00 Group feedback session, writing for radio 2</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>4:00–5:00 Lab time</td>
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<td>5:00–7:00 Writing a first draft of your final story</td>
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<td>4:00–5:00 Lab time</td>
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<td>5:00–7:00 What makes great radio (or podcasts), planning the listening party</td>
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<td>HW: First draft due Thurs.</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>4:00–5:00 Lab time</td>
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<td>5:00–7:00 Workshop your first draft with your mentor</td>
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### April

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<td>5:00–7:00 Distributing stories, audio editing 2</td>
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<td>HW: 2nd draft due Thurs.</td>
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<td>3:30–6:30 Lab time</td>
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<td>4:00–7:00 One hour script edit with your editor</td>
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<td>HW: Fourth draft due Tues.</td>
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<td>3:30 Start Lab time</td>
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<td>4:00–7:00 One hour script edit with your editor</td>
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<td>HW: Fifth draft due Sat.</td>
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<td>5:00–7:00 Voicing your final stories!</td>
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Thank you to our official Teen Read Week 2015 sponsors for their support!

Teen Read Week was once again a huge success!
Thank you to our official sponsors of Teen Read Week 2015 for their support in our Teen Read Week mission of encouraging continued literacy development and library use amongst teens.

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Sociedad Latina has a long history in Boston’s Mission Hill/Roxbury neighborhood and has developed a number of strategies to develop strong relationships with the future leaders of our Latino community. Through our programming, youth also build skills for lifelong success while they build community. In this article, coauthored by Sociedad Latina staff and youth, we outline our model and key learnings.

About Sociedad Latina
Sociedad Latina is a mid-sized, Latino-led youth development organization located in the Mission Hill/Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. Our mission is to work in partnership with youth and families to create the next generation of Latino leaders who are confident, competent, self-sustaining, and proud of their cultural heritage. Sociedad Latina was founded in 1968 as a space for Latinos in Boston to find fellowship and celebrate their cultures of origin. In the early 1980s, we moved to our Mission Hill/Roxbury home and have since become a pillar in the neighborhood. For more than 40 years, Sociedad Latina has served Latino youth and the community of Boston, pioneering new and innovative solutions to end the destructive cycles of poverty, health disparities, racism, and lack of educational and professional opportunities in our community.

At the heart of our work is an organization-wide commitment and promise to work tirelessly to elevate youth voices in decision-making processes that affect youth lives and opportunities. We are committed to creating spaces for youth to be heard, to share their visions for a better Boston, and to help make community changes and improvements that are meaningful to their lives. For Sociedad Latina, youth leadership and empowerment are two of the most important pillars of our work. We believe that youth must take the lead on planning for their success and advocating for change because they have first-hand experience of the challenges facing their communities and their generation. With their unique knowledge and perspective, they are in an ideal position to come up with effective solutions to barriers in their own life and in the community. We take an interdisciplinary approach to this work, combining civic engagement, arts and culture, work readiness, and academic support activities that support the whole youth from middle school through high school and to college and career success.

Our Approach
Sociedad Latina achieves our mission through our original Pathways to Success model, which offers youth ages 11 to 21 a range of hands-on opportunities to elevate their voices, build skills, and become leaders. Our Pathways to Success model integrates four areas identified by our youth and families as most important: Education, Civic Engagement, Workforce Development, and Arts and Culture. Our Education programs support youth to actively engage with school, progress toward high school graduation, and plan early for postsecondary success. With our Civic Engagement programs, we challenge youth to become advocates for themselves and their community on pressing issues such as health inequity, education reform, and climate change. We also offer Workforce Development programming to provide intensive skills training and career exploration opportunities that empower youth to achieve future success.

