“Snappy dialogue, bizarre plot twists, high-intensity action, and a touch of mystery and romance.”
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About This Cover

All of the articles in this issue of YALS highlight the importance of libraries engaging with their communities in order to impact the lives of teens. Community impact and engagement are also highlighted in YALSA’s “Future of Libraries for and with Teens: A Call to Action.” You can learn more about that report 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. YALSA 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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YALS is going through some changes and in this issue and the next you’ll start to see some of those take shape. We are excited about the transformation and expect that you will be too.

Don’t forget that you can access complementary materials to the journal on the YALSAblog at http://yalsa.ala.org/blog. YALS
From the President

Candice Mack

In my 20 years in the library world, one thing I’ve noticed is that people who work in libraries—especially people who focus on serving teens—tend to be doers. We just roll up our sleeves and dive in. This can be a positive attribute, but, if we act by ourselves, it can also have a downside. We are all probably guilty of staring a project in the face and thinking to ourselves that we should really reach out to a colleague, a teen patron, or a community partner to have them tackle a certain task, but then decide that “it’s quicker to do it myself.” In the short term, there’s the benefit of being speedier so we can move on to the next item on our to-do list. When you take the long view though, excluding others with an interest in or expertise related to the project squashes the growth of long-term relationships and collaborations that could increase capacity to do more and to reach more teens.

And teens need us today more than ever. The statistics in YALSA’s report “The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action” are sobering. For example:

- More Than 16 million youth (22%) in the United States live below the poverty level.
- Approximately 3 million teens drop out of school each year in the United States.
- More than 1.3 million youth in the United States experience homelessness each year.

Now, more than ever, it’s critical that we reach beyond the library and engage with others in the community who serve youth. Only by working together will we be able to make any true impact and start improving teens’ lives. Still need convincing? According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, nearly one in four eighth graders cannot read at the basic level (see http://bit.ly/naep_readin_15). These numbers have remained fairly static for years. So, if library summer reading programs were truly making an impact, wouldn’t these numbers be better? Yes, they would.

I encourage you to take time to read the interview in this issue with Karen Pittman about collective impact. This is an approach to solving community problems by bringing together people from all walks of life to determine a joint course of action. After you’ve read the interview, continue to learn more about collective impact on the Collective Impact Forum’s website at http://collectiveimpactforum.org/. Then, think about who in your community also serves youth. Need help with that? We have you covered! All you have to do is type your zip code into this website, http://youth.gov/map-my-community, to call up a list of youth-focused organizations in your area. Find out who you can connect with in your community to identify teens’ greatest needs, and then put your heads together on how you’ll go about addressing that problem. You can do it!

For example, my library, the Los Angeles Public Library, started a partnership with the Los Angeles LGBT Center last year, which expanded to participating in two resource fairs, including one aimed specifically at increasing employment of people who are transgender. From that partnership grew a relationship with the Louisiana chapter of the Trevor Project, who we will be working with on a large half-day or day-long event promoting LGBTQ YA lit, cultural sensitivity and training in October 2016 in conjunction with Teen Read Week, LGBTQ Heritage Month, and National Coming Out Day.

While switching to a collective impact approach can seem daunting, it’s worth it in order to improve teens’ lives. Plus, YALSA has more resources than ever to help you out! For example, check out our new Teen Programming HQ (http://hq.yalsa.net/index.html)—it’s an online community where you can find and share program ideas and connect with others doing similar work. You can read more about the HQ in the YALSA Highlights section of this issue.

The YALSA Board and Executive Committee have been hard at work developing a new strategic plan for the association. We started the process over a year ago and found that in order to successfully focus on the needs of library staff in 2016 and beyond, we had to go beyond a traditional strategic planning process. The new plan outlines for YALSA how to be future focused and looks at the outcomes YALSA needs to achieve over the next several years. The plan uses a theory of change model and the ideas of collective impact and outcomes.

(continued on page 13)
As many of you are aware, YALSA’s previous strategic plan and its companion document, the action plan, ran through 2015. In mid-2014, YALSA’s Board began discussing the need for a new strategic plan, put together a Strategic Planning Task Force, and conducted a membership-wide survey. However, since publication of the report, “The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: a Call to Action” (Frequently referred to as the Futures Report and available at www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report) called for significant changes in teen services, YALSA’s Board agreed that the traditional approach to strategic planning was no longer a good fit for YALSA and its needs. Because of this, the process and activities that have occurred during the latest round of planning do not necessarily mirror what’s been done before, and that’s okay—there’s not one right way to do strategic planning.

The Board felt it was necessary to take a step back and rethink the organization’s purpose, focus, and structure in order to enable YALSA to position itself to help its members adopt the recommendations in the Futures Report and transform library services for and with teens. Perhaps most importantly, the Board agreed to use the Futures Report as its guide for the strategic planning process. As a part of this, a “teens first” message was a broad focus throughout this process. All of us are passionate about helping teens succeed in school and prepare for college, careers, and life. Keeping this foremost in our minds throughout strategic planning discussions is what the Board strove to do.

In the past, YALSA’s Board did not have the type of call to action or a vision document from which to base its strategic planning efforts. As a result, the Board felt it was starting a new round of strategic planning with an advantage over past planning endeavors. However, in late 2014 and early 2015 the strategic planning process stalled while the Board struggled to find a consultant who could help lead YALSA through a new, nontraditional organizational planning process. So, an RFP was put together in the spring of 2015 in order to find what YALSA needed. Then, over the summer, YALSA’s leaders reviewed proposals from potential consultants and in August signed a contract with the Whole Mind Strategy Group (www.wholemindstrategy.com).

A first step in the development of a new plan for the organization was at YALSA’s Executive Committee meeting in early November 2015. The Committee did an environmental scan in order to identify what external and internal factors had an impact on teen services in libraries. Then during their Midwinter Meetings in January of this year, the YALSA Board discussed this scan and developed a vision for how YALSA will make the recommendations in the Futures Report a reality. The Whole Mind Strategy Group consultants used the vision that the Board developed to draft a new plan for YALSA. In February, the Board will review this draft plan and refine it. Once revisions are complete, the Board will officially vote to adopt the plan.

The new plan, which we expect to be available in March, is different than the association’s past strategic plan format in two key ways:

- The new plan covers three years and not five as was the case of previous YALSA strategic plans.
- The new plan has new components including an intended impact statement, a theory of change.

CANDICE MACK is the 2015–2016 YALSA President and the Senior Librarian for Young Adult Services at the Los Angeles Public Library.
statement, organizational outcomes, and a learning agenda. To learn more about these new components, visit the Bridgespan Group’s website, www.bridgespan.org/.

Look for the new YALSA strategic plan on the association website this spring. You can also read updates about the plan and the rollout in the “YALSA Info” category on the YALSA blog at http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/category/yalsa-info/. The Board will strive to share news and information regularly, in order to keep membership informed. If you have questions about the process, the document, or want to get involved in the exciting work outlined in the plan, fill out a brief online form at www.surveymonkey.com/r/R7MMRSG.

As the YALSA Board does not meet at ALA Midwinter (January 8–12) until after this issue goes to press, we won’t know the specifics until after those meetings and the Board has a chance to explore options. Based on reviewing the key priorities in the Futures Report, we know YALSA needs to make some changes in order to be positioned to help its members, teens, and libraries. Members should get ready for some exciting new initiatives to help you help teens. These will be phased in as the three-year plan rolls out from 2016 to 2018. Additionally, members can expect that some existing initiatives will also need to be modified in order to better fit the needs of teens and libraries, and that some other current initiatives will not align with the new plan, as based on the Futures Report, and those few will need to be either handed off to another organization to continue or phased out during the three-year plan.

