YALSA'S THREE YEAR ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN
PROJECT LEAD THE WAY – BRIDGING THE COLLEGE AND CAREER PREP DIVIDE
A TEEN SPACE MADE FOR CAREER PREP

LIBRARIES AND TINKERING SPACES

SUMMER 2016
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THE YALSA UPDATE

YALS ON THE WEB

» Want more YALS? Members and subscribers can access the latest and back issues of YALS digitally on the YALSBlog at yalsa.ala.org/blog, as well as browse supplemental YALS articles and resources.
It’s very exciting to see the amazing amount of great work currently happening in our field related to college career readiness (CCR). The federal government, youth serving agencies, schools, and libraries are all focused on making sure that young people, and their families, have what they need to succeed after high school. That’s why this issue of YALS is filled with information and inspiration to help you jump in and support the college and career readiness needs of your community.

You can’t go wrong if you start with the YALS interview with Mamie Eng, Director of the Henry Waldinger Memorial Library in Valley Stream, New York. Eng realized that the teens in her community weren’t learning the practical survival skills for their first month’s of college. They didn’t have financial literacy skills, information on how to eat well, or information on how to survive living with a challenging roommate. She developed a program, with a range of community partners, to instruct teens in those areas.

Your questions about community partners should lead you to the article by Jen Cahill from Project Lead The Way (PLTW). It’s no less than inspiring to learn about PLTW’s career preparation programs for children, tweens, and teens. Similarly, the Tinkering Space at the Exploratorium in San Francisco provides an inspiring experience to the youth and families that spend time “tinkering” in their space. In the article by Luigi Anzivino and Karen Wilkinson, you will learn how you can integrate tinkering into your program.

Megan Emery and Megan Egbert both work to support youth 21st century skill development through programs and services, collections, and mentorship. Their articles give you a good framework for starting or enhancing your own CCR services for youth.

One contextual topic that you want to think about in your CCR focus is digital equity. Crystle Martin’s article provides an explanation of the challenges to digital access that teens face and how libraries can help to overcome those challenges.

The Highlight section of this issue updates you on all that’s been going on with YALSA, from the new (continued on page 19)
The focus of this issue of YALS is timely, as a 2015 Youth Truth survey (http://bit.ly/1UJwWtp) found that the majority of youth felt unprepared for college and careers, and a 2016 report, “Meandering Toward Graduation” (http://ow.ly/10jIw0), showed that just 8 percent of students complete a college and career readiness (CCR) curriculum. Those most in need of CCR, information and services, as well as access to related digital tools, are youth whose families live at or below the poverty line. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that as of 2013, 51 percent of students in the United States come from low-income families (http://bit.ly/1EfRrnG). A 2014 White House report (http://1.usa.gov/24fpE4O) noted that these low-income students face significant barriers to college access and success, including limited access to key information.

Why is this issue something we should be paying attention to? Helping low-income students pursue college and careers can have a significant and long-term impact on the student. According to a report (http://bit.ly/1LKzTIO) by The Hamilton Project, a college degree remains a low-income student’s best hope of making it out of poverty. A low-income individual without a college degree will very likely remain in the lower half of the earnings distribution, whereas a low-income individual with a college degree could just as easily land in any income bracket—including the highest.

How can libraries help? According to the White House report mentioned previously, these young people need information about: colleges that are the best fit for their interests and abilities, expected costs, financial aid, and application fee waivers. The Expanding College Opportunities Project (http://bit.ly/22zPzlW) noted that “it is often the case that neither parents nor other trusted adults are able to fill the deficit in information about college quality and costs for high-achieving low-income students. In short, traditional information channels may bypass high-achieving, low-income students, even if counselors and admissions staff conscientiously do everything that they can for these students.”

In addition to needing information, low-income students and their families

(continued on page 15)
The Life of a YALSA Board Fellow

Abigail Phillips

Since June 2015, I have served as the 2015–2016 YALSA Board Fellow, a position that has been both stimulating and eye-opening. After several years of serving on YALSA committees and task forces, I decided to apply to the Fellows program to gain insight into how YALSA works. I wanted to see things from the inside and learn more about the division as a whole. I also wanted to nurture my beginning leadership skills and discover more about myself as a leader.

I knew from my previous volunteer work that YALSA is an association with many opportunities for members to participate in a variety of roles and types of responsibilities. Some of these are obvious, others not as much. Additionally, I wanted to learn more about how YALSA itself works and serves its members, and how the association’s efforts have a broader impact on the day-to-day work of youth services library staff. After looking at information about the Board Fellow program, and reflecting on how my participation could influence my future, I decided to apply. I’m very thankful that I decided to take this brave (for me anyways) step.

While also being a dissertating doctoral student in the School of Information at Florida State University, serving as the Board Fellow has been no small challenge. Juggling my dissertation and Fellow duties has at times been overwhelming. But I pushed through because I knew at the end of my term as the Fellow I would grow extensively as both a practicing librarian, a youth-focused researcher, and as a YALSA member. And indeed I have.

Getting Started

From the start I felt warmly embraced by a group of individuals who are as passionate about working with and serving teens as I am. In my career as both a librarian and doctoral student, it isn’t often that I have been so inspired by the passion and motivation of the people around me. The Board truly enjoys the work they do for and with YALSA members, youth library staff, and young adults. Through my board activities and efforts, I have been able to witness the variety of opinions, thoughts, and personalities that are necessary to create a healthy, successful, and functioning board of an association. Although my experience with board work prior to serving as a fellow had been limited, I now realize how many different opinions, viewpoints, and qualities of individuals are necessary to create a board that is able to produce high quality and thoughtful work for its members.
I began my work as a YALSA Board member during our Board orientation at the start of ALA Annual 2015. In this meeting I met other newly appointed or elected Board members who would be working alongside me to continue the inspiring efforts that YALSA has made in serving and working with youth library staff in libraries across the country. During these meetings at Annual, I learned more about the Board, its members, and the process of serving on a board—no small undertaking. Many of the procedures and protocols can be overwhelming for someone new to this type of work. This has been especially true for me. Thankfully, I had a mentor assigned to me by YALSA. She continues to be a wonderful resource. From the outset of my term she offered me guidance and insight into how the Board operates, what my role is, how to work with a diverse group of people, how to engage during smaller breakout groups, and what it takes to serve on such a fluid and responsive Board. Over the course of the orientation process and early meetings, I developed a more solid grasp of what my work would entail for the next year. I had a lot ahead of me, much more than I realized when I initially applied to be a Fellow. Yet, I believe that I have met these challenges and helped, in some small way, to improve the work of YALSA.

A Great Opportunity

During my term on the Board, I also took part in YALSA’s strategic planning process. Strategic planning is very new to me, and at times I felt flustered during our work. I learned that strategic planning is a very time-consuming activity that involves the input and work of a diverse group of voices. What I have been consistently impressed with is how YALSA placed its members at the forefront during strategic planning. It would be easy to rush through a strategic plan, developing mission and vision statements, goals, and outcomes without acknowledging the people who will be impacted most by this plan—library staff and the youth they serve. The YALSA board consistently kept its members informed through posts to the YALSA blog, through weekly YALSA e-newsletters, and through social media posts.

The Reality of the Futures Report

Another element of my education while serving on the Board has been learning more about the report the “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action.” (commonly referred to as the Futures Report). The report reflects the changing nature of young adult services and outlines how libraries and library staff can respond to this paradigm shift. If you work at all with teens, this is a document that is well worth your time to read. For my dissertation, I used this report extensively as I researched the rarely investigated area of how librarians emotionally, psychologically, and socially support young adults within the library through everyday interactions. However, as much as I used this report for my dissertation, I understood it in an academic sense, not as an “in the field,” everyday library staff member. Through my work on the Board, I began to better understand how YALSA is using this report to develop its strategic plan and respond to the needs of youth library staff and youth themselves in communities across the country. During the strategic planning process, the Futures Report always stayed in the forefront of any discussion when determining the reenvisioned goals and eventual mission and vision statements. I’m grateful that through my work on the YALSA Board I discovered even further than when I first read the report how inspiring the Futures Report truly is and how it can be used both by researchers and practitioners.

Making It Work for Me

Beginning with our Board orientation process, I began to feel a bit out of sorts. There were so many new people to meet and engage with who were also excited as I was about being on the YALSA Board. I’m an introverted person by nature and relatively new to serving on a Board. Learning to speak up became my first personal task to accomplish as a Board member. This has been a task that I am still working on. Now at the end of my term, I feel more confident about speaking my mind in monthly Board calls and e-mail discussions. I attribute my newfound public speaking confidence to YALSA and my work on the Board. From my first official Board work at Annual 2015 to my current participation, I have grown both personally and professionally. Introversion is nothing new to librarianship. Based upon anecdotal evidence, many librarians would consider themselves introverts in some form. This is why I believe serving on committees, task forces, and boards are the first steps in expressing yourself more fully and becoming more engaged in a professional community. As a proud introvert, I’m thankful to the YALSA Board for the opportunity to challenge my natural shyness and quietness in a positive way.

A major part of my Board fellowship has been a year-long project that I am supposed to complete by the end of my term. Admittedly, I took an embarrassingly long time to figure out what to do for my project. I knew that it needed to be YALSA Board focused in some way; however, my mind, maybe because of my researcher background and leanings, kept turning to research projects that I could create...
that focused on different intertwining aspects of youth, librarianship, and research—not the projects that would improve in-depth the work of the YALSA Board overall. Now, after much discussion with other Board members and our executive director, Beth Yoke, I have finally (FINALLY) figured out an appropriate project. This project may not be completed by the end of my term during ALA Annual 2016. Still, I feel that my project will benefit the work of the Board, ideally, for years to come. At the moment, I’m creating a toolkit for YALSA Board members to use to build and nurture relationships with funders and potential funders. The toolkit can be turned to when determining who are funders, how they can support YALSA, and ways in which Board members can approach these funders. Like much of my work as a Fellow, this hasn’t been an easy task to take on, but I am pleased by the work I have produced so far.

You Can Do It Too

Finally, I would encourage others to apply for the YALSA Board Fellow program. It’s a wonderful opportunity to learn more about YALSA as an association, how it functions, and how it strives to support its members and young adults. Your fellow YALSA Board members and YALSA staff are incredibly supportive and encouraging throughout your year of service. Yet, I must offer up one disclaimer; being a YALSA Board Fellow is not an easy task to undertake. It will take up considerably more time and energy than you expect. In fact, I have been consistently surprised by how much effort is involved in my work as a Fellow. So many e-mails, online discussions, face-to-face conversations, and meetings come with serving on the YALSA Board. It can be a wealth of information to keep up with and reflect upon in a timely way. However, through this communication, I have discovered that YALSA is not an association that allowed itself to become stagnant within the overall work of the ALA organizational structure. It is a remarkable association that is continuously evolving, growing, and looking toward the future, as demonstrated by the Futures Report discussed earlier. By taking up the job of Board Fellow, you will be contributing to this positive and wonderful environment of change, growth, and determination.

Learn more about being a Board Fellow on the YALSA website at http://bit.ly/yalsa_brd_fellow. If you have any questions about the program, feel free to get in touch with me at abigail.leighphillips@gmail.com.

Abigail Phillips, Ph.D. was the 2015–2016 YALSA Board Fellow and recently completed her doctoral program at Florida State University’s School of Information.

Teen Services 101
A Practical Guide for Busy Library Staff

Need to amp up teen services, but you’re short on time or not sure where to start? Teen Services 101 provides useful information that will help staff put together a basic teen services program with minimal time and hassle. You’ll also find practical tips and instructions on how to build core teen services into the overall library program. Whether you’re a new teen services librarian, or staff in a one person library, this how-to guide on teen services can help you effectively serve teen patrons.

*Price: $40 | Item Number: 978-0-8389-8803-9

Also available as an E-Book!
The process of realizing the vision of the Futures Report involved working backwards to identify the organizational priorities that facilitate the desired outcomes. It’s like planning to build a house; by envisioning the result, it’s possible to make informed decisions about construction materials. The YALSA Board is therefore creating an organizational structure that supports growth aligned with the Futures Report. Read on to learn what that organizational plan is all about. And, if you are interested in getting involved in next steps, fill out the form at www.surveymonkey.com/r/R7MMR5G

Preface
This organizational plan is intended to be a guiding document to provide overall direction for YALSA for three years. A companion document, the implementation plan, lays out specific activities to be carried out over the three years, and outlines the necessary resources and metrics needed for implementation and evaluation. The implementation plan will be a flexible, living document that evolves over time as work progresses toward the three priority areas outlined in the organizational plan.