RAYMOND ORTIZ, 16, is a third-year Youth Leader at Sociedad Latina. He lives in the Mission Hill neighborhood of Boston and is a junior at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. Ortiz is bilingual in English and Spanish. LAURA SIMOCKO is the Grants Manager at Sociedad Latina, where she is responsible for fundraising, marketing, and evaluation. Simocko holds an MPhil in Race, Ethnicity, Conflict from Trinity College, Dublin, and a BA in Peace and Conflict Studies from Colgate University. Special thanks to Kelly Baker, Alexandra Oliver-Dávila, and Angel Santana, who served as peer reviewers on this article.
our Arts and Culture programs offer youth a space to self-express, articulate frustrations and fears, and create original works of art. These four disciplines are integrated across our model, ensuring that all youth who engage with Sociedad Latina have the chance to explore, grow, and take action toward their goals.

Our Pathways to Success model is culturally relevant, bilingual, and rooted in the community; we consider these factors essential to its impact and success. We differentiate ourselves as a Latino organization, with curricula, events, staff, and an organizational philosophy built on a deep understanding and valuing of Latino culture and the assets that Latino youth and families bring. We also support young people to develop positive cultural identities, which serve as protective factors, promote resiliency, and continue Latino cultural traditions in our community.

Research shows that a positive cultural identity is a critical protective factor in helping youth to overcome racial and ethnic disparities that are detrimental to long-term success. In 2015, 88 percent of youth in our programs were more culturally responsive and 78 percent felt more pride in their own culture, race, or ethnic group. Our parents and caregivers also gave overwhelmingly positive feedback on our programming: 93 percent reported that Sociedad Latina met the academic, social, career, and cultural needs and interests of their child and 93 percent agreed that Sociedad Latina understands the situation of our youth and families and celebrates Latino culture.

Although we consider our culturally based approach central to our organizational philosophy and impact, we have identified other factors that successfully engage youth and support them to achieve positive outcomes:

- **Flexible Pathways:** Every youth is unique, and we celebrate that at Sociedad Latina. Our Pathways to Success model is flexible and offers youth multiple points of entry so they can define their own success and access services in line with their needs and interests. We also recognize that youth have other responsibilities in their lives and cater our programs to their schedules. Our programs are offered year-round, throughout the day, and at varying levels of commitment.

- **Holistic, Long-Term Investment:** As a rooted member of the community, Sociedad Latina aims to engage with youth throughout their lives and to offer progressive programs that respond to their growth. We support youth and their families through the critical transition periods that occur between ages 11 to 21, from middle school to high school and on to college and careers. We also ensure that youth have opportunities to increase their role and responsibilities over time, becoming true leaders in their lives and communities.

- **Youth Ownership:** Although Sociedad Latina’s dedicated staff members plan and oversee our programs, we encourage youth to take ownership of and pride in their projects. During programs, our youth play an active role in designing and leading activities, planning next steps, and finding solutions to challenges. They also regularly give feedback that is used to identify best practices, pinpoint areas for improvement, and brainstorm programmatic expansions.

- **Family Engagement:** We recognize that parents, caregivers, and family members are the single most important factor in a young person’s life. As a result, Sociedad Latina actively engages family members in all aspects of our programs, which increases the likelihood that youth will stay involved over the long term and achieve more positive outcomes. We also offer programs specifically for parents to build their support network and celebrate Latino cultural traditions.

- **Linguistic Diversity:** The majority of our youth are bilingual (or multilingual), an incredible asset that we value at Sociedad Latina. All of our programming is presented in English and Spanish and we provide targeted language supports that foster resiliency, self-acceptance, and tolerance. By respecting diverse linguistic backgrounds, we support English language learners and Spanish-speaking youth to build their English skills while celebrating their cultural heritage.

**Centering Youth Voice**

Recognizing the importance of amplifying youth voices across platforms and spaces, we decided to incorporate youth perspective in this article, as a model for how youth development organizations can provide youth with meaningful leadership opportunities and diverse projects. First, staff identified a youth coauthor (Raymond Ortiz) and met with him to talk about the background and goals of the article. Then staff and youth worked collaboratively to develop the article’s broad structure, create a timeline for writing, and identify which of Sociedad Latina’s strategies were most important to highlight and share. Using this initial plan, we divided up responsibilities and got to work. Staff members contributed the background and approach sections based on youth feedback. Our coauthor wrote a reflection on his experience with Sociedad Latina and also interviewed his peers to collect quotes, anecdotes, and stories that were used to frame the overall article. We then compiled our sections into a complete draft and sent it out for
peer review. A staff member and a youth (Angel Santana) who were not involved in the writing process were identified to give comments on the draft. This step proved particularly important, as peer reviewers gave key insights that improved the article and more clearly articulated our vision. Finally, staff and the youth author worked together to incorporate feedback and make final changes to the article.