YALSA’s Board is very excited about the possibilities that the new organizational plan opens up for the association and its members. We hope you are too! Together we can work to put teens first and ensure that all of the nation’s teens have the chance for a successful future.

YALS
library staff working with teens are often conscientious in offering programs for and with teens that:

1. Have direct teen input and are teen driven
2. Demonstrate high quality in teen library programming
3. Have identifiable goals and learning outcomes
4. Include evaluation components to ensure the program reaches stated outcomes and goals.

YALSA’s Teen Programming HQ is a website (at http://hq.yalsa.net/) where these well-planned and thought-out programs are collected. Anyone can access the HQ to learn more about great programs and get ideas for how to try something new. Each program in the HQ includes a description, information on the cost of running the program, age group targeted, instructions for successful replication, a list of learning outcomes, and an evaluation strategy.

Where Do These Programs Come From?
Library staff is the answer, so this is where YOU—teen library staff from all across the country—are needed. For the HQ to be successful we need you to submit your tested programs for review by the HQ team of experts. (Find out more about the experts below.) YALSA is looking for programs that support the ideas in the YALSA “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action” report (frequently referred to as the Futures Report) and the “YALSA Programming Guidelines.” (You can find each document on the YALSA website at www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report and www.ala.org/yalsa/teen-programming-guidelines.)

Why Focus on the Futures Report and the Programming Guidelines?
Both of these documents focus on areas of importance when serving teens and highlight skills teens need to develop to succeed in life. Both documents provide information on how libraries can support teens in acquiring 21st-century skills. Each document talks about the importance of identifying learning outcomes and developing evaluation plans for programs and highlights reasons why these are important. The documents provide library staff with real-life and research-based recommendations for ways to help teens entering the workforce gain much-needed critical thinking and technology-based skills.

The “YALSA Programming Guidelines” are specifically intended to guide library staff who design, host, and evaluate library programs with and for teens. They were developed to align with YALSA’s Futures Report and are specifically intended to help library staff leverage skills and resources to provide relevant, outcomes-based programs to better the lives of all teens in the community. (Which is what the Programming HQ is also intended to do.)

Back to How the Teen Programming HQ Works
After a program is submitted to the HQ, it is vetted by a panel of Content Experts (the Content Experts have at least three years of direct teen programming experience for and with teens). The Experts make sure that the program proposals are aligned with the Futures Report, the Programming Guidelines, and fully include all of required content. If there are aspects of the program proposals that aren’t present or aren’t fully fleshed out, the Content Expert’s role is to mentor and support the submitter of the program in revising the proposal and providing recommendations for improvement. YALSA members interested in becoming a Content Expert can contact me at yalsahq@gmail.com. (You can learn more about the role of the Content Expert and the background required on the YALSA blog at http://yalsa.alas.org/}

JESSI SNOW is the Teen Services Team Leader at the Boston Public Library Central Library and the Member Manager for YALSA’s Teen Programming HQ.
I’m the new Member Manager of the HQ. As the Teen Services Team Leader at the Central Library of the Boston Public Library I have developed and implemented programs for and with teens for over 14 years. I think the Futures Report and the Programming Guidelines help in this kind of work by providing a structure and guidelines for developing programs that help build skills teens need to succeed. Part of my role as the Member Manager is to work with the Content Experts to ensure the programs include aspects of the Futures Report and Programming Guidelines and to share with the library community this resource as well as promote the work that library staff are engaged in.

That’s Not All
The YALSA Programming HQ includes a Q & A section where anyone can post questions about programs and anyone that is registered on the site (because this is a benefit to registration we hope everyone that goes on the site will register) can comment and answer questions. This is a fantastic way to build a teen programming community. By registering, you will have access to the wider community and can continue to share and learn from each other. The Q & A section is a great way to ask questions, exchange ideas and best practices, and discuss struggles in implementation. It’s a place to connect and learn from each other. In addition to the Q & A section, those who register are able to create a profile, which further builds the teen programming community accessible via the HQ. Think of it as a database of teen programs as well as one of teen library staff.

It’s All for You
The HQ is a resource to be shared. It is a valuable tool to use for programming discussion and to learn about best practices in creating, designing, and implementing teen programs with and for teens. We would love to hear from you and get your input on programming and to share your great ideas. If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch. You can contact me at yalsahq@gmail.com. I’m looking forward to connecting with you on the YALSA Programming HQ and seeing and implementing your program ideas.

Find, share, and discuss teen programming ideas with other library staff and educators.

http://hq.yalsa.net/index.html
Welcome to Resource Roundup. The purpose of this recurring column is to make the vast amount of research related to youth and families accessible to you. To match the theme of this issue, this inaugural Resource Roundup column will focus on community engagement and reaching diverse populations outside of the library, including why community engagement is important. For each item listed below, you'll find a short overview of what the research is all about and some ideas about how you might integrate the findings and recommendations into your work with youth.

**Libraries at the Crossroads** (www.pewinternet.org/2015/09/15/libraries-at-the-crossroads/). In this Pew research report, readers learn that libraries are seen by the public as pathways to economic opportunity. “Libraries at the Crossroads” notes, “Latino, African American, and low-income families are more likely to say that libraries impact their lives than other Americans.” These groups also say that libraries help people find jobs, offer programs for local business and entrepreneurs, and support learning. If this is what people already view libraries as providing, ask yourself, “What are the gaps that community outreach still must fill and how can libraries and library staff reach the entire community’s diverse populations?”

**Zeroing in on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America’s cities** (http://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MOA-Zeroing-In-on-Place-and-Race-Final.pdf)

Kristin Lewis and Sarah Burd-Sharps describe a major issue that affects low income and diverse youth in their report “Zeroing in on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America’s Cities.” One in seven young adults (ages 16–24) is disconnected, that is neither working nor in school. Young adult disconnection has both individual and societal costs. “Disconnected youth are cut off from the people, institutions, and experiences that would otherwise help them develop the knowledge, skills, maturity, and sense of purpose required to live rewarding lives as adults.” Disconnection impacts African American, Native American, and Latino youth the most. It does not occur overnight but instead is years in the making. Early success in school supports the development of self-confidence, optimism, and agency; repeated negative interaction with school causes the opposite effect. These early negative interactions can impact a youth’s persistence and motivation with school. This in turn can affect whether they finish high school or take a first job.

Key findings from this report include that disconnected youth were twice as likely to live in poverty and three times more likely to have left high school. Concentrated racial segregation within metro areas creates a higher likelihood for disconnection of African American youth due to the physical, social, and aspirational distance to opportunity. Youth who live in a place with freely available opportunities offer pathways to successful adulthood, however, the lack of these affordances creates disconnection. It is a complex problem with many variables to consider.

**Don’t Quit on Me** (http://gradnation.org/sites/default/files/FullReport%20Don’tQuit_2.pdf)

John Gomperts and Laysha Ward explicate this issue and the impact of relationships on students’ decisions to leave school in their report “Don’t Quit on Me.” An earlier report, “Don’t Call Them Dropouts,” offered four major takeaways that illuminated issues around why youth left school early: (1) a confluence of factors, (2) toxic environments, (3) yearning for connection, and (4) bouncing back and reaching up. The authors found from the previous research that young people who leave school before graduation potentially were affected by: individual factors such as academic performance and engagement; family factors such as family structure and parental attitudes; school-level factors such as a culture of low expectations and exclusionary practices; and peer factors such as having friends who engage in deviant actions.