Introduction: A Legacy of Success Since 1957
YALSA has a long and proud history dating back to 1957 of strengthening library services for young adults and supporting the library staff who provide these services. YALSA has strived to change with the times, and in many ways it has been ahead of its time, consistently launching initiatives to integrate new services and technologies into young adult library services and to address the needs of disadvantaged youth. YALSA now recognizes that the current and emerging needs of society call for the organization to enter a new stage in its journey. These issues prompting this shift...
are documented in YALSA’s report, “The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action” (referred to herein as the Futures Report), which was adopted by the YALSA Board in December 2013 as the organization’s foundational planning document. The issues listed in the report include:

• The need for greater cultural competency on the part of those working for and with teens, based on the growing diversity of the U.S. population
• The increase in the number of teens who are living in poverty, unemployed, and/or homeless
• The existence of significant and negative societal pressures teens are faced with including bullying, homophobia, and violence, which can lead to depression, eating disorders, and mental health issues
• A stark “achievement gap” between Caucasians/Asians and African Americans/Hispanics
• High levels of teen unpreparedness for the 21st century workforce
• Socioeconomic disparities in ownership of the technologies that play an ever increasing role in teens’ social, personal, and academic lives

In short, teens need libraries and library staff in a way they may never have needed them before. Today’s adolescents face an expanding array of social issues that place them at physical and psychological risk, and libraries can help. Libraries can contribute to solving and alleviating the issues and problems that negatively impact teens, and can put more teens on the path to a successful and fulfilling life.

To play this role, library staff working for and with teens will need to take on roles and responsibilities that were not part of their job description in the past. Further, they will need to adopt an evolving orientation that shifts some focus away from traditional aspects of the job such as collection development to allow for greater innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking. What is needed is no less than a transformation of the teen library services profession.

A Theory of Change

Through the strategic planning process, the YALSA Board has updated its mission and vision. The vision is the overarching purpose that YALSA will serve with everything it does, now and for years to come.

Mission: Our mission is to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens—especially those with the greatest needs—on the path to successful and fulfilling lives.

Vision: Our vision is that all teens have access to quality library programs and services—no matter where they occur—that link them to resources, connected learning opportunities, coaching, and mentoring that are tailored to the unique circumstances of the community and that create new opportunities for all teens’ personal growth, academic success, and career development.

This vision could be advanced in many ways. It is no surprise, then, that YALSA has often tried to be “all things to all people,” and as a result YALSA has sometimes struggled to achieve all of its ambitious goals. The Board has articulated the need for YALSA to have a clearer strategic focus that all people doing the work of YALSA—and ideally all YALSA members—will be able to articulate. Further, addressing the challenges identified previously implies that some of YALSA activities that made sense in the past may not make sense to pursue in the future, and will need to evolve or be sunsetted.

One framework that can provide this strategic focus is a theory of change that links YALSA’s activities to the outcomes it wants to produce. A theory of change sheds light on an organization’s unstated assumptions about its work, and supports outcome-based planning. The core elements of a theory of change include:

• An intended impact statement (the goal the organization wants to accomplish)
• The theory of change itself (a depiction of the causal links between activities and outcomes)
• A learning agenda (the areas in which research is needed to fill in any gaps in the theory of change)

Using the theory of change model, the YALSA Board engaged in a strategic process that built upon the Futures Report noted previously and produced the following intended impact statement:

Intended Impact Statement

To meaningfully address the challenges teens face today and to put more teens on the path to a successful and fulfilling life, YALSA will support library staff who work for and with teens in the transformation of teen library services so that:

• Libraries reach out to and serve ALL teens in the community no matter what their backgrounds, interests, needs, or abilities, and whether or not they frequent the library space.
• The library “space” is at once both physical and virtual. It connects teens to other people, printed materials, technology, and digital content, not limiting teens to a designated teen area but rather inviting them into the full scope of the library’s assets and offerings.
• Teens co-create, co-evaluate, and co-evolve library programs and activities with library staff and skilled volunteers (including mentors and coaches) based on their passions and interests. These programs and activities are connected to teens’ personal, work, or academic interests across multiple literacies;
generate measurable outcomes for teens’ skills and knowledge; and are tailored to the unique circumstances of the community. It will be essential for the YALSA Board, staff, and members to use this intended impact statement to determine whether or not proposed initiatives are appropriate for YALSA to pursue with its time, energy, and financial resources. If YALSA is not thoughtful about what it will and will not do, then it may continue to see its efforts spread so thin as to dilute its actual impact on the issues that matter most.

**Priorities**

To achieve this impact, the YALSA Board identified the following priority areas:

### Leading the Transformation of Teen Library Services

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<td>Leverage YALSA programs, activities, and communications to promote the transformation of teen library services.</td>
<td>75 Percent of members’ libraries have applied at least one aspect of the envisioned future with respect to their teen services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leverage relationships with state and regional associations to promote the transformation of teen library services.</td>
<td>By 2018, there is a YALSA presence at a minimum of 10 state or regional conferences per year. By 2018, YALSA membership has grown by at least 15 percent.</td>
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<td>Implement ongoing curricula to build knowledge and skills required to bring about the transformation of teen library services.</td>
<td>75 Percent of members demonstrate familiarity with transformation-related concepts.</td>
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<td>Institute a three-track leadership development curriculum for (1) front-line library staff, (2) managers, and (3) senior leadership for YALSA and the profession.</td>
<td>30 Percent of YALSA members have used YALSA’s leadership development offerings in some form. 90 Percent of those who have used YALSA’s leadership development offerings self-assess as having increased or improved their leadership skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a program of training and assessment for cultural competency.</td>
<td>At least 100 YALSA members are qualified to provide cultural competency training in their own region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model diversity for the field through YALSA’s recruitment, membership, and governance.</td>
<td>The number of YALSA members with diverse backgrounds, as defined by ALA, has increased by 20 percent</td>
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### Advocacy to Policy Makers at all Levels to Increase Support for Teen Library Services

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<th>Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Train, empower, and support YALSA members to conduct advocacy at all levels</td>
<td>100 Percent of YALSA members conduct advocacy at some level and recognize that they are doing so. Activities include but not limited to participating in local youth development boards and groups. At least five governor’s advisory boards/councils have YALSA members on them by end of 2018. Library funding at the state level increases by 10 Percent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct quarterly briefings on Capitol Hill for legislators, policymakers, and their staffs.</td>
<td>20 Percent of congressional members have staff who have attended at least one YALSA briefing on Capitol Hill.</td>
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The Board drafted a list of activities, resources, and metrics associated with these strategies and three-year outcomes, which together comprise the implementation plan (http://bit.ly/yalsa_org_implementation). These activities, resources, and metrics will evolve over time as YALSA learns how best to pursue the strategies presented previously. This implementation plan is a living document, and its success will depend on YALSA’s ability to learn and adapt as it moves forward.

**Learning Agenda**

The activities described are a heavy lift, and in some cases represent ventures into areas that are new and unfamiliar for YALSA. For this reason, to achieve its intended impact, YALSA leaders and staff will need to learn on an ongoing basis. The learning agenda itself will evolve over time, as YALSA gains mastery of some areas and identifies new areas that require attention. This learning could take place in several ways:

- Learning on the job as staff, board, and volunteers seek out the information to do what they’ve been tasked to do.
- Tapping into the existing knowledge of YALSA members and library staff working for and with teens.
- Identifying continuing education topics to focus on and obtaining training from other entities, such as ALA, ASAE, and external consultants.

**Learning is required in the following areas related to leading the transformation of teen library services:**

- Techniques for collecting data about members, people in the profession, and libraries consistently and unobtrusively in order to measure progress toward the transformation.
- Learning how to create and sustain a movement within the field of teen library services, since that is essentially what YALSA has committed to do. This will require YALSA to learn new ways of identifying, inspiring, motivating, and collaborating with other entities that are relevant to teens.
- Innovative staffing and member/volunteer models for driving significant change that move from bureaucratic to entrepreneurial management styles.
- Current and emerging best practices for delivering high-quality continuing education content (e.g., leadership development and cultural competency).
- Mapping the teen services system or neighborhood as a means to identifying potential funders, partners, programs, activities, and so on that would reach beyond libraries. With this transformation, YALSA is expanding its scope of interest, and it will need to learn about the larger environment in which it now seeks to operate.
- The use of prizes, rewards, and other incentives to drive change. This is an area of rapid growth in the social sector, so there are many emerging best practices that YALSA can adopt.
- Monitoring relevant trend research on an ongoing basis and conducting new research as needed to ensure YALSA’s futures-focused thinking does not get stale or outdated.
- Mapping the ideas, tools, materials, and assessments related to cultural competency to identify the key components necessary for YALSA and for library staff working for and with teens. YALSA will need to determine what its specific needs are, identify which needs can be met by materials that already exist, and then create anything else that is required.
- Training for YALSA Board and staff on cultural competency to ensure that YALSA is able to model this competency for the rest of the field.

### Funder and Partner Development

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| Develop and implement an entrepreneurial funder and partner development strategy. | All libraries for which teens are a potential audience, including but not limited to public and school libraries, have access to sufficient funding to apply to at least one aspect of the envisioned future with respect to their teen services.  
YALSA funding to support members and their libraries exceeds $5 million per year. |
| Ensure members are capable of engaging current and potential funders and partners at the local level. | All members’ libraries will have established at least one community partnership that helps them achieve a future-focused transformation of teen services. |
Learning is required in the following areas related to advocacy:

• How to assess YALSA’s advocacy effectiveness among policymakers, legislators, and their staffs. Surveys may not be feasible to capture this information, so YALSA will have to find other ways to assess its efforts in order to make necessary improvements to its advocacy strategy.

• How to plan and execute congressional briefings, in particular by drawing on the expertise of ALA, ASAE, other associations in general, and YALSA’s current and future advocacy partners.

• Mapping out existing elected leaders’ (e.g., mayors’ and governors’) advisory councils and boards and finding out how they can best be used as vehicles for YALSA’s advocacy efforts.

• How the legislative process works at the state level, best practices for advocacy efforts at the state level, and how best to advocate for teen services within that process.

Learning is required in the following areas related to funder and partner development:

• Identifying and prioritizing types of funding opportunities both for YALSA and for libraries (e.g., grants, capacity capital, unrestricted support, etc.)

• Creation and management of a rigorous funder and partner development function. For partners, this includes how to identify potential partners and how to structure the partnerships themselves, drawing from best practices used in other settings. YALSA will also need to pass this funder and partner development learning on to the profession.

• Identifying and using systems that monitor and evaluate impact so that YALSA can demonstrate its fulfillment of grant or partner terms, and that funders and partners can assess the success of their investments.

Adopted by the YALSA Board of Directors, April 27, 2016.
FEEDBACK NEEDED!

Help YALSA better serve you by completing an online survey by **August 1, 2016**. Your feedback will enable us to improve existing & create new services to meet your needs.

Five lucky individuals will win a $100 Teen Read Week™ resource pack for completing the survey!

[tinyurl.com/YALSAsurvey2016]
This paper provides an overview of and commentary on teen spaces in libraries and its implicit bearing on the strategic vision, planning, and development of facilities design for 21st century libraries. Attention is drawn to key success factors such as understanding why teen space is important, consideration of current and future priorities, best practices related to library facilities designed for and with teens, and the needs of the local community. This paper will help build understanding around the importance of teen space within a library’s organization and its community, and address issues that shape the quality of a teen patron’s experience with their library.

**Background**

Over the past two decades there has been a transformation in library facility design for and with teens. Traditionally speaking, common practice was often either to ignore dedicated space for teens or to develop a space that didn’t take into account the developmental, academic, and personal needs of teens. Many libraries were designed without teen input and preferences in mind, driven by the personal likes and ideas of librarians, administrators, and architects.

As the teen population increases and as libraries look to reevaluate their priorities and services in the 21st century, more and more school and public libraries are working to accommodate teens, moving away from traditional approaches toward creating more efficient, innovative, appealing, and teen-inspired spaces. This reevaluation of priorities is necessitated by the fact that teen demographics and needs are changing, a development that is discussed in YALSA’s 2014 report, “The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action.” Additionally, according to the “Public Agenda” in June 2006, three-quarters of Americans believe it is a high priority for local public libraries to offer a safe place where teens can study and congregate.

**Position**

As libraries continue to move forward, organizations of all types, sizes, and budgets must realize that inviting, comfortable, and user-centered environments are integral in: (1) meeting the needs of all teens, (2) transforming the role and image of the library, and (3) contributing to successful community development. Libraries are essential informal learning spaces within communities that bridge the gap between the classroom and after
HIGHLIGHT

school, and they provide an ideal environment for all teens to engage in connected learning activities—hands-on, teen-driven activities that enable teens to learn while exploring their passions and interests.

Whether building a new library, renovating an existing facility, or working on a minor facilities revamp, the primary key success factor is understanding why an informal learning environment that specifically recognizes teen needs and interests is critical. Developing dedicated, attractive, motivating, and teen-oriented space creates a positive, safe environment for learning, socializing, and leisure activities. It is a way to outwardly and interactively acknowledge teens and their needs by supporting adolescent development, creating an environment that encourages emotional, social, and intellectual growth, and building a sense of teen belonging, community involvement, and appreciation of how a library fits into their day-to-day lives.

Creating an inviting and supportive teen space helps connect teens to library resources beyond what their initial visit or need might have been focused on. Once teens experience a welcoming environment, they will want to branch out and connect with other library resources, such as materials, programs, staff, volunteer coaches and experts, and peers. This deeper engagement with the library will help teens expand their knowledge and interests as well as help them develop an appreciation for the library as an essential part of the community.