Although this youth-led process was in some ways more time intensive than the traditional writing process, it opened up the article to diverse viewpoints and experiences. It also ensured that youth voice was at the forefront, even in writing done by staff members. The youth coauthor expressed his personal reaction to working on the project: “I’m new to this sort of project, and I benefitted from learning new things about the writing process and different topics. I also learned to work together with a group of people collaboratively.” For staff members, the process was invaluable. Although staff often asks for youth feedback on specific activities or programmatic components, there is rarely the opportunity to reflect with youth on the organization as a whole and what makes Sociedad Latina unique. One staff member commented: “Our youth coauthor and peer reviewer brought a great energy to the project. They also taught me a lot about our organization and the impact that our programs have.”

Raymond’s Journey

To give some insight on Sociedad Latina’s model for connecting and working with youth, we thought it important to share the reflection of a youth who has been an active member of the Sociedad Latina community in different capacities and roles.

My name is Raymond Ortiz. I live in Roxbury [a neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts], and I attend Madison Park Technical Vocational High School as an upcoming junior in the Information Support Services and Networking track. I am a Youth Leader who’s been working at Sociedad Latina for almost three years. During ninth grade, I was walking home from the store and saw a youth hiring poster in the window of Sociedad Latina’s first floor. I approached the building and went in to hear what Sociedad Latina has to offer to young people. Without hesitating, I applied without knowing what any of the jobs meant. I thought, “They’re paying, so why not?”

For the nearly three years I’ve been at Sociedad Latina, I have been in the Youth Community Organizing group. I joined this group without knowing what it means to be a “Youth Community Organizer,” but over time I’ve learned many skills such as public speaking and working in a group. I was also given the chance to speak out at Boston Public School Committee hearings about school lunches and budget cuts to Madison Park, Boston Redevelopment Authority meetings to speak my mind on affordable housing in Mission Hill and take a college course on C++ programming at Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology.

I have decided to stay at Sociedad Latina because of the endless support from staff members, experiences, and opportunities provided to me. The other Youth Leaders I’ve met over the years also pulled me back in because we got along so well, and some relationships have become friendships, including with some youth that go to the same school as me. Many older Youth Leaders gave me advice and tips for passing high school and the road ahead. I also appreciate all of the advice, tips, and support my peers at Sociedad Latina have given me. I believe that friendship is a main aspect of Sociedad Latina that makes it special to me.

This summer, my current position at Sociedad Latina is as an intern for the Development team, which in my opinion is pretty good. So far, I’ve been planning social media posts for Sociedad Latina, working on marketing projects, doing grants research, and taking photos of Sociedad Latina’s summer concert series on Thursdays. I’m enjoying every moment of it. After my internship this summer, I’m planning to return to Sociedad Latina in September for my third school year. In addition to getting ready to apply to college, I’m planning to be a Health Educator and work on health issues in the community.

Sociedad Latina’s Pathways to Success model embraces the whole person with the understanding that one-size-fits-all programming doesn’t work for most youth, especially those with diverse interests like Raymond. Our flexible pathways encourage youth to explore different topics and talents while building academic and work readiness skills that will ensure their long-term success. Each program also incorporates the arts and civic engagement so youth have the opportunity to be creative while serving as leaders in their community.

“How Do You Feel about Your Connection with Sociedad Latina?”

Each of our youth has an interesting personal experience with Sociedad Latina that reflects a unique connection. Across the board, however, we see that our model is successful in creating and growing strong bonds.

- Abraham Sillah (Current Youth Leader): “Sociedad Latina offers a warm, welcoming feeling of support and happiness, just like a family.”
Sociedad Latina ofrece un ambiente cálido y acogedor de apoyo y la felicidad como una familia.