**CRYSTLE MARTIN** is a postdoctoral research fellow for the Digital Media and Learning Hub at the University of California, Irvine. Her research interests include informal learning and youth, and the future of libraries.
Findings highlighted in this new report call out that social relationships are extremely important for youth development and achievement. Informal, sometimes called natural, mentors can support youth mental health, risk behaviors, and academic achievement. Formal mentors can promote educational, social, and emotional well-being, and positive identity development especially for high-risk teens. According to the report, “Supportive relationships can buffer the effects of adverse life experiences of leaving school and open the opportunity for youth to express their strength.” Youth need both stable relationships and a wide web of relationships to help stay in school and succeed in life. These youth need an anchor, which is someone in their life that is not a family member nor a paid youth worker. To be an anchor requires trust building.

So what can be done about this? The answer is community engagement—connecting disconnected, opportunity-scarce neighborhoods into wider society and creating meaningful pathways within them for youth. To keep youth connected, libraries can support civic engagement, social capital, the school-to-work transition, and connecting school to real world contexts. For those who are already disconnected, they need more than just one-off summer internships and low-wage jobs. They often need support to grapple with personal and family issues, gain credentials, develop soft skills and confidence, address health issues, and deal with housing and transportation issues. Youth at-risk of leaving school need the community engagement of library staff.

Library staff need to build trust with youth. To do this the youth must believe that the library staff understand the youth’s needs, strengths and goals; recognize and be responsive to what’s going on in the youth’s life; cares for the youth and will be available and provide support if the youth is confronted with challenges; and instill a sense of warmth and connection, a sense that is present even when the library staff is not present. Library staff can engage with the youth in their community by listening, connecting, and starting conversations. To engage with the community, library staff need to assess the risks and resources of young people in their community. To help youth, libraries can engage with healthcare professionals, social support systems, and educational and income services. The impact of these connections and this type of community engagement can be life changing.

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www.yalsabadges.ala.org
Public Libraries and STEM
An Interview with Paul Dusenbery and Keliann LaConte

In August 2015 the first-ever Public Libraries and STEM conference took place in Denver. This National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded event brought together library staff, science center staff, and academics to talk about serving all age groups through libraries and STEM learning. The following is an interview with the two primary organizers of the event, Paul Dusenbery and Keliann LaConte.

YALS: Before you describe the Public Libraries and Stem Conference, tell readers a bit about the work you do.

Paul Dusenbery: I founded the Space Science Institute (SSI; headquartered in Boulder, Colorado) and currently serve as the director of SSI’s National Center for Interactive Learning (NCIL). SSI has about 60 staff including 30 amazing scientists who are studying how our Sun affects Earth, exploring the harsh but awe inspiring landscapes of Mars, and learning about planetary systems far beyond our own solar system. I have been interested in communicating science, and more recently STEM, to all sorts of audiences—K–12 students, undergraduates, and families—who visit museum exhibits that I developed (along with some great partners). NCIL is leading a new direction for STEM education in partnership with ALA, the Lunar and Planetary Institute, and the Afterschool Alliance (along with many other strategic partners) to provide interactive STEM exhibits, programming, and training to public libraries nationwide. This groundbreaking, NSF-funded library program, called the “Star Library Education Network” (STAR_Net), is reaching and positively impacting underserved and underrepresented communities. STAR stands for Science Technology Activities and Resources. I am the primary investigator and project director. Nearly 1 million patrons have visited STAR_Net’s Discover exhibits, over 50,000 have participated in hundreds of programs conducted by host libraries, and over 1,000 librarians and STEM professionals are part of the STAR_Net online community. Other funders and sponsors of STAR_Net programs, including the Public Libraries and STEM Conference, are the National Institutes of Health, FIRST and the LEGO Foundation, NASA, and KEVA Education. See www.STARnetlibraries.org for more information.

Keliann LaConte: I lead the informal education efforts at the Lunar and Planetary Institute (LPI), which is a research institute in Houston, Texas. Our education and outreach efforts promote science literacy and engage the public, build capacity of educators to reach their audiences, and engage scientists in education and public outreach. The LPI is operated by the Universities Space Research Association (USRA) under a cooperative agreement with NASA’s Science Mission Directorate.

YALS: How did you end up working with libraries within the STEM world?

PD: My involvement with public libraries began around 2007–2008, when I developed a pilot STEM library exhibit called Discover Space. This exhibit toured Colorado libraries from 2007 to 2010. ALA and SSI partnered on a STEM in Libraries survey that focused on exhibitions. Because of this early success, NCIL was able to receive funding from NSF for the first phase of STAR_Net. Partners included ALA, LPI, the National Girls Collaborative Project, and others. The focus of that project was on developing two museum-quality traveling exhibitions: Discover Earth and Discover Tech. The project also included developing STEM activities, conducting various types of trainings (in-person workshops and webinars), and establishing a national community of practice of those working in libraries and STEM professionals. STAR stands for Science Technology Activities and Resources. I am the primary investigator and project director. Nearly 1 million patrons have visited STAR_Net’s Discover exhibits, over 50,000 have participated in hundreds of programs conducted by host libraries, and over 1,000 librarians and STEM professionals are part of the STAR_Net online community. Other funders and sponsors of STAR_Net programs, including the Public Libraries and STEM Conference, are the National Institutes of Health, FIRST and the LEGO Foundation, NASA, and KEVA Education. See www.STARnetlibraries.org for more information.

KL: LPI has designed space science programming resources with and for libraries for over 15 years through the Explore program, and more recently, in partnership with the STAR_Net team. LPI has expertise in developing planning tools for children’s and youth library staff to use in facilitating hands-on science and
engineering learning experiences. The Explore model incorporates input from scientists and engineers, science educators, and library staff to design engaging, relevant experiences for the diverse youth of our nation, while taking into consideration the unique strengths and opportunities of the library learning environment. Training opportunities are designed to complement the existing skill set of library staff, while helping them develop the confidence and background knowledge needed to facilitate STEM learning experiences. Thanks to generous funding from NASA and NSF, over 1,000 library staff have been trained to use the materials, and these partners are using them to attract new audiences and further their missions to instill habits of lifelong learning and literacy in their patrons. Visit www.lpi.usra.edu/explore for more information.

YALS: How did the Public Libraries and STEM conference come about?
PD: When I approached Keliann several years ago about the conference idea, we had to decide whether bringing the public library and STEM communities together was a good idea or not. We had lots of anecdotal evidence that suggested that the timing was good for such a conference. In our proposal to the NSF we laid out a pretty good case for why now and who should be invited and what the possible impact of the conference could be in the months and years ahead. Because we knew both communities well, we hoped that something good and lasting could come out of the event. The conference’s overarching goal was to facilitate strategic partnerships between the public libraries and STEM education communities. Toward that end, the conference brought together researchers, library staff, funders, and STEM and library leaders.

KL: After providing professional development and resources to library staff over the years, it became clear that there is a tremendous amount of innovation and grassroots work being done to provide STEM learning experiences for patrons. Yet, there isn’t a clear mechanism for sharing successes and challenges with others in the profession—and libraries don’t routinely compare notes with more traditional venues for STEM learning, such as museums! We needed leaders from local, state, and national libraries; professionals from related associations; STEM leaders from informal science education institutions, universities, and research institutions; and individuals engaged in evaluation, funding, and policy to come together. Thanks to the support of our national organizing committee and generous sponsors, we were able to bring many key leaders together.