When creating a welcoming library teen space, staff must work with stakeholders and others working in youth development to learn about community needs and how the space can help to meet those needs. Libraries must consider the needs of all teens in the community, not just current library users. Working with the community in this way will help to guarantee that the library’s teen space supports the community as a whole.

Other key success factors for teen spaces include making teens’ voices and engagement a priority as well as a regular practice throughout the planning, design, implementation, maintenance, and marketing of the space and related teen library services. It is also crucial that libraries appropriately size their teen facilities based on community/student population (ages 12 to 18), and not on existing teen use. Libraries must reevaluate space allocations in their overall facilities and scale them according to demographics and overall community needs, not traditional practice or personal bias. In public libraries, the size of the space should reflect the needs of the community overall and the informal and formal learning activities that will be supported in that space, based on a vibrant community engagement process.

It is important to keep in mind that “teen-friendly” is not synonymous with unruly, unreasonable, impractical, and tacky. Don’t make assumptions or let personal biases impact decision-making, whether selecting furniture, shelving/display units, digital tools, flooring, lighting, paint color, signage, etc. Overall, the space should encourage positive use of the library as a whole.

All space and facilities projects should include a well-thought-out plan for improvement, including short-term and long-range planning for current and future teen space and services. Identify what teens need, not what adults want. As noted in YALSA’s “Teen Space Guidelines,” (www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines/teen-spaces) teen-friendly space should be flexible and allow for teens to move furniture so that they can be comfortable and successful in collaborative and independent activities. It should allow for small and large groups working together, and should enable ongoing upgrading to support the evolving way in which technology and digital tools are used by teens.

All library staff should have professional development opportunities in order to learn about the importance and value of teen space and how best to interact with teens in that space. This includes allowing for flexible use of the space and creating rules and procedures that do not impede or interrupt that use. All library staff should acknowledge the need for the entire library to be a safe and welcoming space for all patrons, including teens, and not view the dedicated teen space as the only part of the library where teens are welcome.
Conclusion

Making libraries appealing and important to teens is not an impossible task. Library facilities design, based on teen and community input, is one integral step in attracting teens and to ensuring that libraries remain relevant into the future. Looking at teen facilities design in a new light, letting go of antiquated ideas, reevaluating traditional ways of doing business, and emphasizing patron needs and wants are essential first steps in moving forward in the world of 21st century libraries.

You can access the resource list and a PDF version of this position paper on the YALSA website at http://bit.ly/yalsa_space_paper.

FROM THE PRESIDENT
(continued from page 3)

also need assistance with identifying what information is reliable. The Expanding College Opportunities Project noted: “Although a great deal of relevant information is available on the Internet, it is not easy for an inexperienced student to distinguish reliable sources of information on college admission standards, curricula, and net costs from the numerous unreliable (sometimes egregiously misleading) sources that are also online. Furthermore, many available information sources assume that low-income students are low-achieving and offer guidance that reflects this assumption.”

A growing body of research shows there are widespread negative perceptions of libraries among today’s teens as well as a lack of awareness of available services (“Teens, Libraries, and Social Media: Myths and Reality,” Denise Agosto et al. in Public Library Quarterly, 34:4, 318–327). As future voters and taxpayers, this group is important to public libraries. To secure a positive future for libraries, today’s teens must view them as vital and relevant.

Providing CCR services also strongly positions libraries at the forefront of addressing digital equity by providing young people in need with access to the high-speed internet and digital tools necessary to gain skills that will prepare them for using technology in academics or the workplace as well as for filling out online college and employment applications, and more. As a result of addressing these 21st century information needs, this provides a focus for libraries in supporting youth needs. To learn more about the digital equity issue, read Crystle Martin’s article in this issue.

Please join me in thinking about what you can do to make a difference in this critical area. Every year, the Los Angeles Public Library hosts a variety of college and career readiness workshops and programs through our Student Smart and Student Zone initiatives and our partnership with the city of Los Angeles’s Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD). In fact, our Central Library recently opened a mini Work Source Job Center, in partnership with the EWDD. If you need ideas or inspiration, check out the articles from Jennifer Cahill, Megan Emery, and Megan Engbert, and read the interview with Mamie Eng. Also, be sure to check out the CCR page on YALSA’s wiki at http://bit.ly/yalsa_wiki_ccr. I hope you will add your own tips and resources to it as well.

If you feel you need to build up your own career skills, Kimberly Sweetman’s article has just what you need to know. In addition, YALSA received a $300,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and with these funds will provide training for and with library staff in small, rural, and tribal libraries to help them provide CCR services for middle schoolers and their families in their communities. Learn more about this project on YALSA’s web site at www.ala.org/yalsa/future-ready-library.

This is my last column as President of YALSA. I can truly say that it has been a privilege to serve and represent you all over the past year. Throughout my year, I have had the opportunity to speak with many of you and hear about the great things you’re doing for and with teens, libraries, and YALSA. Before I turn over the reins to the fabulous Sarah Hill, I would like to sincerely thank you for your hard work and passion, and encourage you to continue your great work!
Welcome to Research 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 Research Roundup column focuses on college and career readiness and in particular games that research proves help youth to gain an understanding of the college admissions process.

Research suggests that a critical reason why many students do not attend college is not that they are not qualified, but because they lack the knowledge and skills to navigate the process of applying to college and for financial aid. The national guidance counselor to student ratio hovers around 1:450, but in many districts, particularly in urban areas, that ratio can be closer to 1:800. Many schools and communities are consistently under-resourced when it comes to providing quality college guidance, leaving thousands of students across the nation unaware of their postsecondary options.

Over the past several years, the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California (USC) has committed to developing programs and conducting research aimed at understanding how games can be used to cultivate college knowledge and elevate college-going outcomes for low-income and underserved youth. While much of our work is in schools with teachers and counselors, we believe that as brokers of information for young people, librarians can play a powerful role helping low-income youth learn about opportunities for college and financial aid.

The following outlines two games—Application Crunch and Mission: Admission—as well as an online digital platform that library staff and other information brokers may find useful in their efforts to engage and empower students with information to aid them in navigating the college application process.

**Application Crunch**

**Engagement Type:** Card Game  
**Number of Players:** 3–4  
**Play Time:** 60–90 minutes

Application Crunch is a card game designed through a collaborative effort among game designers from USC’s Game Innovation Lab, researchers from the Pullias Center for Higher Education, and students and teachers in California. The game is designed to help high school students become familiar with the college application process. Players take on the role of a high school student who has to figure out how to balance time between academics, extracurricular activities, work, and service, all while competing for scholarships and acceptance to colleges. Player goals include getting accepted, acquiring money to pay for tuition and expenses, and developing a character who is college ready.

The game is designed to engage students in conversations that help them become familiar with college vocabulary and to learn about the features of successful college applications.
For example, students learn about the differences between types of colleges, the importance of scholarships and financial aid, and the value of extracurricular and service activities.

If you work with low-income high school youth in your library and would like to receive a complimentary copy of the Application Crunch card game, email Diane Flores at dianeflo@rossier.usc.edu. Please refer to this article in your email.

**Mission: Admission**

**Engagement Type:** Online Video Game and iPad App  
**Number of Players:** 1  
**Play Time:** 10 minutes each day for one week  

*Mission: Admission* is the digital follow-up to Application Crunch. Initially developed for Facebook, *Mission: Admission* is now available online in web browsers such as Chrome and Firefox, and can be downloaded for iPads in the App Store. Just like Application Crunch, *Mission: Admission* was designed to help students develop knowledge about successful practices for completing college and financial aid applications.

At the beginning of a game of *Mission: Admission* players select a character to guide through the process of applying to college. They choose between three randomly generated characters, each with a unique appearance, family income, and career aspiration. With limited but regenerating energy points, players choose how to delegate their character’s time. Successful strategies achieve balance between leveling up the character’s academic and extracurricular abilities, requesting letters of recommendation, mastering college essays, and meeting the requirements of college applications and scholarships. Players must keep track of schools and scholarships they want to apply to and get their applications submitted before the deadlines, which occur throughout the one-week game period.

**Learning Goals for Application Crunch and Mission: Admission:**

- Build college-related vocabulary  
- Prioritize how to allocate time toward college preparation  
- Learn to experiment with college-going strategies  
- Increase understanding of college costs and financial aid opportunities  
- Stimulate discussion around college knowledge with peers

**Get Schooled**

**Engagement Type:** Online platform  
**Reaches:** More than 5 million so far  
**Content:** Articles, quizzes, surveys, and more  

The Pullias Center’s current research, with support of the US Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education’s First in the World (FITW) program [P116F140097], explores whether *Mission: Admission* is scalable. We want to know, can we design an intervention that any interested high school can access and implement in ways that help their students gain the knowledge they need to successfully apply for college and financial aid? Then, how can we pass those research findings on to schools, libraries, and other spaces where youth spend their time in an easy-to-understand way that empowers them to support students?

To launch an intervention that engages students, we teamed up with the Get Schooled Foundation, a group that has extensive expertise in engaging schools and students. Founded through a partnership with Viacom and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Get Schooled is a nonprofit organization that capitalizes on the media and popular culture to inspire and motivate teens on their educational journey through high school and into higher education. They believe that engaging and motivating today’s youth can be as simple as tapping into the sizzle they love while delivering the substance they need to be successful. They use the messengers (celebrities, powerful peers) and the means (mobile, social, web) that resonate with youth, to meet students where they are and deliver resources, tools, and support to help students meet their educational goals.

Their website—www.getschooled.com—has reached more than 5 million students in more than 10 thousand schools.

**Reference**


Amanda Ochsner is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California. Her research focuses on using games and digital media to promote equity and opportunity for underrepresented youth.
Getting Ready for College Life: An Interview with Mamie Eng

In the summer of 2015, Mamie Eng, the Director of the Henry Waldinger Memorial Library in Valley Stream, New York, hosted a series of programs for teens on getting ready for college. Mamie spoke with YALS about her program series.

YALS: What gave you the idea to offer a college readiness program?
Mamie Eng: The idea came to me to try to offer programming for older teens after reading various articles in YALS or on the YALSA website that noted that programming for this age group is generally minimal, except for providing SAT classes. I was going through various newsletters and YA flyers in several Nassau Library System (the system on Long Island that my library is a member of) Publicity Packets and saw very little offered for older teens.

I have personally been involved in my college recruitment team, which includes talking to prospective applicants, so I have spoken to teens about what to expect when they go to college. I have taken numerous nieces and nephews for college visits, guided them in making college selections, and have even helped a few library pages. This is a topic that I felt comfortable talking about.

YALS: Why did you think it was important to offer this kind of program to your teens?
Eng: Programs for older teens seem to be limited to SAT classes. This is really not “programming.” In general, older teens don’t have a lot of free time between college prep, exams, jobs, etc., so I thought college readiness programs would be relevant, plus they NEED this type of information! Some teens may be the first in their families to go to college—their parents may not be able to give them guidance. Guidance counselors don’t have the time to talk with them about the nitty-gritty of college life. College recruiters stress why they should choose their institution. But no one is addressing that first day or first month of college.

YALS: How did you decide what aspects of college readiness to offer?
Eng: Based on my previous experience with teens going off to college, I definitely felt that [there should be] a program on how to prepare for going away to college, including what to pack, what to expect about new rooming situations, etc.

Then I started thinking about other topics and who would be available to speak. I was at a local Chamber of Commerce luncheon, and I connected with someone at a local bank who could speak about managing your finances and keeping on a budget, and then a local nutritionist agreed to speak about healthy eating at college and avoiding the “freshman 15.” At the time, there was a lot of buzz in the news about New York Governor Cuomo’s initiative against campus violence, so I looked for someone to speak on that topic, I found someone through the Nassau County Bar Association.
YALS: You are offering the series for a second time this summer, did you change anything, what and why?

Eng: Yes, we are offering the series again, with some of the same topics and some new topics, depending on who I get to speak. I will do the introductory session again, and the bank is doing a financial program again. I have contacted local hospital outreach programs to do the nutrition program, and I am considering a program on sleep—importance of good sleep habits, avoiding the over-the-counter sleep aids, etc.

The last series was not developed until after the school year ended, so I was not able to promote it at the schools. I am trying to get everything lined up before school ends so the high schools can help promote the series. The programs will be offered on various days throughout the summer, rather than four Monday afternoons in a row—teens with jobs could not attend.

YALS: How can someone replicate this?

Eng: I think that this program can easily be replicated—local banks, local hospital outreach programs, local legal services outreach programs, Chamber of Commerce members are all sources of possible speakers. Local banks, local hospital outreach programs, local legal services outreach programs, and Chamber of Commerce members are all sources of possible speakers.

Chamber of Commerce members, are all sources of possible speakers. I am very specific about what I want to have addressed, and for the most part, all the speakers stayed on topic. Topics can vary based on who is available to speak, but a general introductory program on going to college etc. is a must!