- Jenn Then (Alumni Youth Leader): “I can speak from experience when I say that there are incredible people in Sociedad Latina that have helped me get through high school, and have encouraged and supported me through the college process. [Hablo por experiencia cuando digo que hay personas excepcionales en Sociedad Latina que me ayudaron a graduarme, y me animaron y apoyaron durante el proceso de solicitar admisión a la universidad.]”
- Wilmer Quiñones (Alumni Youth Leader): “I was asked to be a part of my community and that was special for me. Now I want my community to be my career. [Me pidieron que formara una parte de mi comunidad y eso era especial para mi. Ahora quiero a mi comunidad sea mi carrera.]”
- Joy Monge (Current Youth Leader): “My family has been connected to Sociedad Latina for many years and I feel like I want to continue the tradition. [Mi familia se ha conectado a la Sociedad Latina durante muchos años y me siento como que quiero continuar con la tradición.]”
- Maria Baez (Parent): “This is a program that builds leaders, encourages students to do better every day, and makes positive changes in our community. It gives hope to the ones who think there is no opportunity in life to do better. [Este es un programa que construye líderes, anima a los estudiantes a mejorar cada día, y hace cambios positivos en nuestra comunidad. Da esperanza a la que piensan que no hay oportunidad en la vida para hacer mejor.]”

**Conclusion**

Raymond’s reflection and the feedback from our youth and families make clear that Sociedad Latina’s model is impactful and achieves lasting relationships. And the success of our youth-led writing process reflects how youth can develop transferable skills (such as professionalism, leadership, and critical thinking) while building community within their groups and across the neighborhood. Based on these results, we are confident that aspects of our model and organizational philosophy could be adopted by libraries, schools, and community-based organizations to guide youth to fulfilling leadership roles, careers, and futures.

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**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 [http://yalsa.ala.org/yals](http://yalsa.ala.org/yals) and click on “Submissions.”

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SOUNDS OF AFRICAN DRUMS AND CHANTS AND THE SIGHT OF GIANT PUPPETS FILL THE STREETS AROUND LOS ANGELES’ LEIMERT PARK AT DAY OF THE ANCESTORS: FESTIVAL OF THE MASKS. GIANT PAPEL PICADO CUT PAPER PIECES ENCASED IN CLEAR PLASTIC FLOAT IN THE BREEZES BETWEEN THE TREES IN MACARTHUR PARK. VIVID, COLORFUL MURALs WITH IMAGES OF CHALLENGES TO AND VISIONS FOR HEALTH AdORN SEVEN BUILDINGS IN SOUTH LOS ANGELES. PAINTED UTILITY BOXES ON STREET CORNERS IN THAI TOWN, LITTLE ARMENIA, AND LITTLE SALVADOR SHARE GLIMPSES INTO THE CULTURES, PEOPLE, AND PLACES OF EAST HOLLYWOOD. WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF LA COMMONS’ NEIGHBORHOOD STORY CONNECTION WHERE, FOR OVER A DECade, YOUTH ARTISTS AGeS 15 TO 25 YEARS OLD AND LOCAL ARTISTS FROM THE CITY’S COMMUNITIES HAVE COLLECTED STORIES FROM NEIGHBORS AND CREATED TEMPORARY WORKS OF PUBLIC ART AS A WAY TO SHARE STORIES AND TO BUILD UNDERSTANDING ACROSS LOS ANGELES.

HOW THIS CAME TO Be
LA Commons founder Karen Mack, a native Angelino, noticed a disconnect in communications between and within the diverse city neighborhoods. She began LA Commons in 2003 with the purpose of creating cultural connections by enabling people to share stories through artistic programs and tours and through the creation of collaborative public art. In the past decade, LA Commons has produced over 43 community arts projects in 13 LA neighborhoods engaging over 322 artists, 838 youth artists, and 8423 community members. In addition, the organization produces “Found LA,” a free weekend of neighborhood cultural tours by and for LA neighbors, and “Trekking LA,” an ever-changing thematic cultural tour series.