YALS: Why did you think it was important to organize this type of gathering?
PD: The public library of today is very different from that of 10 years ago. Librarians used to help patrons access card catalogs, indexes, and reference books; now they help patrons choose the right search engine, use websites on specific subjects, learn how to navigate through a myriad of online tools, and are asked more frequently to conduct various types of STEM programs for their patrons. As places that offer their services for free, public libraries have become the “public square” by providing a place where members of a community can gather for information, education programming, and policy discussions. Just as 21st-century skills include innovation, creativity, and critical thinking, libraries are developing new ways to engage their patrons (especially kids and teens) in STEM learning. Across the country libraries are hosting science Saturdays, robot races, LEGO clubs, maker spaces, hands-on workshops, and museum-quality STEM exhibitions. Building the capacity of public libraries and library staff to deliver engaging, inspirational, and educational STEM programs has the potential to transform the STEM education landscape nationwide.

KL: Together, these various groups could explore where there are challenges and what existing resources and expertise can be used to address those challenges. It was also an opportunity to celebrate successes and draw attention to the tremendous work that is being done. Both the STAR_Net and Explore! programs were supporting the national trend of STEM learning in libraries, but we needed to come together with others to take things to the next level. The conference has succeeded in drawing attention to the past successes and future opportunities for library-STEM collaborations.

YALS: What were your favorite takeaways from the conference?
PD: I loved that we were able to hear from knowledgeable and inspirational speakers. Concepts such as free choice learning, collective impact, and the power of facilitation permeated the conference. We learned about ideas to reach underserved populations and underrepresented groups. We thought long and hard about what the keys were for a successful STEM learning program in a library. We were able to look critically at our communities and undertook a SWOT analysis. The two poster sessions were another opportunity to discuss programs and ideas with one another in one-on-one or small group interactions. The sessions were very successful. I thought that the posters were of such high quality that we have asked for PDF versions and will create a resource that anyone can access (on the STAR_Net online community site).

KL: Libraries bring unique contributions to the field of STEM teaching and learning. They aren’t schools
Public Libraries and STEM

or museums—they bring their own professional skill sets and resources to their communities.

- Library staff continue to need training—at the professional and graduate levels—on facilitation skills and STEM content knowledge.
- To paraphrase Marsha Semmel, one of the conference presenters, we need to consider and honor new forms of learning as our culture shifts from one of consumption to one of production. Maker spaces are great venues to help patrons learn as they create; citizen science is unfolding as a way for patrons to not only build things but knowledge for the whole of society.
- For all of us working to provide STEM learning experiences, it isn’t just about STEM but people and connections. Whether it’s STEM or STEAM or some other combination of skills and knowledge, our communities will benefit from having access to the richness of our world through our collective efforts.
- We need to join forces because we can accomplish more together than alone.

YALS: What were you surprised by during the conference?

PD: I was pleasantly surprised by how well both library staff and STEM professionals were able to connect and talk like they had been friends for years. I think that having an event at the Denver Public Library that included a tour of their maker space and a reception along with a reception/banquet at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science that included a fabulous presentation by senior vice president, Scott Sampson, made for rich and informal networking opportunities.

KL: How much energy could come from a convening like this! The ideas were free flowing and people were making connections with each other!

YALS: What would you like to see as a follow-up to the conference?

PD: There are two important activities planned:

1. STAR_Net will be leading a public engagement campaign called STEM @ My Library that is modeled after Lights on Afterschool led by the Afterschool Alliance. Interested? Contact Anne Holland at aholland@spacescience.org.

2. A Leadership Forum. The Forum’s purpose will be to support the creation of STEM learning opportunities in public libraries nationwide, which means understanding that libraries have different resources and strengths and serve unique communities. It will include library directors, key library staff, library science educators, and policy makers, as well as STEM professionals and educators. It will also include professional association leaders. The Forum’s primary goal will be to foster some of the leadership needed to help nurture the STEM-in-libraries movement by exploring and writing about the infrastructures and approaches needed to support and sustain long-term STEM learning in public libraries. This exploration will also include questions of how to incorporate the STEM-in-libraries movement into the larger movement to transform libraries into community learning centers addressing a host of literacies and 21st-century skills.

Initally, the Leadership Forum project infrastructure that includes a WebEx communication system. During implementation, a Leadership Forum website, accessible from the STAR_Net project website, will launch. Everyone will be invited to join the Forum, which may require registration. The Forum site will be a place where members can upload and access key resources and participate in discussions. Existing members will then be encouraged to invite colleagues to join. Ideally, the Forum should produce a quarterly newsletter consisting of articles produced by members, as well as by invited authors. A sign-up process will be announced in an upcoming STAR_Net Newsletter (see info below).

KL: I’d like to see more dialogue like this, which takes us outside of our daily grind and connects our work to the bigger picture. Collaboration requires time, persistence, and the ability to really listen to what your colleague needs and how she or he contributes to a joint effort. Yet, we can do so much more if we talk to each other and freely share what we have learned from our mistakes as well as our successes.

YALS: What advice do you have for library staff who want to connect with science organizations and support STEM learning in their community?

PD: The easiest thing to do is ask! Most public benefit institutions (like museums, zoos, and parks) have a mandate to do local community outreach. Libraries provide a venue that (as schools are tightening down on programming) these institutions are normally thrilled to visit. You can also talk with local community college and university staff to set up talks based on their current research. We’ve seen libraries get a whole summer lecture series off of a single phone call.

Another great tip is make it fun! Scientists get a lot of requests to do lectures, not so many to do a “Science Fact or Fiction” night, where your patrons can watch a movie like Armageddon and
be treated to a “Mystery Science Theater 3000”-esque commentary from a real scientist in the field!

The easier you can make it for the STEM professional, the better. Have a specific idea in mind when you approach them, and be flexible when they have other suggestions. Remember, the worst that can happen is they say “no,” and the best is a long-term partnership with that individual or institution!

KL: There are amazing people out there, working to make our world a better place. Reach out and don’t give up if you aren’t able to find a match on your first try. There is help out there in the form of new partnerships.

YALS: What else would you like YALS readers to know about the work you do?

PD: What each of you does is so important because you focus not only on young adults but their families as well. Let’s not forget that your library has the power to engage your whole community in a variety of timely and relevant STEM topics. Andrew Carnegie once said that “A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people.” Have you seen this quote? You and your library can be a national STEM resource for the 21st century. Let’s work together to achieve this ambitious goal!

Be sure to sign up for the STAR_Net Newsletter, contribute to the community blogs, and participate in STAR_Net webinars: www.community.starnetlibraries.org.

KL: There are so many library staff making connections to STEM or informal education professionals in their communities—I’d love to honor each and every one! I recommend reading through the abstracts from the conference program at www.stemlibraryconference.org. There are some great ideas there! I think Sally Chilson (Spokane Public Library) offered an excellent insight for us all from the beginning of her relationship with a local STEM-related nonprofit—saying “yes” leads to things.

We are working to engage both library staff doing great work directly with their communities, as well as state libraries and associations and STEM organizations. We’d like to work in collaboration with others to provide ongoing opportunities and STEM learning resources to public library staff. We invite you to be a leader in this—reach out to your state library and your professional associations so that they can help highlight this important work.

from the President (continued from page 3)

It’s a bit of a different tack for YALSA. However, the Board and Executive Committee believe it will give YALSA the planning framework it needs. The strategic planning process used is outlined in the YALSA Highlights section of this issue.