YALS: What was the total cost of the program?

Eng: The total cost of the program was next to nothing! I had to pay for printing the brochures, printing information for the introductory program, and a few other copies, but all my speakers did it for free. However, my first contact for a program on college safety wanted to charge $250, so someone might have to build in some speaker fees if they cannot find someone to do it as a public service.

FROM THE EDITOR (continued from page 2)

organizational plan to the revised “Teen Spaces and Public Libraries” position paper.

And some important news: YALSA recently received an IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Grant to support CCR in small, rural, and tribal libraries. You can read about that project at: www.ala.org/yalsa/future-ready-library.

Don’t forget to also take a look at the YALS section of the YALSA blog (http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/yals/). You’ll find additional resources there related to the topics in this issue.
Libraries and Tinkering Spaces

What tinkering is all about and how you can integrate it into your library’s services.

As informal educators, our mission is to encourage everyone’s creativity and love of learning, and we believe out-of-school opportunities have the greatest potential to build upon young learners’ interests and abilities. Making and tinkering are perfect vehicles for this, because they rely on personal interest and motivation as drivers. We think that libraries are especially well positioned in this area because they can introduce local makers and tinkerers as mentors within the community, fostering powerful connections.

Creating a studio-like environment dedicated to making and tinkering can help facilitate this mentorship process. A space that grants access to materials and tools—where people are working side by side to figure things out—allows these mentorships to happen less formally, and for the role of teacher and learner to be more fluid—not necessarily residing in the same individual the whole time.

The Tinkering Studio

Nestled in the heart of San Francisco’s Exploratorium—an active and immersive science museum that views itself as a public learning laboratory—is the Tinkering Studio, a space dedicated to offering visitors an opportunity to explore the world by making things, to slow down, to think with their hands and tinker with their own ideas connected to science, art, and technology. The studio, the activities, and the facilitation that occur there are all designed to help cultivate something we call a tinkering disposition—a proclivity for seeing the world as something that can be acted upon, and creating confidence in one’s ability to do so.

Creating a space dedicated to learning that is transformative starts with shaping the environment. Every aspect of the physical space of the Tinkering Studio is designed to feel welcoming. A display near the entrance, filled with artifacts made in the studio, gives a sense of what to expect inside without needing to spell it out. We pay special attention to lighting, preferring a living room–like atmosphere rather than overhead lights whenever possible. The shape and placement of furniture encourages conversation: visitors face each other across large rounded tables with materials spread on them, which encourages cross-talk and helps unplanned interactions between strangers occur more naturally. Our aim is to allow a temporary tinkering community to emerge, one that changes day-to-day, based on who is there and the experiences and interests they bring to the activity.
Qualities of Tinkering
We make very intentional choices when it comes to materials, prompts, and facilitation in order to make sure that the tinkering experience is rich as well as enjoyable.

Materials are plentiful enough to allow for a variety of experience levels and simple enough so that entering into the activity is fairly easy. Even if the materials are unfamiliar, it usually takes only a few moments of tinkering or watching others around the table to figure them out. Learners begin working with whatever materials they find most accessible or interesting.

We try not to rely on step-by-step instruction, and instead try to involve curiosity and experimentation as ways of getting people started. The phenomena themselves give robust feedback to the learner, and small insights develop quickly. Learners can decide how to proceed and what to try next, based on what they notice and the direction in which their own curiosity leans. Mistakes, missteps, and dead ends do occur, often; we believe those to be valuable learning opportunities, and the gateway to true understanding, so we choose not to design those possibilities out. We try to encourage tentative ideas, so when things don’t work as planned, learners are more motivated to not give up and think more deeply about how to solve the problem.

All of the activities in the Tinkering Studio are designed to become more complex than the entry point. Iteration (working on something over time, making small but important adjustments) is what drives this process. When participants test a design to see how it moves, flies, or operates, each refinement of their design is part of the iterative process. These steps are taken in direct response to what’s happening with the phenomena. Learners may notice something outside of what they were going for, a surprising result to their manipulations; this can set off a whole series of investigations involving constructing, testing, refining, observing, reflecting, remixing or reimagining. This process of building fluency with tools, materials, and phenomena is indicative of development of understanding. The ability to iterate itself is learned over time and with practice! Becoming comfortable with this process is part of the path toward developing a tinkerer’s disposition.

One of the defining qualities of a tinkering experience is that frustration and failure are common occurrences; the path from idea to execution is never straightforward, and there are many steps that seem to go in a direction opposite of success. Part of this is intrinsic to the nature of tinkering as a mode of making; the absence of a prescriptive plan, using materials in ways they weren’t intended to be used, setting highly personalized goals, encouraging quirky ideas, and so on, all naturally lead to people getting stuck in a problem, getting themselves into trouble, in a way. Not only do we not mind that these moments occur while tinkering, we actively design for them, and try to help learners see frustration as a natural by-product of pursuing interesting ideas, and failure as valuable feedback. This breakthrough in thinking, and ability to persist in the problem space, is one of the fundamental outcomes of tinkering. It is about finding the capacity in oneself to look carefully at the problem, reframe a solution, try it out, and assess the outcome.

Tinkering is not a prescribed set of steps that everyone is expected to follow. Each person comes away from a tinkering experience with a slightly—and sometimes significantly—different artifact or takeaway. Sometimes the takeaway isn’t a physical object at all, but more an attitude or idea. This breadth of outcomes is a mark of a successful tinkering activity and a testament to the importance we place on the role of the individual learner and the pathway to understanding. We achieve this by structuring the tinkering experience around the learner’s questions, tentative ideas, and intuitive insights. However, empowering people to trust their instincts and feel competent in pursuing their own pathway to understanding is not trivial; to be truly rich and transformative, what gets constructed must start with the learner’s existing collection of experiences and build from there.

One shortcut to connect with learners at an emotional level is through considered use of humor and whimsy, which are always present in Tinkering Studio offerings in one way or another. We enjoy unusual juxtapositions of topics, like sewing with circuits or using familiar materials in unfamiliar ways, and use humor to lower the barriers for entry for those who might approach the activities more tentatively. Playful and whimsical aspects of activities set a tone for what we value beyond science learning and hint that these tinkering experiences might go beyond traditional didactic science learning.

We deeply believe that learning isn’t linear and it’s never done. By modeling the fact that there isn’t one single right way of doing something or a simple linear path to follow when pursuing an idea, we give the learner permission to follow hunches and further develop a tinkerer’s disposition in the process.

Developing a Culture of Thoughtful Reflection
Perhaps the resource that is most responsible for the success of our tinkering environment is the team of educators and designers that runs it. We value a capacity for self-reflection, for being constructively critical about our own work, and for using that feedback to iterate our solutions and designs on
TRENDING

This is a capacity that we have built over time by nurturing an environment and a culture where feedback is welcomed, sought after, and acted upon. We don’t have a formalized approach to this aspect of our work, so rather than provide a checklist or recipe for how to implement this in your own practice, we will try to share some of the attitudes and practices that contribute to it.

First and foremost, we make time for it. It is tempting to get stuck in a daily routine or move on to the next project if things feel stale, and it definitely requires effort to take stock of what has been working and what needs to be tweaked. We believe the payoff in terms of advancing your practice is well worth it.

We schedule a weekly meeting as a regular opportunity to touch base and identify problems that need to be tackled in depth. But we also practice regular debrief conversations following any bit of work that is new or substantial, like an event, a professional development workshop, a new activity we have just tried out on the museum floor, and so on. This is a chance for us to review photos from the event and go over every aspect of it: from the schedule and setup, to facilitation prompts and choice of materials. We analyze what worked well, what didn’t, what surprised us, what we wished we had done differently.

We have developed such an ingrained habit of debriefing that we don’t feel like a project is truly done until we have had a discussion about it as a group. In some ways we might even go so far as to say that the reason we try things in the space is so we can have a conversation about it afterward.

The structure that supports our work also works in our favor: our group is small enough that we don’t have to go through a committee review process before we can implement a compelling idea for something we want to try, even if highly experimental. We are able to act fast and fail (if necessary) right away so we can course correct.

We are truly motivated by making the work better rather than getting points for having a good idea, so we are able to ask each other for feedback and honest critique. This is also helped by the fact that all of us participate equally in our most critical work: activity development and facilitation on the floor. This means we are intimately familiar with the details and reasons behind our choices and solutions.
We take the work we do very seriously, but not so much ourselves. Keeping a sense of humor, a relaxed work environment, and family-like relationships allows us to critique each other without fear of offending, and inject some levity and “snarkasm” into the serious business of developing a tinkerering practice. 

In our book, The Art of Tinkering, we tried to condense some of our principles into light-hearted Tinkering Tenets. (See previous page.)

**Now It’s Your Turn**

Initiating a process like this can seem daunting at first, and it is not free of challenges, but it is also entirely doable and lends itself to a grassroots approach. One key to sustaining the effort long term is finding the right people as mentors and support staff, seeking out those who self-identify as being interested in this approach. Tinkering takes passion, and if it is a forced fit, the effort is more likely to flounder. Start by activating those interested people first, cultivating curiosity over time, and give them latitude to figure it out over repeated trials rather than hitting it out of the park on first attempt.

Then turn your attention to the local community just outside your space: who should be involved? What are they doing that can be shared with others? Making connections can be exhilarating, both between people, visitors, and makers, and connections that are more tangentially related to other ideas across different disciplines and media. The great news is that libraries are already a great source of information, and library staff are highly skilled in finding out more about stuff! Try for a variety of ways for makers to connect—give a talk or a workshop, show or demo their work at an Expo or Faire type of event, participate in a skill swap or tool exchange. We have found lots of people itching to share their work both with their local community and with other makers, just by putting the word out. Once you get the ball rolling ideas will begin to leapfrog, as people get inspired to try something based on things they’ve seen or tried. Making is a deeply human endeavor, and it almost becomes a self-feeding system once it gets going. The more you do, the more makers start to reach out and want to participate, at all levels—from lurking along the sidelines, to actively participating, and ultimately proposing new ideas themselves. This arc of engagement is wonderful to witness.

When it comes to activities and programming, use inspiration as a guiding light, and look for ideas that are suggestive of possibilities: find ways to highlight the different facets a single idea might contain. Sometimes we have used materials as springboards for inspiration: everything you can do with cardboard, or plastic, or metal, or even computer code! You could also think about highlighting a process instead, such as printmaking, or a skill such as soldering.

**An Open Source Approach**

We have always strongly believed in the power of sharing and disseminating knowledge, in empowering others to do for themselves what we have found so rewarding in our own practice. We jokingly refer to this attitude as “open source tinkering,” but we practice it seriously. We continually try to develop ways to document and disseminate our work, both internally and outside our walls; this forces us to reflect upon it and articulate it in a way that others will understand and perhaps be interested enough to pick up and try iterating on the ideas for themselves—and hopefully share what they’ve tried back with us. In many ways, maintaining a regular blog (http://tinkering.exploratorium.edu/blog) has been a tremendous incentive to keep a written record of our work. Its original intent was to provide a glimpse into the backstage of the Tinkering Studio, and as a way for our expanding tinkering team to keep up with each other’s work; as we realized that we had a growing audience, however, it also provided the motivation for articulating the thinking behind our work more clearly. In doing this, we feel more connected to other people and places doing similar things and that we’re adding to the collective conversations taking place around the Maker Movement.

We find libraries to be some of the most exciting spaces for doing this type of work because, compared to museums, they are often more directly connected to the communities they serve, as well as being accessible by a larger proportion of the public. Allowing the makers and tinkerers in the local community to see libraries as epicenters for this type of sharing and exchange is exciting to consider and seems filled with promise. We can’t wait to see what you will do.

Luigi Anzivino wants to live in a world where people can learn by doing in messy, unusual, and inventive ways, without fear of failure. Hoping to pull that off, he works as a Tinkering Content Developer at the Exploratorium, where he helps design, prototype, and facilitate hands-on making activities in the Tinkering Studio.

Karen Wilkinson is the Director of The Tinkering Studio at the Exploratorium in San Francisco. Through her commitment to playful and inquisitive learning, she has helped shape the pedagogical approach of the Tinkering Studio; drawing upon a deep interest in constructionism and studio pedagogy. She recently co-wrote The Art of Tinkering, highlighting makers and tinkerers in residence at the museum, working at the intersection of art, science, and technology.
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College and career readiness is a concept that has been around for decades in K–12 education. In the 1970s, 1980s, and even 1990s, career preparation conjured images of shop class, industrial arts programs, and vocational schools. Throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century, industrial arts programs waned as budgets declined, state standards changed, and the amount of testing increased. Even so, still today “career prep” often creates the image of the dusty shop class in the back of the school, filled by students labeled as “low performers.”

While many of our nation’s industrial arts and vocational programs have diminished, we still too often find that schools place students into two categories: (1) those who are destined for college, who may strive to be at the top of their class or take honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses; and (2) those who will enter work immediately after graduation, who have an interest in a trade and just want to make sure they meet their state’s graduation requirements. This mindset is a disservice to our country’s students.