I have had the great joy of working with Karen since 2003 as the organizer of the community arts projects. In this article, I’d like to spotlight a few of these projects as well as the basic process that, while ending in very different visual outcomes, always results in the creation of unique art and facilitation of greater communication between neighbors.

When organizing community arts projects, the Neighborhood Story Connection always follows these five steps:

1. Meeting with neighborhood stakeholders to identify issues or neighborhood goals that could benefit through engagement of artists, youth, and community members via the arts.

2. Assembling the team that will recruit lead professional artists, youth mentors from the communities, and youth artists ages 15 to 25.

3. Story gathering as a way to engage the community in the process. We do this through story summits at key local venues where the community shares food, performances, and stories with the youth arts team. At the event, the youth arts team members also conduct interviews with community members.

4. Designing the art as a way to transform stories gathered from the community and from the art team members. The stories are told through sketches, drawings, or paintings.

5. Creating, installing, and celebrating the work once the final artwork is created; it is then installed or placed in public view.

BETH PETERSON is the LA Commons Community Arts Programs Director. She has worked over 25 years organizing community arts projects, first in Minneapolis, Minnesota and for the past 12 years with LA Commons. She also works as a puppet and mask teaching artist with the Music Center, Inner City Arts, and teaches a yearly course, “Integrating Arts and Culture in the Curriculum,” at Antioch University in Los Angeles.
performed in local public spaces. Youth artists speak about the process of creating the art and lead tours of the completed work.

Our Stories
Leimert Park Day of the Ancestors, Festival of the Masks
Master Nigerian drummer Najite Agindotan and filmmaker and KAOS Network director Ben Caldwell approached LA Commons six years ago with the idea of creating a yearly festival at Leimert Park. The idea was for a festival based on the mask rites of the Yoruba people in Nigeria.

For decades the neighborhood where Leimert Park is located has been an African American cultural center in Los Angeles, and a place to gather for celebrations and for commemorations of milestones, tragedies, and passings. Now in its fifth year, Ancestor Mask Festival, grounded in West African, African American, and other traditions of the diaspora, honors all ancestors. It brings neighbors together for a common purpose to connect with and honor the past, to engage with present issues, and to nurture the connections across generations that lead to more positive futures.

Over the past five years of the festival, highlights include hosting residencies for Adunni and Nefretiti, a seven-woman Yoruba singing group from Nigeria, and Kuenta and Tambu, from Curacao and Aruba. This past year’s festival was exceptional as we honored the work of people in Nigeria.

In April 2015, college student and musician Metabrafor Agindotan traveled with a group from LA Commons to his father’s home in Lagos, Nigeria. He returned to become a youth mentor and lead artist for a section of the procession. Metabrafor talks about what brought him to the project, “I wanted to expand my involvement in the LA community using my skills in art and music. I wanted to support an important cause and to connect with my roots in West Africa as well as to honor my ancestors.” He notes that he learned from the youth artists that “the passion for justice in making the world a better place is not lost on our younger generations.”

Papel Picado in MacArthur Park
Over 14 years ago, cultural worker and leader “Mama” Sandi Romero and the Urban Institute for Research and Development opened “Mama’s Hot Tamales” across the street from MacArthur Park, with the purpose of helping to legalize street vending and foster employment opportunities in the primarily Central American immigrant neighborhood. Though the restaurant has now changed hands, Sandi’s work continues to use art, culture, food, and celebration as a means to create peace and foster vital community in the neighborhood. Sandi is LA Commons’ “go to” partner and story connections event organizer in MacArthur Park. In our past two Story Summits, Sandi has personally cooked tamales for over 175 people each time as well as hosted full programs of Aztec dancers, youth folklorico, Peruvian classical guitar, and bilingual experts speaking about the history of the park. Local homeless people helped spread the word about and attended the events. These events are free to the public, take place in the park, and, in addition to residents, bring together businesspeople, government officials and police, and families.