Also, be sure to save November 4–6, 2016, when we’ll hold our next YA Services Symposium in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania! Visit www.ala.org/yalsa/yasyposium for more information or to apply for a travel grant to attend. I hope to see you in November in the Keystone State!
Partnering for Impact
An Interview with Karen Pittman

Karen Pittman is cofounder of the Forum for Youth Investment, which has dedicated the past 16 years to increasing community commitment and investment in young people’s growth and development. Pittman talked with YALS about collective impact and how libraries can be a part of collective impact initiatives in their communities.

YALS: Tell me a bit about your take on collective impact.

KP: The idea that any sort of complex problem takes buy-in and commitment from more than one organization or system or sector is not a new idea. This is why when you go into communities you find so many different partnerships, task forces, and initiatives that have lots of different people sitting around the table. Lots of entities exist because of this basic idea that you need the folks that have made individual commitments to certain pieces of the puzzle to align their work to make the whole puzzle come together.

The Stanford Innovation Review article published in 2011, “Collective Impact: Creating Large Scale Social Change,” got the collective impact movement started. What made that article so powerful is the fact that while the authors started their research with the assumption that you need these kinds of partnerships to be able to make an impact, they ended up reflecting on why they were so hard-pressed to find examples. They found lots of partnerships, initiatives, and coalitions. They didn’t find much evidence that these initiatives had actually moved a public indicator at the population level, not just at a program level. They started asking “why?” More importantly, they also asked, “What do the successful partnerships have in common?” That’s how they came up with the five conditions of collective success. (See Sidebar 1.)

How communities have reacted to this has been interesting. These ideas were designed to get a broader swath of high-level leadership thinking population level change is possible if investments are made in collective impact initiatives that follow these rules. In the children and youth education space, the push was to get the top decision makers who control the resources at the table—superintendents, university presidents, CEOs, private funders, and the mayor’s office. The successful initiatives had these leaders at the table ready to make commitments to do things differently: set a common agenda, agree to change policies, and prioritize resources differently. Each of the five conditions is critical, but two stood out because they are frequently not addressed.

One is the idea of shared measurement. Leaders not only have to agree upon clearly defined, measurable outcomes, they have to commit to move forward in specific ways (take action, track accomplishments) and track consistent data collection and reporting on the outcomes selected. This often means negotiating ways to share data across systems, across programs, even across different geographic boundaries (school districts versus neighborhoods) and agreeing on the specific measures to be used.

The second is the idea of backbone supports. The basic message: achieving results requires setting up the right type of staffing, structures, and resources to manage this cascade of efforts. When these are run as volunteer efforts, or are too thinly resourced, nothing happens. People meet and feel good, they share their stories, but what they are able to accomplish in addition to their day jobs isn’t enough. And if no one is providing support and holding them accountable to honor commitments, the result is a weakly linked system that actually promotes complacency. We are all trying our best, but nothing is really happening. If communities really want to “move the needle” on big issues, they need to take these initiatives seriously, invest in staffing, invest in infrastructure, pull people together, hold them accountable, use data and make change, build the backbone supports needed to manage the connections.

YALS: What are the challenges to making this actually work in real life?

KP: One of the challenges that has arisen with the focus on setting population level goals is what we have come to call “the denominator” challenge. Programs and services providers usually report progress against the number of clients served.
That number is almost never the total number of children and youth who could be served. Collective impact initiatives set population level goals (all children and youth), review population level data, and begin to prioritize strategies for changing outcomes. Service providers have critical perspectives that should be represented in these planning discussions. But service providers often lack the capacity and resources to implement the solutions at the population level. If the conversation ends with the selection of a strategy (e.g., more afterschool opportunities), it is unlikely that the service providers, acting on their own, will completely fill the gap.

Ensuring that every young person who could benefit from high-quality afterschool opportunities has them requires a different set of conversations. Programs that often work independently and compete for funding and, sometimes, for clients, have to be brought together to document what they are doing and who they are reaching. They have to ask if they doing enough, are they reaching the kids most in need, or, even, are they counting the same kids twice. Each of these programs could be achieving results with 90 percent of the kids they work with but, combined, only reaching 10 percent of the kids. Ultimately, they have to be motivated to ask three questions: What could they do together to reach a larger proportion of the population denominator with their existing resources? How many more kids could they reach if they had additional resources? Are there young people they don’t think they can reach using current strategies?

In many communities, this second level of conversation between the organizations that are providing a wide array of services for young people in their communities is not getting the same level of attention and support as the big planning processes are. We have to make sure those in the planning processes who control the policies and resources know that the next thing they have to do is help providers partner for impact.

YALS: Tell me more about this idea of partnering for impact.

KP: Our team at the Forum created a stairstep graphic that helps to get this idea across. (See Image 1.) The first step on the staircase is literally the step when two or three organizations come together and decide to partner. They say to each other, “You have this space, I have the kids, why don’t I put my kids on a bus and bring them to your space.” That’s a basic kind of cooperative partnership in which we are putting things together to enable more young people to access existing services. Partnerships can get bigger, deeper, and more complex than that first stairstep. A few organizations can join forces to offer a new set of services or a blended set of services. In the middle of the staircase you have coordinating networks, like Communities in Schools, which match kids with an array of providers according to their needs. Creating these partnerships requires deep work with the providers, pulling them together in small groups, or as a network figuring out everything from training, to transportation, to hours, to differences in organizational culture. This is all required so that kids can move more freely between these services and get better, more comprehensive services.

The seemingly simple act of naming the different kinds of partnerships that have to be in place if you are going to have collective impact, allows people to say to themselves, “Oh yeah, that’s why we are having a problem.” It allows those at the top and the bottom of the stairsteps to visualize the frustration that folks from the services perspective are having when they sit at collective impact meetings. The needle isn’t going to move just because people say the needle has to move. There has to be money and support on the table and an appreciation for the work that goes into creating all of these types of partnerships.

Our collective impact conversations can benefit from sharpen, cleaner language about the levels at which impact needs to happen. It’s great that more communities are doing citywide planning and launching big initiatives. But every level of partnering could benefit from becoming more strategic, more intentional, more outcome driven and better documented.

YALS: Where do you see libraries fitting into the collective impact framework?

KP: Libraries have a huge amount of experience and success in coming together to partner with other organizations on

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**The Five Conditions of Collective Success**

**Collective Agenda**
Focuses on a shared vision and common understanding of the problem.

**Shared Measurement Systems**
Collecting data and measuring results together.

**Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
A joint plan of action.

**Continuous Communication**
Trust, consistent, and ongoing communication.

**Backbone Support Organizations**
A separate organization coordinating and managing the process.
specific projects focused on improving the quality, depth, coordination, and continuity of services that young people get in their communities.

When I think about libraries, one of the things I find exciting about getting them into a collective impact space is the fact that libraries really do have a commitment to serve all the kids in the neighborhood. You take the population denominator as your goal. This can make for an interesting discussion among libraries about the particular role they can play in helping the array of organizations in neighborhoods that have a “program denominator” focus have more of a collective impact on the lives of their kids.