Today all students—regardless of age, socioeconomic status, aptitude, or interest—need college and career preparation, or more simply, career preparation. For many students, college should be one step along the path to career readiness. For others, a two-year degree with work-based learning experiences will be the right choice. Others need a master’s degree or beyond to achieve their career aspirations. A shift must occur—one that recognizes that college doesn’t just mean a four-year degree, and that career readiness is about more than vocational training.

Recent research backs this up. By the year 2020, almost two-thirds of jobs, and nearly all high-paying jobs, will require postsecondary education or training. In the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, 92 percent of jobs will require postsecondary education and training. This includes jobs in fields from manufacturing and welding to engineering and health care.

Defining Career Preparation

College and career readiness demand both academic and applied learning. Students need not only the core foundational knowledge and skills but they also need to understand how the content applies to the world around them. It’s this relevancy and real-world learning that is key to helping students truly understand what they are learning. Take for example the concept of velocity. A typical high school student learns the formula to calculate velocity, completes homework in which he/she calculates velocity, and then takes an exam on the content. But what happens if, the next year, that student is asked to think about velocity in the context of history while learning about the use of cannons in the Civil War? It’s quite likely that he or she won’t recall the equation or will have a difficult time articulating how the concepts relate.

Education has its silos. Students learn math in one classroom, science in
another, English down another hallway, and art in the building across the parking lot. Rarely do these subjects cross over the boundaries of the four walls in which they were learned. And rarely do students have a chance to pull together what they learn in all of these classes to solve a problem that matters to them.

In addition to content and the ability to apply knowledge outside of the context in which it was learned, colleges and employers are demanding a set of skills often referred to as the 4Cs: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. In a survey of managers and executives conducted by the American Management Association, more than half of the 768 executives rated their employees “average at best” in these skills, citing significant room for improvement. Perhaps related, 54 percent of American companies report having openings for which they cannot find qualified workers. And 55 percent of job seekers say they lack the skills they need to find jobs, which they attributed to their education and a lack of knowledge about potential career opportunities.1 There aren’t classes in school called “Critical Thinking” or “Creativity.” So, how do we expect students to learn these skills without purposefully creating opportunities for them to apply what they know to real-world scenarios?

**Bridging the Gap**

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is a nonprofit organization that is working to bridge the college and career preparation divide and empower students with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in our rapidly advancing, technology-based world. Since 1997, PLTW has provided schools with hands-on, project-based curriculum that helps students understand how math and science relate to the world around them, apply what they’ve learned to real-world concepts and problems, and empower them to take ownership of their learning.

Today more than 8,000 schools deliver PLTW’s integrated, applied learning in the areas of computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. Throughout PLTW courses, K–12 students develop and strengthen their problem solving, critical and creative thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. PLTW partners with teachers to prepare them with the tools they need to deliver the transformational learning experience. Relationships with industry and community partners provide schools, students, and teachers with real-world learning, internships, and mentoring.

**Ensuring that all students in the country have access to college and career preparation is critical.**

**Relevant, Hands-on Learning**

PLTW develops its curriculum with the expertise of a talented team of writers, a majority of whom are former teachers or administrators, which allows them to use their classroom experience to ensure that PLTW’s curriculum meets the needs of students and educators. PLTW curriculum is standards based and developed with ongoing input and feedback from students, teachers, administrators, and subject matter experts to confirm that it aligns with the latest knowledge and practices.

All PLTW curriculum follows the activity-, project-, problem-based instructional model. This approach helps students build on their understanding and gain independence in the learning process, provides them with opportunities to transfer knowledge, and engages them as they apply their new learnings to a relevant problem. For example, third-grade students participating in PLTW Launch learn about forces and interactions, first through short activities that explore simple machines such as wheels and axles, levers, and the inclined plane. The subsequent project has them investigate the effects of balanced and unbalanced forces on the motion of an object. Finally, students solve a problem presented to them by the three recurring Launch characters—Angelina, Mylo, and Suzi—who are on a field trip to the zoo and see a tiger trapped in a moat. The characters ask for the students’ help, using their new knowledge of forces, to devise a way to rescue the heavy zoo animal while keeping it safe throughout the process.

To complete the PLTW experience, PLTW partners with classroom teachers to provide rigorous teacher professional development that helps them lead the engaging activity-, project-, problem-based learning. Through PLTW, teachers learn to facilitate and coach their students to new heights. PLTW provides the support and resources so teachers can devote more time to inspiring students.

**Taking it One Step Further**

In summer 2015, PLTW partnered with the College Board, the organization behind Advanced Placement (AP) courses, to create college and career pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science for high school students across the nation.
Each pathway emphasizes applied learning and consists of:
1. PLTW courses that introduce students to the field of study;
2. AP courses that provide an opportunity for students to earn college credit; and
3. PLTW specialization courses that focus on the knowledge and skills needed for high-growth careers.

An example of each pathway is shown in Figure 1 above.

PLTW and the College Board are working with universities and industry partners to develop new recognition credentials for students who complete a pathway and a portfolio of career-focused opportunities such as work-based learning and mentorships.

**A Shining Star**

One of the most inspiring examples of a school district’s approach to college and career preparation is Star City School District in Star City, Arkansas. Nestled in southeast Arkansas between the Arkansas Delta and the Arkansas Timberlands, this rural district suffered from chronically low expectations, said School District Superintendent Richard Montgomery. The county in which it lies is the second least-educated county in the state. More than 65 percent of Star City’s students qualify for the federally subsidized lunch program.

In 2011, Montgomery brought together 60 community members—teachers, parents, and business and community leaders—to discuss their goals for the city’s students. The resulting “Foundation for Excellence,” as they named it, called for rigorous curriculum and learning opportunities for all students.

“We implemented PLTW Engineering, Biomedical Science, and Gateway into our high school and middle school,” Montgomery recalls. “We took all of the remedial courses out of our curriculum. We decided that instead of teaching the basic state standards, we were going to send all teachers to get AP training. Not all courses were AP courses, but we wanted our teachers to teach like they were AP teachers so that by the time students got to their junior and senior year of high school, they were ready.”

By the 2012–2013 school year, Star City High School had both PLTW and AP programs. Today, Star City offers PLTW in grades K–12, including the computer science, engineering, and biomedical science programs in the high school. It is the first K–12 PLTW district in the state. 82 percent of the district’s students are involved in PLTW, and the number of high school students engaged in AP courses has increased by 650 percent since 2011–2012.

“We raised expectations,” Montgomery said of the results. “It’s become our culture. This is what we do.”

Students graduating from Star City High School are headed to engineering and medical schools across the state.

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**FIGURE 1:** AP + PLTW College and Career Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Computer Science</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Biomedical Science</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College – AP courses</td>
<td>• AP Computer Science Principles</td>
<td>• AP Physics 1</td>
<td>• AP Biology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• AP Computer Science A</td>
<td>• AP Physics 2</td>
<td>• AP Chemistry</td>
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<td>• AP Physics C</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• AP Calculus AB</td>
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<td>• AP Calculus BC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• AP Biology</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• AP Chemistry</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• AP Environmental Sciences</td>
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<td>• AP Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career – PLTW courses</td>
<td>• Introduction to Computer Science</td>
<td>• Introduction to Engineering Design</td>
<td>• Principles of Biomedical Science</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cybersecurity</td>
<td>• Principles of Engineering</td>
<td>• Human Body Systems</td>
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<td>• Digital Electronics</td>
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<td>• Computer Integrated Manufacturing</td>
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<td>• Aerospace Engineering</td>
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<td>• Civil Engineering &amp; Architecture</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Environmental Sustainability</td>
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</tbody>
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[211x663]
and country; last summer, a student
was recruited by a local wire company
for a summer job in computer-aided
design and earned $12 an hour for his
highly skilled technical work; other
students are partnering with a nearby
teaching hospital to develop an emergency
room design that will improve emer-
gency services and patient care.

Star City’s annual STEM night at-
tracts visitors from across the state, in-
cluding the Commissioner of Educa-
tion, representatives of the governor’s
office, universities, and local employers.
The Governor has held up the district
as a model for access to K–12 com-
puter science education, something
he’s calling for across the state.

**Solidifying the Shift**

Ensuring that all students in the country
have access to college and career prep-
**aration is critical. To prepare students
to take advantage of the myriad career
opportunities that will be available to
them, school leaders and parents must
expand their understanding of college
and career readiness. College readiness
means postsecondary education—
training programs, two-year colleges,
four-year degree programs, and more—
which research shows is required for
nearly all high-paying, high-growth
jobs. And career readiness must start
early. It’s not just about vocations but
about helping students understand all
of the career opportunities that are
available to them, and what is needed to
take advantage of those opportunities.
Ultimately, a school or district’s
approach to career readiness is about
collaboration. It’s about aligning com-


**Reference**

1. *Opportunities and Options: Making Career Preparation Work for Students.*

Jennifer Cahill is Senior Director of Media
and Public Relations for Project Lead The
Way.
A Teen Space Made for Career Prep

The Teen/Tween Department of the Chattanooga Public Library (CPL) is not new, but our space and push for programming is. I started here just over two years ago after being headhunted all the way from Maine to join Justin Hoenke in a new space dedicated entirely to teens and tweens.

A Little Background

When I arrived it was just six months after the teen collection was located in a new space on the second floor of the library. A space dedicated entirely to teens. We had 14,000 square feet with what now seems to be a rather tiny teen collection, a 3D printer, three televisions, a Wii, a Playstation 2 and an Xbox, a light tracer table, and some tables and chairs. I was working on the floor full-time, and Justin was working full-time as manager while also pulling floor shifts. Between the two of us we kept the floor open the full 62 hours a week the library is open.

It’s been a rapid transition from that space to where we are now. Now we have 10 to 15 walk-up programming stations available at all times where patrons can engage with self-guided learning experiences ranging from making music with the Makey Makey to playing a giant board game that expands their library experience. Also, we now have several part-time employees offering great customer service and programming support, a pair of teen employees, and a robust volunteer program. We offer at least one scheduled program per day and multiple programs on Saturdays and during school breaks. In addition to our walk-ups and regular programs, we also offer pop-up programs (on-the-spot programs offered by request or as an extension of the reference interview). Pop-ups occur when conversations with our patrons may lead us to pull out our metal stamping equipment or a robot to code, to project a movie matinee, or get creative with our nail art supplies.

On-the-Job Training

Of all our programs, the volunteer program is by far the most popular among our teens. This workforce development program affords participating teens the opportunity to gain valuable experience before they’ve even submitted their first job application. All volunteers are given training in quality customer service and programming support, a pair of teen employees, and a robust volunteer program. We offer at least one scheduled program per day and multiple programs on Saturdays and during school breaks. In addition to our walk-ups and regular programs, we also offer pop-up programs (on-the-spot programs offered by request or as an extension of the reference interview). Pop-ups occur when conversations with our patrons may lead us to pull out our metal stamping equipment or a robot to code, to project a movie matinee, or get creative with our nail art supplies.

All volunteers are given training in quality customer service that, in library tradition, is private, caring, and confidential. They learn how to interact with patrons who seem shy, to assist those who are looking for something, and to be available to those who seem not to want help at all.

All program communication takes place through email, giving our teens a crash course in digital responsibility and etiquette that others won’t encounter until college. While we set up alternative
communication strategies with those who have no access to email, we find that the use of email is beneficial in many ways. Teens learn to respond to email in a timely fashion (especially when large events with first-come, first-served jobs are on the line!), they use email to alert staff to cancellations or changes in their schedules, and most importantly, they learn that email is an essential form of communication for conducting their business.

Finally, all volunteers engage in a variety of team-based experiences. Sometimes they’re working independently but contributing to a larger goal where their individual purpose is explained, sometimes they’re paired with a more senior volunteer for training purposes, other times they’re completing projects in pairs or groups building cohesion while learning how to work with others. These experiences aren’t just a librarian asking them to work together, they’re real-life work opportunities participating in group activities with statistically tracked results.

**The By-Products**

Many friendships are forged through the program. Our busiest periods are during summer vacation and on Saturdays when teens from varied backgrounds have more time to get together and hang out while volunteering. The effects of such friendships have larger consequences on our community, as according to the Pew Research Center, “Lower-income teens are more likely to say they never spend time with friends in person outside of school (11 percent of teens from homes earning less than $30,000 report that, compared with 3 percent of teens from households that earn more).”

Opportunities to create diversity are something all libraries strive for. This one program creates more inroads for teen-directed interactions between vastly varied members of our city than any program we could design trying to appeal to a diverse audience. The simple fact is that teens want money, independence, and experience, and a strong volunteer program with their needs in mind can help them achieve all three.

**How It’s Different**

Our program differs from other teen volunteer programs in four major ways:

1. **Flexibility**

   First, we’re flexible with our timing. If you can come in for 15 minutes, you can log in and complete some volunteer service. If you have to get 10 hours done for community service and you want to show up and complete it all in one day, we can make that work, too. Teens have enough stress in their lives, and so do their families. Ensuring they complete their hours in a way that works for them is vital.