During the MacArthur Park story events, LA Commons youth artists collect dozens of stories. In 2014, youth artist Fernando Reyes interviewed a teacher from a local school and recorded the following, “She grew up here in the
neighborhood without the love of a father. She had the love of mother but it wasn’t enough. She felt trapped, because she couldn’t go out and didn’t have many friends because she always stayed in. She looked out her window and always saw people outside. She didn’t understand why they could go out and not her. She asked her mother why she couldn’t go outside and she felt alone. Her mother worked and did not spend much time with her. It wasn’t until she grew up that she understood why she didn’t see many children outside. It was because of the gangs, all the drugs, and the police sirens that she always heard. She didn’t understand back then, but now she knows. She now teaches children and makes them feel safe and free. She doesn’t want them to feel how she felt before. Her childhood consisted of bad memories and experiences. All of that made her into who she is now. Just like her, there are many more people who care about the children and the young generation. They know they are the future, we are the future, and they want us to do some things they didn’t have a chance to do in order to change the place they live.” 

Fernando worked with lead artist Alfonso Aceves and 14 other youth artists to create the designs from these and other stories that shared both the challenges and the young generation. They know they are the future, we are the future, and they want us to do some things they didn’t have a chance to do in order to change the place they live.”

Windows to Health in South Los Angeles
For the past three years, LA Commons has partnered with Building Healthy Communities South LA to use art and civic engagement as part of the strategy to further health in South Los Angeles. We began a project entitled “Windows to Health.” The project involved 14 local professional artists working with 79 youth artists at five sites. It engaged over 300 local residents in telling their stories or participating in arts engagement activities in which people told about their challenges and visions for wellness in South Los Angeles.

Jathan Melendez is a youth artist who is also active in Community Coalition, an organization working for social change in South Los Angeles. He said of his participation in the event, “All of my thought went into this painting. I basically wanted to create new ways to help my community so I shared these ideas into my part of the project. What I learned from this project was that there are other people in our community that care.”

Edward Ariola, a youth artist from the Expo Center team of artists said, “This project allowed me to think and discuss what is wanted in the community. I appreciate the hard work we put in and the teamwork. I enjoyed discussing and comparing thoughts with others.” Expo youth artist Stephanie Gordian adds, “I enjoyed the painting process because everyone was very focused and were having fun mixing colors. It felt like we were preparing colorful frosting for cakes. I appreciate to have collaborated with my peers, lead artists, and mentors. I enjoyed going to the health fair and experience the energy of the people. It was a great experience to design our mural based on the answers from the people we interview in the health festival. Thanks to this opportunity I have a better connection with art and social problems.”

It’s All Worth It
Overall, LA Commons youth artists spend three to nine months on average working on a community arts project. Whether creating a procession, papel picado, murals, or light pole banners, youth artists walk away with skills interviewing the public, hosting events, contributing to the design and creation of a public art project, and sharing the work with the community. Some continue as artists and others go on to weave a thread of civic engagement into their future works at school and beyond. Each has expressed a sense of stronger connection and appreciation of their own communities and knowledge that they have something to contribute to the vitality of the community.

LA Commons’ work in building cultural connections continues amid ever-changing times. We are grateful to be a part of this work and hope to see it continue moving far into the future. We also look forward to hearing your own stories of involving youth and young adults though the arts. Please send us your story at www.lacommons.org. You can see photos from LA Commons events on the YALSA blog, http://yalsa.ala.org/blog.
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Announcing the Teen Programming HQ!

YALSA created a new website for everyone interested in planning, implementing and evaluating teen programs! Need a great program idea? Find one here! Got a great idea to share? Do that here! Have a question about programming? Ask it here! Visit http://hq.yalsa.net/index.html to join the community and amp up your programming game!

YALSA Opens up 2016 Applications for Summer Learning and Teen Intern Program Grants

Eligible YALSA members can now apply for the 2016 Summer Learning Resources and Teen Summer Intern Program grants.

Through generous funding from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, two types of grants are available, the Summer Learning Resources Grant and the Teen Summer Intern Program Grant. The purpose of the grants is to help libraries combat the summer slide.

20 summer learning resources grants, worth $1,000 each, will be awarded to libraries in need and will allow them to provide resources and services to teens who are English language learners, struggling in school and/or who are from socio-economically challenged communities. 20 teen summer intern program grants, also worth $1,000 each, will be awarded to libraries to support the implementation of summer learning programs while also providing teens a chance to build hands-on job skills.