Libraries can start from a vantage point of being neighborhood-based organizations with a commitment to be available to the neighborhood. This begins by trying to understand who the kids and families and other organizations are in that neighborhood. Asking more programmatic or service focused organizations what they need, what they are experiencing, and how the library can be helpful is an interesting place to come from. It’s a nice complement to the place that a youth-serving organization, that has a facility and a set of program staff and a set of program slots that it’s trying to fill, would come from. Playing a neutral convener, connector role, if useful, could be both valuable and appreciated. And, to the extent that libraries see young people and families who for whatever reason do not use the services provider organizations make available, libraries can have unique information that can help with the denominator problem.

There’s also another way to look at this. At the Forum for Youth Investment we basically use three gears to talk about a broad theory of change. (See Image 2.) The biggest gear is child and youth outcomes, focusing on improving child and youth outcomes in lots of different categories and for lots of different age groups. There are things that libraries do that really speak to that broadest set of age groups and outcomes. The question,
Partnering for Impact

The question path was designed to help leaders within a community begin to identify the types of information they need to compile to be able to engage in “collective seeing and learning.”

The questions, however, can be used at a higher level to highlight differences between otherwise similar communities. This comparative information, if provided early on in the planning process, can be a powerful motivator to assess local problems and change local conditions.

However, given that broad commitment to all and given that libraries have a wealth of resources that can help lots of folks be able to address lots of different issues, may be: is the target audience for the library really the middle gear of providers? What could libraries do to be a better resource to all of the family, and school, and neighborhood and faith-based providers who are working with kids? It’s that kind of conversation that I think becomes intriguing and gets a lot of libraries to stay true to the mission while responding in more intentional ways to this call for collective impact. YALS

Guidelines for Authors

Young Adult Library Services is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association. Young Adult Library Services is a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with young adults (ages twelve through eighteen) that showcases current research and practice relating to teen services and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

For submission and author guidelines, please visit http://yalsa.ala.org/yals and click on “Submissions.”

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Community Experts Mentor Teens and New Adults

By Laurie Bartz

Teens at Hedberg Public Library in Janesville, Wisconsin, are learning new media and technology skills with the help of community experts. Connecting with partners and engaging teens with interest-driven programs is creating opportunities for leadership roles and internships for teens and new adults.

Teens recently participated in a four-part Basics of Filmmaking workshop through a community partnership with local videographers Stephen and Cameron Pickering from Drywater Productions. The workshop was recommended by Teen Advisory Board (TAB) member and film, 3D animation, and graphic design enthusiast Jacob Cullum. He and other TAB members participated in a similar workshop series for youth at the Beloit International Film Festival.

Stephen began making movies as a teen growing up in Janesville, and he and Cameron were excited for the opportunity to share their skills with area youth. They are the recipients of several awards, including two Telly Awards, a BIFFY Award for a documentary for the Beloit International Film Festival, and a pre-game Super Bowl airing of a commercial they produced.

Establishing a partnership with Drywater based on the interests of youth demonstrates that the library and community value youth.

The Role of the Public Library in Teen Development

The public library is a vital resource that is often one of the few locations in a community that welcomes teens and provides important resources. When libraries are places that provide access to, and participation with, media in both formal and informal settings, they go beyond being safe places in which teens can simply hang out. In this case, our partnership enabled teens to have access to expert knowledge and film equipment. According to YALSA’s “The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action: “Working with other community members can expand what a library can provide for teens and create with teens when it comes to media literacy education, and this will give teens the chance to connect to others who can play a valuable educational, informational, and personal role in their lives, especially in relation to workforce preparedness.” An effective public library can also serve as a protective layer that helps teens avoid risks, focus on individual assets, and increase competence.

Learning to Make Films

During the first session, teens learned the importance of developing the story structure. They assembled a familiar story into the correct sequence and then identified the important elements in several short films. Next students were shown the basic rules of filmmaking. They learned that a film can look good by using correct composition even when filming is done with an iPhone. Then groups worked on setting the camera following the 180 degree rule and the rule of 3rds, and utilized proper camera angles and placement of the subject in the frame.

During the lighting and sound session, teens discovered that equipment and lights found around the home or garage can be used to make a film look professional. Avoiding or eliminating audio interference or extraneous sounds like refrigerators, heating or cooling systems, and passing cars was considered. A simple three-point lighting system with utility lights and household lamps and some of Drywater’s lighting equipment was used during shooting.

Trained as a teacher/librarian, LAURIE BARTZ is currently Young Adult Librarian at Hedberg Public Library in Janesville, Wisconsin, where she oversees the library’s teen program and facilitates the Teen Advisory Board and teen volunteer program. Bartz enjoys partnering with other youth-serving organizations to provide programs and outreach in the community and is a member of YALSA’s 2016 Best Fiction for Young Adults committee.
and directing of a short piece, called “The Interrogation,” made during the workshop.

Editing techniques were demonstrated during the final session. Stephen and Cameron stressed the importance of “worrying the edit” or watching a scene numerous times and sometimes moving a shot a mere fraction of a second to ensure a quality final product. The introduction and transition to new scenes was facilitated through use of storyboards. Stephen returned for a separate session to teach students hands-on film editing techniques in the library's computer lab.

**Teens Using Their Newly Developed Skills**

Following the Filmmaking Workshop, students were eager to use the knowledge they gained and decided to enter the 2014 Teen Video Challenge contest sponsored by the Cooperative Summer Library Program. The teens divided into groups for this project. One group of students met to write the script and focus on promoting libraries and reading. Another group developed Skills

Teens helped staff design Minecraft games used at programs and assisted patrons of all ages at stations at a Teen Tech Week Showcase event at the library, several joined a Tech Team to help the library plan for use of its new 3D printer. Our 2014 TAB president suggested partnering with a local music store and its Band Camp for our Youth Battle of the Bands. The Battle is a successful collaboration with the City of Janesville Recreation Division, JATV Media Services, Knapton Music Knotes, and JM4C, a local youth coalition. The TAB president, a recent graduate of our teen program, will join the Battle of the Bands planning team. Another graduate recently taught a class for teens on advanced paracord survival bracelet techniques.

More Teen Leadership Opportunities

Editing techniques were

More Teen Leadership Opportunities

Teen Video Challenge and won first place in Wisconsin. According to the judges, the entry scored high marks for its creativity, message clarity, inspirational qualities, and overall impact.

The film was featured on the Teen Central at Hedberg Public Library Facebook page and was shown during a celebratory screening for teens and their friends and families. Participants received certificates, and a cash prize was divided and distributed among all members. There is continued interest in filmmaking among teens, and this year JATV Media Services, an award-winning local public access studio, joined Drywater Productions to help guide students with their film projects.

What Came Next

The next step for Hedberg Public Library involved empowering youth as leaders and guides. While in TAB, Jacob created a rendered image of a 3D model of the Mechanical Hound in Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451 using Blender, a free 3D creation software suite. Jacob’s entry was selected as a finalist and Editor’s Choice in the 2013 “It Came From a Book” Teen Art Contest sponsored by The Library as Incubator Project. Outside the library, Jacob won Best Film in the Beloit International Film Festival Student Showcase in 2014 and recently released a demo reel on his website showcasing his 3D work. His skills also enabled him to work as an assistant for Drywater Productions. Jacob graduated from high school and taught a 3D design class for teens at the library this summer using Blender. Students created projects and requested that Blender be added to library computers in the teen area. In addition, a teen internship has been created by JATV Media Services.

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It is instead a place, physical and virtual, to learn how to connect and use resources of all types from physical books to apps to experts in a local, regional, or national community. Media exists alongside print in various platforms, and teens must become proficient with a variety of technological tools and demonstrate innovative skills in order to succeed.