   Some volunteers prefer to have a set schedule where they show up at the same time on a certain day of the week, and others don’t have the luxury of planning ahead in their lives and can only show up on a whim. No matter the circumstances, when a volunteer arrives we can talk about what kind of mood they’re in that day and get them plugged into the volunteer experience that will work best for them.

2. **Always Ready to Serve**

   Maintaining a running Google spreadsheet with volunteer opportunities divided into three categories is one way we’re able to accept teen volunteers at any time and keep them happy and engaged. There are three main categories into which all volunteer tasks fall: *Staff Assistance and Random Librarianship—Help us out with running the floor! Show people how to operate our walk-up stations, play games with younger kids, or help maintain the floor’s eclectic, organized chaos.*

3. **Customization**

   Perhaps my favorite focus of the program is catering to the interests of teens themselves. The *Lead a Program* opportunity is set up for teens to dip their toes into their interests using the library as a platform to gain experience.

   When teens want to present programs, library staff provide a one-on-one design session where we teach them program management skills to develop their ideas into an engaging program that focuses on their age group of interest taking place in the appropriate timeframe and with plenty of time for purchasing supplies and developing the proper marketing strategy.

   A staff member acts as a program assistant during their event, and then afterward we have another one-on-one debrief session where we analyze what they enjoyed and what they’d like to see improved. We leave things open-ended for the teen to plan a new session or take their interests in another direction. This education in all the work that goes into planning a program is wonderful for teens who live in a world designed to give them instant gratification. Firsthand experience...
FEATURES

The Proof in Our Pudding

As I think back on my past few years, three cases in particular stand out to me where the library’s efforts really enabled teens to find their purpose and inspire their future.

First is Ayushi, an especially intrepid teen who started out gathering a group of her friends to teach a coding workshop in exchange for some 3D printing for a school project. We had just started experimenting with what charging for PLA (a 3D printing filament) as a consumable would look like and though we explained to her the cost of the plastic would be far less than offering her program she was adamant. How could we say “no?” That experience in running a library program blossomed into a full-fledged 3D coding and design conference for middle school girls, which Ayushi won a grant to produce. As Ayushi puts it, “Although the short-term gain was being able to get something printed for my project, the long-term gain was so much more profound.”

The library helped her achieve the goal by offering mentorship in a variety of areas. First, we refined her vision into a sure-fire successful program plan. Second, we assisted with some language and writing coaching during her grant writing process. Next, we helped her source out prices for her budget and offered to take care of the purchasing for her. Finally, after the grant was successfully awarded, our fabulous maintenance staff created the setup we designed together, and a staff member acted as conference support for the day.

This young woman is going off to college in the fall, following her passions for engineering and computer science. When I asked her about her plans and if the library had affected her, Ayushi said, “I want to change the world by developing solutions, whether they be engineering solutions or humanitarian solutions, to problems we face in our world today. The library is extremely progressive and unconventional, it’s not just a place to get information… my experience at the library helped me to pursue my dreams and encouraged me to follow my passion.”

Second is Elena, a teen who participated in DevDev three summers ago and then was hired to be a staff assistant for the program two years ago. DevDev stands for Developing the Developer and was a four-week camp that introduced teens to coding, web development, and robotics. Recently, when she attended another program, Elena told me with a laugh that DevDev “sealed her fate” as she described her excitement over entering the computer science program at Covenant College. “Being exposed to the world of computer programing by attending DevDev: Summer of Code is the biggest reason that I have decided to study Computer Science in college. During those four weeks, we learned the very basics of what it meant to code. But that little taste of programing, seeing just a glimpse of what I could do with it, really interested me. More than that, through DevDev, I was able to meet professionals who work in computing and hear what it is like to work in that field. This exposure to what it would look like to work as a developer is what really did me in. Listening to those speakers, I decided that I too could be a developer.”

The DevDev program for which Elena was hired has been absorbed by the Public Education Foundation with the goal of converting it into a program that will be launched in the city’s local public schools.²

Finally, there’s Kayla, an incredibly artistic and politically active teen who was a library regular and steady volunteer when I arrived. As our relationship has grown, I’m constantly impressed with her ideas and her story. In preparing this article, I learned even more about her past. Kayla describes her experience with the library this way: “When I was younger I loved to read. Unfortunately once I hit school age my love started to wane… Having been put in the ‘dumb’ classes, I almost completely lost my love of reading. Since attending my Creative Arts school I have known I want to be an artist. I always thought that I was OK with working for someone because I thought it would be impossible for me to be an independent artist. I needed a challenge and a distraction from my stressful school year, and it (CPL’s Camp EtsyNooga) seemed perfect… Even now that is what the library is for me, a chance to step back from the stress and do something I know I enjoy and am good at. The skills I learned from Camp EtsyNooga were invaluable. Not only do I feel confident that I can be an independent artist now, I also have the experience to back it up.”³

Kayla has participated in two craft fairs organized by the library to celebrate Small Business Saturday, and she is saving
money for “attending [the University of Tennessee Chattanooga] in the fall pursuing a Bachelors in Arts Education and then… a graduate program to get my masters in library science.”

If you’re interested in her vision for the libraries of the future, she says, “If I could get one message across to every library in the world, it would be this: you have the power. Excite your patrons, make them realize that you are worth the extra drive. Promote reading. It’s not just about displaying your books and getting rid of those that don’t get picked. It’s about creating a space where people can feel like themselves, where they don’t feel obligated to learn something because a teacher told them to. You don’t have the restrictions of a curriculum. You can teach people whatever they want to learn so take advantage… take full advantage of the power given to you by the beautiful career you chose!”

**Walking the Walk**

Beyond the support we offer through our programming, we’ve made an effort to provide true employment opportunities to our teens. We currently have a part-time teen employee who helps run the floor, provides programming support, and performs the full range of tasks we librarians perform on a daily basis. She’s another former volunteer who was so driven and impressive that when the position opened up, we knew she would be amazing, and she has been.

Kayla was hired as a library page who works part time shelving books, assisting patrons and with program support. This jump from volunteer to library employee will be powerful for her career goals, and staying local for her career goals, and staying local for the library. She plans to attend library employee will be powerful for her career goals, and staying local for the library. She plans to attend library school out of state to deepen her understanding of libraries.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, “Studies show that youth who miss out on an early work experience are more likely to endure later unemployment and less likely to achieve higher levels of career attainment.”

Between our multifaceted volunteer offerings and the potential for those volunteers to even get hired (a huge topic among the die-hard volunteers they scheme and plan around one another’s birthdays and career goals like mad!), we’re making a real difference in the lives of our teens now and for their futures.

**Moving Forward**

Ultimately, these three stories fill our department with pride, but always we’re left wondering, what next? Does the fact that these three stories came from girls mean that we need to do more for our male youth? Does the fact that two of the three stories resulted in tech careers reflect on the fact that we live in Gig City, or is it because of something we’ve done? Does it mean we’re listening to our teen patrons and providing what they want, or are there still teens who don’t feel they’re being heard by the library?

Here’s what we do know: During our last fiscal year the teens we serve donated 2,813 hours of volunteer service. According to Independent Sector, that carries a monetary value of $88,285.36 in Tennessee and a national value of $64,895.91.

As of January of this year they’ve already donated 1,384 hours. That’s worth $31,928.88 in Tennessee and $28,676.48 nationally, without even hitting our busy summer season! To view this contribution from our teens in fiduciary terms as an in-kind donation is staggering.

Things continue to change around here. Justin has moved on to a director position at the Benson Memorial Library in Tnusville, Pennsylvania, and we have new teen leadership in the hands of Meredith Levine, a fabulous and energetic transplant who joins us from the Fayetteville Free Library in New York. Our space is about to undergo another exciting change as we finalize plans for our state-of-the-art recording studio (another venue to help our teens realize their creative and technical dreams while building a worthwhile skill set!). Many of our first round of teen volunteers are making plans for college and their new lives without us. It’s comforting to think we have one last summer ahead with them and that, like so many others, they’ll be back to tell us all about the amazing lives they’re building for themselves after their work at the library. Man, I love this job.

**References**


Megan Emery is a Programming Librarian at the Chattanooga Public Library. She works with youth and the community to develop and implement a variety of programs for youth and families.
In a time of seemingly easy access to technology an assumption is often made that youth have what they need to be successful with technology use. It is easy to mistake abundance of technology access for equity of the type of access that facilitates community and opportunities available from digital participation.

Issues of digital equity are not solved simply by access to technology as existing research demonstrates. Low-income and underserved youth are often overlooked when generalizations are made by popular media about youth engagement with technology. There is a growing inequity in education opportunities stemming from an ever widening economic divide. Equity is paramount for success of all youth.

**Digital Access Does Not Equal Digital Equity**

There exists a gap between youth who have access and support for using technology and those who do not. As was recently demonstrated by the Los Angeles Unified School District iPad rollout, where youth were given iPads but these devices were so locked down that they were nearly unusable for the youth who were supposed to do their homework on them, the availability of technology does not necessarily guarantee equitable participation or support for youth learning. (Check out the great article about youth affected by the botched iPad rollout and the resulting fallout in this article on the KQED site at http://bit.ly/kqed_la_ipad). As Warschauer, Knobel, and Stone observe, “There is no single digital divide in education but rather a host of complex factors that shape technology use in ways that serve to exacerbate existing education inequalities.”

The digital divide can be seen in lack of access to smartphones and the limitations this can create in learning and social interaction for underserved youth. A Pew Research Center report (http://bit.ly/pew_teens_tech) on teens and technology further corroborates this by showing that 83 percent of US teens have access to a mobile phone. Of these, 73 percent have smartphones and 15 percent only a basic cell phone. This leaves 12 percent without access to a phone in any form. So this 27 percent are potentially unable to participate at the rate, or at all, of their peers in...
Technology and learning in low income families (http://bit.ly/oppp4all) shows that one-quarter of those earning below the median income and one-third of those living below poverty level accessed the Internet only through their mobile devices. Using mobile-only access, which is considered being under-connected, creates another set of problems. A third of families with mobile-only access quickly hit the data limits on their mobile phone plans and about a quarter have their phone service cut off for lack of payment.

Add to that that one-fifth of families who access the Internet only through their mobile devices say too many family members have to share one device. This limits the amount of time each individual has to access the Internet creating a barrier to learning for young people. The barrier limits access to digital homework assignments, resources, and online peer support and collaboration. Limited access to the Internet also creates barriers for interest-driven learning. 35 percent of youth who have mobile-only access look online for information about things they are interested in. But this goes up to 52 percent when young people have access to an Internet-connected computer. When young people have their own access to the Internet, they have an opportunity to engage in connected learning (learning that is based on interest, is supported by peers, and has the potential to offer better opportunities for the future) based on their passion, because it allows them to have time for deep exploration and participating at a pace that feels comfortable and can build over time.

What Can Libraries Do?

When looking at digital equality there are structural issues and individual issues. What can be done to confront a structural inequality? The federal government is considering overhauling its Lifeline program (http://bit.ly/uslifeline), which currently offers subsidies for low-income families for landline and mobile phone services, to include broadband Internet as well. This type of issue is more difficult for libraries to try to tackle on their own. However, there are many opportunities for library staff who work directly with teens to support teens in overcoming the divide.

Dewey stated: “To ‘learn from experience’ is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction—discovery of the connection of things.”

As part of my research, I have been conducting workshops in libraries located in low-income communities, using an online coding program that is not yet available on mobile devices. In one of the workshops, students needed to work on projects outside of the sessions. Because of the limited technology access at home, the librarian held additional open hours so the youth participating in the workshop could work on their projects outside of the workshop hours. A few youth had access to their own computers, but the majority had only mobile access. The youth with computer access at home created more complex projects. This was partly because they had more time to develop, modify, and problem-solve their projects. But it was also because the coding program was available to only those with computer access. These youth also seemed to develop a deeper interest in coding potentially due to this greater level of exposure.

Library staff who work for and with teens across the country are implementing a range of programming

Mobile Access Does Not Equal Skilled Access

For underserved youth who do have smartphone access one can’t assume that means they are able to use the tools available whenever needed. A recent report, “Opportunity for all? social media conversations and online communities.

In other words, the shift to smartphones means low-income teens are shut out of a dominant communications media of their generation. Teens in wealthier households are more likely to have smartphones and to prefer Snapchat and Instagram. Compared to those in households earning less than $30,000 annually, twice as many teens in households earning more than $75,000 annually say they use Snapchat most often. While 51 percent of teens in households earning less than $30,000 use Facebook often, only 31 percent of the teens in the wealthiest households, earning more than $100,000, do so. Facebook can be accessed through a shared family PC or a public library computer, making it a much more accessible platform than those that rely on smartphone connectivity for an app. This is important to mention because teens gain digital fluency through use of social media and digital technology. Young people who lack digital fluency will always be slightly behind their connected peers. The idea that the digital divide is as simple as user versus nonuser has lost ground, being replaced by a more nuanced view which takes into consideration what it is that people, and, specifically for this article, youth, do with the technology they have available to them. This change in perception of the digital divide has led to studies of unequal development of digital skills by youth. Schools and libraries emerge as important access points for children and youth who did not have access at home.
Similarly, in early 2015, librarians at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library in North Carolina created a maker space called Idea Box, a place where area youth are invited to learn to 3D model, 3D print, knit and code. This creates learning opportunities for youth and develops their interests in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) careers, allowing them to use the materials for extended periods of time to really get to explore the concepts encompassed in the box and their potential interest in it. In another such example, the Seattle Public Library started a partnership in 2014 with the Seattle Youth Employment Program. Together, they designed curriculum to build digital and information literacy skills. This offers youth the opportunity to both develop work-related skills while exploring different potential careers.