Interested applicants are invited to apply for the grants if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be a YALSA member at the time the application is submitted.
- Summer learning program must be administered through a library.
- Library must be within 20 miles of a Dollar General store.

To learn more about the grants and to apply, please visit our Summer Learning website at summerreading.ning.com. Apply by January 1, 2016. Recipients will be notified during the week of February 15, 2016.

2015 Teen Tech Week™ Theme Announced

The theme for Teen Tech Week™ 2016 will be “Create it at your library,” and provides libraries with an opportunity to focus on the “A” in S.T.E.A.M (science, technology, engineering, arts and math).

Teen Tech Week will take place March 6–12, 2016. Educators and library staff are encouraged to visit and join (for free) the official Teen Tech Week website to get the latest updates, access to planning and promotional resources, including digital posters and bookmarks, and more. Visit www.ala.org/teentechweek for more information. The site launches in early November.

YALSA 2016 Election Slate

YALSA’s Awards Nominating and Governance Nominating Committees have assembled the following slate for 2016:

President-Elect
Sandra Hughes Hassell

Secretary
Crystle Martin

Board Member-at-Large
Franklin Escobedo
Kafi Kumasi
Robin Kurz
Jessica Snow
Mega Subramaniam

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Jonathan Hunt
Vanessa Irvin
Deborah Parrott
Jennie Rothschild

2018 Nonfiction Award Committee
Jan Chapman
Michael Fleming
Sarah Okner
Candace Reeder
Wendy Stephens
Dorcas Wong

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Edi Campbell
Jenna Friebel
Traci Glass
 Elections open March 15, 2016 and close April 22, 2016.

**2016 YA Services Symposium to Take Place in Pittsburgh**

The 2016 YA Services Symposium will take place in Pittsburgh, PA in early November, with the official dates to be announced. The symposium is an annual event that covers a wide spectrum of topics related to providing services for and with young adults, including programming and maintaining young adult collections. Learn more and sign up to receive updates about the symposium on the official symposium website at www.ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium. Never been to the ‘burgh? Learn about all the city has to offer (hint: everything from sandwiches with French fries in them to a thriving arts scene!) at www.visitpittsburgh.com/

**Join YALSA’s New Learning Community!**

YALSA is expanding its professional development offerings with its free Badges for Learning virtual badge program at yalsabadges.ala.org.

Learners with an interest in young adult library services can complete project-based tasks and develop skills tied directly to the seven (7) competency areas covered in YALSA’s Competencies for Serving Youth in Libraries. Learners will develop projects in each of seven areas to show proficiency in that area. Once proficiency is proven, participants can submit their project for vetting by the badging community. If the community approves the project, then the learner earns a digital badge that can be displayed in virtual spaces, such as social media websites or online resumes. The program is free, completely virtual and asynchronous.

Seasoned library staff can contribute to the badges community by reviewing the projects submitted by the learners and giving them a ‘thumbs up’ or a ‘thumbs down.’

For information about other e-learning opportunities, please visit www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelearning.

**Nominations Open for YALSA’s 2016 Outstanding Achievement Award**

YALSA has opened nominations for its Outstanding Achievement Award, which is sponsored by ABC Clio/Greenwood. The nomination period is open through Dec. 1, 2015.

The prize, worth $2,000, recognizes a member who has demonstrated unique and sustained devotion to young adult services through substantial work in any two or more of these initiatives:

- The promotion of library services for and with young adults
- Conducting and publishing research for young adult services
- Publication or presentation of knowledge or best practices relating to library services for and with young adults
- Advocating for library services for young adults
- Mentoring of other professionals in the field of young adult library services
- Notable efforts in furthering the mission of YALSA

A pool of candidates will be gathered via a nomination process. All persons nominated must be current personal members of ALA/YALSA. To nominate a candidate for the award, please fill out the online nomination form at tinyurl.com/achievementaward15. Nominations must be received by Dec. 1, 2015. Self-nominations are accepted.