Library programs that incorporate media and technology provide opportunities for libraries to connect students with high-interest learning, content creation and sharing. Through the dedication of community members like Stephen and Cameron Pickering and JATV Media Services, teens and recent graduates are learning skills and taking leadership roles, internships, and jobs in the library and community.
Learning with and without Technology

By Karin Perry and Holly Weimar

Teens are surrounded by technology. “88 percent of teens text their friends at least occasionally, and fully 55 percent do so daily” (“Teens, Technology and Friendships,” www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06/teens-technology-and-friendships). Kids born today will never live in a world where there aren’t devices like smartphones and tablets. Whether or not they personally own one, it is most likely that their school does. This means there are many new opportunities for youth to gain a variety of skills.

In this article we write about an array of tools—online, digital, and analog—that library staff working with teens can use to support youth acquisition of a variety of skills. We think that this assortment will help library staff help teens learn in a range of environments: those that are technology-based and those that focus on the use of physical objects.

Building Things: Build with Chrome and LEGO

Build with Chrome is a web application where teens build using digital LEGO blocks (www.buildwithchrome.com). It was originally developed for the LEGO Festival of Play. Then in 2014 the application was opened to everyone and anyone. By signing in with a Google account, teens from around the world can build their own creations and see what others built. Users have the option of building from scratch or going through tutorials or challenges in the Build Academy. The possibilities are endless with the multiple brick and color options. Once created, Builds can be published for others to view.

Of course the analog version of LEGO is also a great way for teens to create and build. Building may be solitary or in collaborative groups. For realistic building, there is the LEGO Creator series of cars (think Ferrari), buildings, and jet planes. More specifically builders can create replicas of the White House, the Louvre, and even the Leaning Tower of Pisa. If interested in building a wall made of LEGO, Pinterest and sites like RenovatedLearning.com have great ideas for constructing one of those. Don’t forget you can give teens the chance to talk about what they build digitally, or with physical bricks, and describe what they like, don’t like, and what they learn with each type of building experience.

Build Electrical Circuits with Squishy Circuits

Hands-on inquiry-based learning is the perfect way for teens to learn how things work. At a 2011 TED Talk, AnnMarie Thomas demonstrated how homemade play dough conducts electricity. (Available at www.ted.com/talks/annmarie_thomas_squishy_circuits.) By combining the use of conductive and insulating doughs, a circuit is created. (Thereby creating “squishy circuits.”) There is a Squishy Circuits

Karin Perry is an Assistant Professor of Library Science at Sam Houston State University. She spends most of her time reading YA books. Her book, Sci Fi on the Fly: A Reader’s Guide to Science Fiction for Young Adults, was published in July 2015. She is the author of the “Audio Talk” (audio book reviews) column for VOYA. Perry presents in Texas and elsewhere about books and technology. She is currently working on a book about Sketchnoting with students and another reader’s advisory book for VOYA. Holly Weimar is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Library Science at Sam Houston State University. Her research focus includes virtual learning presence, educational sketchnoting, and researching in the school library. In addition to teaching and scholarly and administrative duties, she is also the internship coordinator for the library science program. She enjoys visiting school library interns in the field and learning about all the important work that they are doing together with the school librarian. Currently, she is working on an educational sketchnoting project with Karin Perry and Mary Ann Bell.
Online (www.worldwaronline.com) is a free to play browser-based game with players from over 100 communities. It is a unique combination of war, strategy, and community. It is a free to play browser-based game with players from over 100 nations taking part. Playing games in both physical and digital environments gives teens more opportunities to think and talk about when technology provides ways to expand understanding and when it’s a hindrance to that. Library staff and youth development experts can facilitate those conversations with the teens with whom they work.

**Saving the World with Board and Online Gaming**

Have you seen Pandemic? In this game teens get a chance to learn how to solve a world problem, which helps them to expand their knowledge of real-world problems and events. Two to four players start at CDC headquarters and travel between cities treating diseased patients while looking for a cure. They must decide how to balance treating patients while at the same time working on developing a cure for the four different viruses that plague the populace. Strategy and cooperation with other players is important and must be used to cure the diseases for a win. Game play usually takes about 60 minutes. Some other board games that require the important 21st-century skill of strategy include Memoir ’44 (replay of WWII battles), Game of Thrones (somewhat similar to the fantasy of George R. R. Martin and the popular HBO series of the same name), Ticket to Ride (building of the first U.S. railroads), and the tried and true game of chess.

To coincide with the physical board games Pandemic and Memoir ’44, teens can play Pandemic II and World War Online. In Pandemic II (www.pandemic2.com) players choose to be either a virus, parasite, or bacteria with the goal of killing everyone on the planet. World War Online (www.worldwaronline.com) is a unique combination of war, strategy, and community. It is a free to play browser-based game with players from over 100 countries taking part. Playing games in both physical and digital environments gives teens more opportunities to think and talk about when technology provides ways to expand understanding and when it’s a hindrance to that. Library staff and youth development experts can facilitate those conversations with the teens with whom they work.

**Life Happens**

Teens have a lot of options for keeping track of their lives. Writing a diary or creating a to-do list can happen both digitally and with “old-fashioned” pen and paper. For teens, selecting the right pen, paper, or other tool to create a to-do list or to write a diary entry might have a lot of personal meaning and importance. Choices abound: Pilot, Zebra, Uniball, and Sharpie pens are popular and come in a variety of colors. Moleskins, specialty notebooks, or printer paper may do the job. Teens may even find that different types of projects require different writing tools—digital or analog.

When teens want to go the digital route for life management, there is an array of tools they may use. For example: Wunderlist (Android, iOS, Windows, Web, Mac), Quest (iOS only), and Begin (iOS only). Wunderlist and Quest accomplish the same thing. Teens keep a list of tasks to complete and then cross them off when finished. The advantage of Wunderlist is that the app syncs across platforms so what is on a smartphone will also show up on the computer. Quest enables teens to “level up your life” and grow an 8-bit character. As teens complete tasks they earn items to advance their character in a “game.” Once tasks are finished, teens level up and watch the character grow. Then there is Begin. This productivity app focuses on short-term due dates. Teens enter tasks that need to be completed today or tomorrow. At the beginning of each day, the app clears out the old to-dos and teens start fresh.

**Career Readiness:**

**Junior Achievement/ Future Business Leaders of America**

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) is the oldest student organization for teens preparing for careers in business. The organization provides service learning opportunities and conferences for leadership development. For educators or advisors, a specialized business curriculum is available. Another organization that supports teen learning about the business world is Junior Achievement (JA). The focus for JA is more entrepreneurial, with experiences focused on starting a business and managing finances. Both organizations provide online information to help educate their members, but the face-to-face interactions prove to be highly engaging and inspiring.

**Gaining Career Skills Online**

TeachingKidsBusiness.com is definitely a place to go online to gain business and entrepreneurial skills. Under the site’s “Skills” tab there are several programs and activities to complete that help prepare teens for the business world. There are instructions for creating a resume, a planning sheet to help teens decide what their “thing” is, activities to help teens learn how to network, and tips for working on attitude and self-image.

Learning how to handle money is also really important for teens to find out about. FamZoo Family Finance is a free iOS app that allows parents to set up their own online virtual bank to manage a teen’s allowance, chores, budgets, goals, loans, spending, saving, and charitable giving. What we like about this one is that it seems to encompass a lot of what parents want teens to know about money, including what loans are all about, which is something not frequently included in budgeting apps.
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The Young Adult's Guide to Dream Interpretation: Learn What Your Dreams Mean

REVISED 2ND EDITION of this BEST SELLER! Now with workbook on CD!
2015 Teens’ Top Ten Announced

Teens all over the world voted starting Aug. 15, with voting lasting through ‘Teen Read Week’ (Oct. 18–24, 2015) for Teens’ Top Ten. Altogether, over 27,000 votes were cast for the 24 nominees.