What libraries and library staff can offer is a place of access and support. The lab hires teen interns to run workshops on a variety of topics of their interests. These range from Photoshop to stop-motion animation and skill-building technology projects. These interns work with a librarian to plan activities that give them experience related to their career goals. The librarian in the space actively looked for opportunities to expose youth to new careers and to help them explore activities related to career interests. Similarly, in early 2015, librarians at the Seattle Youth Employment Program opened the IDEA Lab, where students can explore and learn new technology with the support of their peers. The lab hires teen interns to run workshops on a variety of topics of their interests. These range from Photoshop to stop-motion animation and skill-building technology projects. These interns work with a librarian to plan activities that give them experience related to their career goals. The librarian in the space actively looked for opportunities to expose youth to new careers and to help them explore activities related to career interests.

Having a makerspace is not enough, if it does not offer hours that are convenient for teens and there is not concerted support for teens to both feel welcome and supported in the space. College and career development can mean both specific training and also larger experience and skill development. Supporting youth in seeing connections between interest, skill, and career is essential for underserved teens to envision the broadest variety of careers and future opportunities.

See the YALS section of the YALSA blog (http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/yals/) for a full list of research and resources noted in this article.

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Making, Literacy, and College Career Readiness

When developing maker opportunities for teens, don’t forget that the skills learned will help youth to succeed in life after high school.

It is 2016 and sometimes it can feel like the job of a library staff member encompasses everything. You work with teens in libraries? That means you talk books, technology, and college prep methods all in the same sentence, right? As libraries grow and progress and become recognized in emerging areas such as maker-spaces, it can feel overwhelming to information professionals who have to keep up with the trends in not just one area (books) but in a plethora of other areas as well.

Finding a way to create time and energy for making and technology, plus college and career readiness for teens, while still dedicating your career to improving literacy for patrons leaves many library staff asking, “do we have to do it all?” Unfortunately, for those tired and overwhelmed librarians, the answer is “yes.” We do have to do it all, and we have to do it well. The good news is, it doesn’t have to be as hard as you might think.

I was asked to present last year on the topic of making and literacy and how the two are connected. I jumped at the opportunity and quickly said “yes,” and then two hours later realized I knew nothing about how making and literacy are connected. Or at least I didn’t think I did. Instead of backing out of my commitment, I decided to act in a way many library staff can relate to on some level. I faked my way through the situation with research. At the event I was honest with the audience and told them that making and literacy were not two things I had ever before spoken about in connection with each other, but I was eager to learn as much from their experiences as they would probably learn from mine (in conjunction with my research). What I found out during this process was that there was in fact a lot that I knew, and even more that library staff in general knew, about the intersection of these areas that at first glance might seem so distinctly different.

Some of the things I found out about the connections between making and literacy were simple. An educator told me there was a noticeable difference in the students who were reading during their lunchtime after they installed a makerspace at his
The library was always buzzing with students who had their head in a book. How did they promote this newfound love of reading within their students? They were reading Arduino manuals. Their interest was piqued with new maker technology, and they wanted to learn more. Some of it is not so simple but just as effective. Students are programming Dot and Dash robots to recite Shakespeare in their English class. They are using Roominates to animate the age-old idea of dioramas. They are creating Rube Goldberg machines to illustrate the hero’s journey. All of this is just a new way to look at old challenges where there are no confines of supplies or topics for explanation.

I’ve found that libraries can do this very thing—use new ideas when focusing on traditional areas of service. Making, literacy, and college and career readiness can all be supported by collections, programs, and mentorship.

Library Collections

The first way libraries can achieve this is through their collections. In 2013 my library, Meridian Library District, added many new books on trending maker subjects: robots, Arduinos, Raspberry Pi’s, etc. Making was becoming increasingly popular and I thought the books would fly off the shelf. Instead, day after day, they sat there. Sometimes we would drag them to programs, but otherwise they were collecting dust. One day it dawned on me—why would anyone check out a book about robots without an actual robot? It didn’t make any sense.

We were assuming what we thought a patron would want to read, based on something they might own, rather than creating something that would actually be useful. Out of that idea, our “Make It Take It” kits were born. Each one contained a maker technology (robots, Arduino, Raspberry Pi, etc.) paired with books and curated online materials about the subject—essentially a kit that would enable them to learn, not just supplement what they might already have. “Make It Take It” kits made us reevaluate a lot of aspects of our collection. How else can we create an experience rather than an object? How else can we be comprehensive and facilitate learning in the way we pair resources? The thought still hasn’t left us, and I hope we’ll continue to develop it not just for teens but for all of our library collections. A collection shouldn’t just be about books and DVDs. It should be anything that is necessary to facilitate learning for our patrons.

Library Programs

Another way libraries can connect traditional services with newer teen needs is through programs. At the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) they implemented a type of maker kit, however, theirs are used for programs rather than as a part of their collection. The programming kits were created to give library staff at locations that aren’t currently designated as one of their lab sites (meaning they don’t have the space and all of the gear necessary for making) a way to engage with maker programming at their library. Each kit has everything that’s needed to run a program. What I love about the kits CLP uses for programs are the instructions, which is not something I would normally say. However, their instructions were created in the style of a graphic novel and read more like an epic saga in circuity than like instructions. I’m inspired by their ingenuity to create their own materials that can transcend these confines of roles that we create between subjects like making and literacy.

Other ways libraries are filling multiple needs through their programs are through direct library programs to prepare high school students for life after graduation. A compilation of programs can be found on the YALSA wiki page “College and Career Readiness” (http://bit.ly/yalsa_wiki_crr). These include Idea + Space, out of Pima County Public Library in Arizona. Idea + Space is a cafe for nonprofits, small businesses, and smart ideas that is located in the Joel D. Valdez Main Library in downtown Tucson. They partnered with local start-ups to teach teens entrepreneurial thinking through design challenges. During one program called “GrowUP and Get Rich” teens learned design thinking, decision-making, and start-up skills from experts, and collaborated with several area nonprofits. They have stayed in touch with the teens, and one of the participants has gone on to a state university, where she is working for the library.

Programs like these present teens with endless opportunities for learning while also allowing them an experience to help develop lifelong career-readiness skills. As Lisa Waite Bunker, the social media librarian for Pima County explains, “I believe that the experience was a transformational one. The project didn’t just simulate real life, it WAS real life.” In April the main library at Pima County will open a teen space called 101 Space that will have formal and informal learning focused on skills like animation, movie making, 3D modeling, coding, and analog skills. The space is designed around the HOMAGO model (Hanging Out, Messing Around, Geeking Out) and will still focus on allowing teens a voice and way to follow their curiosities, preparing them for college and careers.

Libraries Providing Mentorship

The third way to connect traditional with new is mentorship. At the San Diego Public Library they take the idea of engaging teens around the
topics of making, literacy, and college and career readiness even one step further than collections and programs by adding in mentorship. At their IDEA Lab they have a Tech Team Internship that was started in 2014. The main goal for the interns is to foster technology and teaching skills and then to successfully teach “mini” one-hour workshops for their peers to introduce them to the IDEA Lab. Interns have worked on projects ranging from videos to animated GIFs that help promote San Diego Public Library. These projects give teens practice in collaboration, teamwork, and communication, and other soft skills that can’t be acquired through simply learning a new skill. This type of mentorship program that they are facilitating at the IDEA Lab is working. In 2015, one of the interns had her work screened at the San Diego Latino Film Festival, and was accepted to several University of California campuses, including San Diego and Berkeley. Internships through mentorships are a perfect way to combine these areas of librarianship into a comprehensive experience for the teens we serve.

Libraries and Curiosity
At the heart of all of these additions to collections, programs, and mentoring comes a central theme that can help us focus in on individual learning to meet teen needs and at the same time foster curiosity. Curiosity is what can take a teen from an avid reader to an avid learner (or vice versa), and also what can take a not avid reader or learner and prepare them for life after high school. Curiosity is what led those makers to read Arduino manuals, and curiosity is what helped guide interns into new areas of career possibility. Curiosity is what we have to focus on in on, both on an individual level and for a broader community.

At Meridian Library District, our teen librarian has successfully engaged a teen who “hated reading” to become a voracious reader through 3D printing. By 3D printing the logo from Legend by Marie Lu, the teen became curious enough to read the first chapter of the book. Then the next. And the next. We had to be able to feed that curiosity at the beginning to get him engaged enough with the library to continue being curious. Thus, the library becomes the map, but the user determines their path.

With each area, I believe the libraries that are doing these things well are not just getting lucky with a good idea about how to improve their collections, their programs, or their mentoring. Instead, I think they have an understanding of what 21st century learning really looks like. In the Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills report (http://bit.ly/1mls_21stcksks) published by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, it’s possible to gain an understanding about why makerspaces, a lifelong love of reading, and being prepared for life after high school will matter so much to the teens we work with every day. The skills also highlight the ways we can bridge these topic areas, while fostering the overarching themes of creativity, problem solving, collaboration, and more. All library staff should familiarize themselves with these skills, and suddenly the impossible—doing it all—doesn’t seem like a pie-in-the-sky dream anymore—it feels like a necessity.

Start with “Yes”
Not only is the answer to “do we have to do it all?” “yes” but the answer to “how do we do it?” is also “yes.” Start with saying “yes” to doing it, and the details can be worked out. Once library staff realize how essential it is to encompass all these types of learning, saying “yes” becomes easy, “Yes” to making, “yes” to helping teens prepare for life after high school, and “yes” to finding ways to connect teens to great books. As libraries, we have to see our role in literacy, making, and career and college readiness not only equally as vital but not mutually exclusive. They can, and should, coincide with each other. With this framework in mind, examining individual and community needs, engaging through curiosity, and focusing on 21st century learning skills, library staff can improve their collections, programs, and mentorship opportunities while elevating the role of the library within the community.

Megan Egbert is District Program Manager, Meridian Library District, Idaho, and the author of Creating Makers: How to Start a Learning Revolution at Your Library.
Ever feel like you walked into work one day and no longer knew the workplace expectations? Sure, you do your best to be great at your job, but what is expected of a high-performing library staff member in today’s workplace?

**Workplace Expectation #1: Change**

When you think about libraries over the past 20, 10, five, or even two years, a tremendous amount has changed. The same is true for the way we work. Today’s workforce is expected to understand change. We all need to think about change and how it affects us. We need to learn about the change process and how it might affect our colleagues.

People react to change in different ways, but when the reaction is negative, frequently it is fear based. Many kinds of fear can surround a change: fear of the unknown, fear of making the wrong decision, fear of success, fear of failure, fear of loneliness, fear of losing one’s job. Anyone, in any change role may experience fear. Individuals who drive the change may fear they’ll make the wrong decision; individuals who are subjected to the change may fear they will lose their jobs. Fears influence how quickly people adapt to change—if you can address these fears (in yourself or others) you can get everyone to a state of comfort with the change, which helps the whole organization. So talk about change and listen to the reactions of your colleagues.

Keep in mind that the most important part of a successful change is making sure that all involved have the information needed. If you don’t feel you are getting the information you need, ask for it.

**Workplace Expectation #2: Collaboration**

Another essential workplace expectation is collaboration—working together with people who have different areas and levels of expertise. This means that you have to know your stuff. If you are part of a work group or committee, or even just participating in a conversation about an issue, you represent your department’s focus, viewpoint, and concerns. You may be the only person on a given project who knows what you know. You are a leader for your specific area, and your organization counts on you to get that done. Your organization trusts your judgment and you are expected to work with a certain degree of autonomy within specified guidelines.

**Workplace Expectation #3: Communication**

In today’s workplace there are many more modes of communication than 20, 10, or even five years ago. It is important to know which mode of communication is most appropriate...
for your need. When is it appropriate to call instead of email or choose to text or talk face-to-face? The best guide for deciding is to know your audience and know your situation. Simply stop and think about what it is you need to communicate. Phone is generally best if you need a fast answer or if what you are discussing could be misinterpreted either because it’s a complicated subject or if tone of voice is needed to convey something. Phone calls are also great if you don’t want to overformalize a conversation or if you don’t want to leave a record of what is discussed, if you need to convey personal passion, or when an email thread is getting out of hand. Sending a text is a great option if you have a quick question that is time sensitive. A meeting is a good option when the information is too complex to convey in any other way, or when some face-to-face time is needed to build trust. Email is appropriate when you need a record of the communication, can wait a day or two for an answer, or are communicating across different schedules or time zones.