**YALSA Announces 2015 Teen Read Week™ Recipients**

YALSA announced the 10 recipients of its 2015 Teen Read Week Grant. Each grant is worth $1000 and is generously funded by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to help fund Teen Read Week programs and activities.

The recipients are:

- Dawn Abron, Zion-Benton (Illinois) Public Library
- Britni Cherrington-Stoddart, Charlotte Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Library System
- Guadalupe Gomez, Anaheim (California) Public Library: Haskett Branch
- Eden Grey, Kenton County (Kentucky) Public Library
- Kerry Hogan, Cedar Shoals (Georgia) High School
- Jodi Krahnke, Ypsilanti (Michigan) District Library
- Robert McMahon, Oshkosh (Wisconsin) North High School
- Lauren Regendhardt, Yuma County (Arizona) Library District
- April Shroeder, Gum Spring Library/Loudoun County (Virginia) Public Library
- Michele Ricca, Stephenson (New Hampshire) Memorial Library

Teen Read Week™ is a national adolescent literacy initiative created by YALSA. It started in 1998 and is held annually during the third week of October. Its purpose is to encourage teens to be regular readers and library users. Learn more at www.ala.org/teenread.
**Free**

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60 minute webinars on timely topics. Presented by experts. Commercial free.

See what we’ll be talking about this spring at [www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars).

Live webinars are available only to members and they are free as a member benefit.

**Webinars 24/7:**

All archived webinars are free for members. They’re posted after the live presentation in the For Members Only section of the website and nonmembers can buy access for $19 at [www.ala.org/yalsa/webinarsondemand](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/webinarsondemand).

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**YALSA Publication Sale!**

[www.ala.org/yalsa/products&publications](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/products&publications)

**Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults**

| Orig. $24 | Now $12.50* |

This guide highlights 25 of the best programs across the country, providing ideas for replicating and adapting them in school and public libraries. Organized for easy browsing, each chapter encourages you to think about the range of possible programs.

**The Complete Summer Reading Manual: From Planning to Evaluation**

| Orig. $40 | Now $20* |

Summer reading programs are a mainstay of public library services; whether you’re embarking on your first or you think you could plan one in your sleep, you’re sure to find helpful advice, sources, ideas and program descriptions in this manual.

**Cool Teen Programs for under $100**

| Orig. $35 | Now $17.50* |

Producing engaging, innovative programs for teens on a tight budget is a challenge that many librarians face. With *Cool Teen Programs for under $100*, YALSA offers an inspired new guide providing a wealth of fun, creative programming ideas sure to entice teens into the library, all easily replicable and easy on the bottom line.

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

| Orig. $35 | Now $17.50* |

This manual will offer guidance to librarians planning their annual events, with advice on best practices, collection development, outreach and marketing, program ideas and more.

Visit [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org) or call 1-866-SHOP-ALA to order today.
Understanding Teen Behavior for a Positive Library Experience & Strengthening Teen Services through Technology Instructional Kits Now Available!

YALSA's training kits take the work out of putting on a workshop! Each kit provides ready-to-use training materials, including PowerPoint presentations, a script and step-by-step group activities. Trainers can adapt them for their audience, or use as-is. Each kit is broken into several modules, that can work as stand-alone mini-sessions, or they can be presented together as a full day of training. The Understanding Teen Behavior for a Positive Library Experience kit focuses on helping all library workers gain the knowledge and skills they need to have successful interactions with teen patrons. The Teens and Technology kit provides a wealth of information to help library workers keep up to date on how best to integrate technology into programs and services. Visit www.ala.org/yalsa/young-adults-deserve-best to view free demos, place your order or learn more!

Cost: $175 for digital download; $199 for paper edition with CD containing PowerPoint presentations (binder-ready, three-hole punched and tabbed). For 20% off orders of 25 or more, mention code YUTB12 for Understanding Teen Behavior and code YTEC12 for Strengthening Teen Services through Technology.

Visit www.alastore.org or call (866) 746-7252 to purchase yours today.
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★ “A stylistically mesmerizing tale.”
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