The official 2015 titles are:

1. “The Shadow Throne” by Jennifer A. Nielsen (Scholastic)
2. “I Become Shadow” by Joe Shine. (Soho Teen)
3. “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” by Jenny Han. (Simon & Schuster)
4. “My Life with the Walter Boys” by Ali Novak. (Sourcebooks)
5. “Heir of Fire” by Sarah J. Maas. (Bloomsbury)
6. “The Bane Chronicles” by Cassandra Clare. (Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry)
9. “Since You’ve Been Gone” by Morgan Matson. (Simon & Schuster)

For more info about the Teens’ Top Ten, visit www.ala.org/yalsa/teensstenopen.

Teen Tech Week™ 2016: Create it at Your Library!

YALSA invites library staff to encourage teens to “Create it at your library” for Teen Tech Week 2016.

The Teen Tech Week “Create it at your library” theme gives library staff the opportunity to show their communities how their services help youth gain STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) skills.

Teen Tech Week takes place March 6–12, 2016. Library staff are encouraged to visit and join, for free, the official Teen Tech Week website. On the site staff can access planning and promotional resources and exchange ideas with fellow library staff.

Learn more, at www.ala.org/teentechweek.

Apply by March 1st to Serve on a Strategic Committee!

Update your skills, get leadership and networking opportunities, be a part of moving YALSA forward and have a great time by joining one of our strategic committees! President-Elect Sarah Hill will appoint committee members for 2016–2018 strategic committees. These committees help the association advance its mission and the profession. Interested in being more involved? Read on to find out how.

A Guide to Strategic Committees

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

JURIES

Book Wholesalers Grant Jury
Conference Travel Scholarships Jury

Frances Henne Award Jury
Great Books Giveaway Award Jury
MAE Award Jury
Volunteer of the Year Award Jury
Writing Award Jury

BOARDS

Continuing Education Advisory Board
Editorial Advisory Board
Research Journal Advisory Board
Publications Advisory Board
The Hub Advisory Board
Website Advisory Board

COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES

Division and Membership Promotion Committee
Financial Advancement Committee
Joint School/Public Library Cooperation Committee
Legislation Committee
Annual Conference Marketing & Local Arrangements Task Force (seeking members in the Chicago area)
Organization and Bylaws Committee
Research Committee
Teen Read Week Committee
Teen Tech Week Committee
Teens’ Top Ten Committee
Mentoring Task Force
National Guidelines Oversight Committee
Summer Learning Task Force
RUSA/YALSA Young Adult Reference Committee

What to Know Before You Volunteer

Before you volunteer to serve on a committee, advisory board or jury, you’ll
want to learn what the group does and what your responsibilities will be. Check out the Committee FAQ at www.ala.org/yalsa/committee-faq

On the YALSA Web site you’ll also find information about each of the group’s functions, size, and more. Start your research at www.ala.org/yalsa/workingwithyalsa/yalsacommittee. Lastly, be sure to read through YALSA’s Handbook, especially the sections that list responsibilities for committee members. It’s online at www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsahandbook.

Complete the Volunteer Form
To be considered for any committee or jury, you need to fill out a volunteer form. It is available online (go to www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsahandbook and choose “Committee Volunteer Form”). When you fill out a form, please be sure to include the name of the groups on which you’d most like to serve. If you don’t indicate a few that you’re particularly interested in, it is very difficult for the president-elect to find the best fit for you. Forms are only kept on file for one year, so it’s important that you fill out each year that you would like to serve on a committee or jury.

Timeline
Applications will be accepted through March 1st, and once submitted you should look for an email confirmation from YALSA. Appointments will be made by the President-Elect, Sarah Hill, in March and April 2016. Please do not expect to hear from Sarah before March. For updates on the appointments process, check the YALSA blog. If appointed, your term begins July 1, 2016.

The Fine Print
All of YALSA’s strategic committees are virtual appointments, meaning you do not need to attend the Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting to serve on a committee. Appointments are two-year terms for advisory boards and committees, and one year terms for juries. Some groups are very popular and may receive dozens of volunteer forms for just two or three available spots. Your membership in YALSA must be current in order for you to be eligible to serve on a committee or jury.

Questions? Please contact Sarah Hill, YALSA’s President-Elect, at gsarahthelibrarian@gmail.com or YALSA’s Membership Coordinator, Letitia Smith, at lsmith@ala.org.

For other ideas on how to build your professional skills and/or get more involved in YALSA, please visit www.ala.org/yalsa/getinvolved/getinvolved.

Submit a Program or Paper Proposal for YALSA’s 2016 Symposium!
The call for proposals and papers for YALSA’s 2016 YA Services Symposium, which will take place in Pittsburgh, PA, November 4–6, 2016, is now open! Visit the symposium site at www.ala.org/yalsa/yasyssymposium to learn more about how to submit a proposal, sign up for updates and apply for a travel stipend to attend! Registration opens in April.

Promote the Best of the Best @ Your Library
By the time you receive this issue, YALSA will have announced its award winners at the ALA Youth Media Awards on January 11, 2016. In addition, YALSA will announce its selected book and media lists for 2016 the week of Jan. 11th, as selection committees submit their final lists to the YALSA office.

In late February, visit www.ala.org/yalsa/best to find downloadable tools to promote winners at your library, part of YALSA’s new Best of the Best! You’ll be able to download customizable bookmarks featuring the winners of the 2016 Alex, Edwards, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey, and Printz Awards. You will also find press releases, which you can customize and send to local publications to let teens know that award winners are available at your library. You can also download logos to use on your website or in marketing materials in your library, spine labels to apply to titles that appear in the Best of the Best, and other tools to promote the awards, as well as the Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults, Best Fiction for Young Adults, Fabulous Films for Young Adults, Great Graphic Novels for Teens, Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, and Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers.

A New YALS Design will be Unveiled Soon
A new and improved YALS is coming your way! We’ve given YALS a makeover, and we’re excited to share it with you. Keep your eyes peeled for a whole new look and design in the next issue! Also, did you know, members and subscribers can access the latest issue of YALS digitally on the YALSA website? To do so, simply visit www.ala.org/yalsa, log into your ALA account, and visit the “Members Only” section of the site to receive access to the links!

YALSA announces Kayla Marie Figard as its 2016 Emerging Leader
Kayla Marie Figard, teen services community program specialist at the Belmont (California) Library has been chosen as YALSA’s 2016 Emerging Leader.

The Emerging Leaders program is designed to enable library staff and information workers to participate in project planning workgroups; network with peers; gain an inside look into ALA structure and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity early in their careers.

Figard will receive funding to attend the American Library Association’s 2016 Midwinter Meeting in Boston and 2016 Annual Conference in Orlando. YALSA’s participation in the Emerging Leaders program is funded through the Friends of YALSA (FOY). Since 2005, FOY has funded more than $100,000 in member awards, grants, stipends and scholarships.
YALSA’s YA Services Symposium will be held in Pittsburgh, PA, November 4-6, 2016, at the Westin!

YALSA is now accepting program proposals! Check the website for more details!

www.ala.org/yalsa/yasympposium
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