Recently I read a shocking statistic: we remember between 24 and 50 percent of what we hear. That is less than half. To improve this, two techniques are helpful: active listening and presence. While presence is 100 percent focus and attention on a moment, active listening includes careful listening as well as using speech to ensure that you are understanding what a speaker is trying to get across. When actively listening to a person the goal is to ensure that both parties share the same understanding about what is being said and what is being heard. This is achieved by carefully listening to what is being said and testing to be sure you understood the statement correctly. Paying attention to nonverbal cues is an important element in active listening. People communicate with their facial expression, their gestures, tone of voice, posture, proximity, eye gaze, casual contact, and the way they dress. This is an important concept to consider both in terms of decoding what other people are “saying” and understanding the messages that are given, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Presence is simply really listening to what your colleagues and customers say while giving them 100 percent of your attention. When discussing something don’t check your phone or be preoccupied about anything else. Put everything else on hold and dedicate all your energy to listening. You will be surprised by the results. One way to effectively use presence is through something called the Frame Experiment that is detailed in Roger Martin’s The Responsibility Virus. If you ever found yourself assuming you know what someone is going to say before they are going to say it, this can be a really helpful tool. The purpose of the Frame Experiment is to put your hard-wired governing values on hold for just five minutes and consciously adopting the altered frame (or simply put, way of thinking), which actively reminds you to listen to what the other person is saying. By consciously reminding yourself that each perspective is valuable and that you don’t have all the answers you will begin to better hear other people’s perspectives and gain new insights as a result.

The Frame Experiment is particularly useful if you have ever found yourself dismissing a colleague’s contribution because of their age, gender, or cultural background. It is human nature to gravitate toward individuals who are similar to you. While this may create comfort for those in a homogeneous workplace group, it tends to create a singleness of perspective that leads to less innovation. Organizations that are homogeneous in thought are less able to be creative about solving problems. Diverse workplaces produce the

**The Changing Components of Workplace Success**

While traits that historically have been important to workplace success are likely to stay relevant, new elements have emerged over the past 25 years.

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best output. By learning about the stylistic differences of your colleagues you can be sure your organization is enriched by a variety of viewpoints. To do that it is helpful to consider how approaches can be influenced by personal identity. For instance, there has been lots of research over the years on the ways in which men and women communicate differently. Recently there has been a lot of press on the way women tend to use questions and overuse the phrase “I’m sorry.” Jessica Olin and Michelle Millet have shined a light on this topic in libraries with their #libleadgender discussions. Ever since William Strauss and Neil Howe wrote Generations in 1992 people have been talking about generational differences in the workplace. Ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic background can similarly influence communication style. Backgrounds need to be bridged to hear diverse viewpoints to strengthen organizations.

Workplace Expectation #4: Multidirectional Management

We are expected to be able to manage ourselves, our colleagues, and our bosses. Managing relationships means consciously working with your colleagues to obtain the best possible results for your department and your organization. We need to continually inform our bosses of what they need to know and occasionally suggest what they should do next. And we need to do this according to what some authors call, “the platinum rule.” While the golden rule states, “do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” the platinum rule states, “do unto others as others would have you do unto them.” This is where the essential skills of communication and emotional intelligence come in.

The big benefit of managing your work relationships is that it makes everyone’s job easier and makes you more effective. In addition to the benefits you will receive by focusing on your personal growth and improvement, it also helps you to build a personal power base. Think about how your boss and each one of your colleagues handles stress. How do they handle their emotions? What are their strengths and weaknesses generally? What are their goals? What are their needs? What is their personal interaction style? By observing those around you, you can begin to think about how you can adjust your own actions and behavior to better meet the needs of those around you. Sometimes very minor adjustments can make a world of difference to making a relationship more cooperative.

Workplace Expectation #5: Emotional Intelligence

Today’s workplace is more diverse than ever before, and getting along
with different personalities can be challenging. This is where Emotional Intelligence (EI) becomes important. EI is the ability to recognize your emotions, understand what they’re telling you, and realize how your emotions affect people around you. People with high EI are usually successful in most things because they are easy to work with.

Daniel Goleman who first brought the notion of EI into the common understanding indicates five areas that raise emotional intelligence. People with high EI are self-aware, knowing their limits and growth areas as well as strengths. They know how they will react to different situations and are not often taken off guard by their emotions. They exhibit self-regulation, or good emotional control. They are not prone to emotional outbursts. They are motivated, generally productive, and focused on long-term goals. They exhibit empathy or an understanding of the perspective of others and what they may want and need in a given situation. And, they exhibit all of this through the use of good social skills, by conducting themselves in effective and appropriate ways.

Unlike traditional intelligence, which experts believe is more or less fixed throughout an individual’s life, EI can be developed and improved. In my experience, simply understanding the essential elements of EI can help people to improve their EI. The more you learn about EI and consider how it applies to you, the better your EI skills will become.

**Workplace Expectations: Conclusion**

In today’s workplace we need to increase our comfort with change, become effective communicators and collaborators, and develop our work relationships and emotional intelligence. With study and practice, all of these essential workplace expectations can be improved, even mastered. Don’t forget to check out the YALSAblog for resources in order to learn more about workplace expectations.

**2016 Teens’ Top Ten**

Encourage teens to read the nominees and vote online for their favorites August 15 - October 15!

www.ala.org/yalsa/teenstopten
PLUS

The YALSA Update

New YALSA Three-Year Organizational Plan

YALSA has adopted a three-year organizational plan aimed at encouraging the transformation of teen library services that will be implemented starting this year through 2018. The new plan was constructed in response to the new vision for teen services presented in YALSA’s report, *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action* (www.ala.org/yaforum), which emphasized that while the need for teens to build 21st century skills to succeed in college, careers and life has become increasingly high, not all libraries are well-equipped to help teens achieve this.

With this in mind, the organizational plan was structured to focus on the following priority areas:

• Leading the transformation of teen library services

• Advocacy to policy makers at all levels to increase support for teen library services

• Funder and partner development

With the three-year plan, YALSA hopes to better support the library community by initiating the transformation of teen library services and forming a solid foundation that the library community can build and prosper upon through various projects, resources, grants, and more. Read and learn more about the organizational plan at www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/strategicplan.

Funding Opportunity for Small, Rural and Tribal Libraries

Rural, small, and tribal libraries can now apply to participate in the “Future Ready with the Library: Connecting with Communities for College & Career Readiness Services” project, which YALSA is partnering with the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) to implement.

The project, made possible through funding by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, aims to create a customized learning program for and with staff at rural, small, and tribal libraries to help them build the knowledge and skills needed to prepare middle schoolers with the 21st century skills needed to succeed in college and careers.

The project also aims to help these libraries build and expand their capacity through community engagement and partnerships.

In the first year, YALSA and ARSL will identify 20 successful applicants who will participate in a year-long project that kicks off January 19–20, 2017 in Atlanta. For the remainder of 2017, cohort members will participate in online courses and discussions with the ultimate goal of planning, implementing and evaluating a college and career readiness (CCR) service for the middle schoolers in their community. Cohort members will receive funds for their library to use to hire temporary staff to cover cohort members’ absence. Cohort members also receive two stipends: one to purchase CCR materials for their library and another to use towards a professional development activity, such as attendance at a state conference.

To be eligible to participate, library staff must be working in libraries with a service population of 15,000 or fewer and/or a library that is 25 miles or more from an urbanized area. To learn more and apply, visit www.ala.org/yals/future-ready-library. The application deadline is August 1, 2016 for the first cohort.

YALSA’s 2016 Top Ten Summer Learning Programs

In April, YALSA held a “Top Ten Summer Learning Programs Contest” on our Teen Programming HQ website and asked educators and library staff to submit their best, innovative summer-learning program ideas. The submissions were then vetted by the HQ’s group of content experts and the top ten were chosen.

The top ten programs are:

• **B-Town Teens** submitted by Jeanette Lehr; Monroe County Public Library; Bloomington, IN

• **Create It! Camp** submitted by Beth Dunston; Paris-Bourbon County Library; Paris, KY

• **Escape the Library** submitted by Andrea Elson; Radnor Memorial Library; Wayne, PA

• **Movie Club** submitted by Jeffrey Stoffer; Ak-Chin Indian Community Library; Maricopa, AZ

• **Robot Extravaganza** submitted by Shannon Schreur-Klein; Lee County (Florida) Library System

• **Start Up Cecil: Teen Small Business Contest** submitted by Katelyn McLimans; Cecil County Public Library; Elkton, MD

• **Teen Filmmaking Workshop** submitted by Laurie Bartz; Hedberg Public Library; Janesville, WI

• **Snap and Chat Robot Maker-Overs** submitted by Ellen M. McTyre; Mamaroneck (New York) Library

• **Survive the Zombie Apocalypse: Maker Edition** submitted
**Fall Committee & Task Force Appointments**

This fall, President-Elect, Sandra Hughes Hassell, will be making appointments to the following YALSA committees and task forces:

- **2018 Denver Midwinter Marketing & Local Arrangements Taskforce**
- **2018 Midwinter Paper Presentation Planning Committee**
- **Alex Award**
- **Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults**
- **Awards Nominating Committee**
- **Best Fiction for Young Adults**
- **Governance Nominating Committee**
- **Great Graphic Novels for Teens**
- **Morris Award**
- **Odyssey Award**
- **Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults**
- **Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers**

To be considered for an appointment, you must be a current personal YALSA member. Volunteer forms are being accepted now through Oct. 1st. If appointed, service will begin February 1, 2017. Before filling out a volunteer form, please review the resources and information on our website at www.ala.org/yalsa/getinvolved/participate to ensure that committee work is a good fit for you as serving on a committee requires significant commitment. Questions or concerns? Please contact Sandra Hughes Hassell at smhughes@email.unc.edu.

**2016 YALSA Election Results**

**President-Elect**
Sandra Hughes Hassell

**Secretary**
Crystle Martin

**Board Member-at-Large—three year term**
Franklin Escobedo
Kafi Kumasi
Mega Subramaniam

**Board Member-at-Large—one year term to fill vacancy**
Jessica Snow

**2018 Edwards Award Committee**
Jonathan Hunt
Vanessa Irvin
Jennie Rothschild

**2018 Nonfiction Award Committee**
Jan Chapman
Sarah Okner
Wendy Stephens
Dorcas Wong

**2018 Printz Award Committee**
Edi Campbell
Jenna Friebel
Traci Glass
Scot Smith

**Speak up for Teens!**
Help policy makers learn about all the good we do to help teens prepare for college, careers and life by participating in District Days – the time when our representatives in Congress are back in their home district. District Days is a great opportunity to get to know elected officials and to help them understand our important work. Teens are relying on us to inform elected officials about their needs and how libraries are helping them. District Days take place between Aug. 1 and Sept. 4, 2016, so invite your members of Congress to come to one of your summer learning or back to school events! Everything you need to invite and host your members of Congress can be found on YALSA’s wiki at http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/District_Days.
JOIN us as we explore ways to empower teens to increase your library’s impact!

YALSA’S Young Adult Services Symposium
PITTSBURGH, PA • NOV. 4-6, 2016

WWW.ALA.ORG/YALSA/YASYMPOSIUM

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Leary and Mundy Face Down a War

"Space opera is alive and well."—SFReader.com on the RCN series

Content to leave dangerous adventures behind them, Captain Daniel Leary and his friend, the spy and cybrarian Adele Mundy, settle into a peacetime existence. But a war is brewing between the Republic of Cinnabar and its rival, the Alliance of Free Stars. Daniel and Adele are once again called to serve and the odds are badly in the enemy's favor.

The latest entry in the nationally best-selling RCN series, from master of military SF David Drake.

A Zombie War on All Fronts

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When zombies overrun the Earth, brave men and women ask themselves: “What do we do now?” These are tales of survivors, those who face down the infected and stand for humanity. Featuring original stories from John Ringo, Eric Flint, John Scalzi & Dave Kiecha, Sarah A. Hoyt, Jody Lynn Nye, Michael Z. Williamson, and more.

A Deadly Secret

“Anyone whose taste runs toward SF in the true romantic tradition can’t help but like the Liaden Universe.”—Analog

Clan Korval needs to reestablish itself as one of the top trading clans in known space. But that’s not their only problem. Onboard the Korval ship Dutiful Passage is Padi yos’Galan, the master trader’s heir, and she’s keeping a secret that threatens her very existence. A new entry in the best-selling Liaden Universe® series from Sharon Lee and Steve Miller.

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Destruction from Above

“You won’t want to put it down”
—John Ringo on Travis S. Taylor’s Warp Speed

With billions up for grabs, asteroid mining has jumpstarted the private space industry. But maneuvering an asteroid close to the Earth in order to mine its riches is dangerous. Planetary destruction is about to become a grim reality unless the burgeoning space industry can stop the asteroid.
The truth has been buried for too long

“A harrowing, pulpy page-turner along the compulsive lines of *Flowers in the Attic.*”

—Kirkus Reviews