

# young adult library services



THE  
LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT  
ISSUE

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YALSA  
Young Adult Library Services Association

Celebrating 15 Years of YALS!



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DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A  
TEEN GAMING PROGRAM

FIGHTING FAKE NEWS:  
BECAUSE WE ALL  
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## YALS ON THE WEB

» Want more *YALS*? Members and subscribers can access the latest and back issues of *YALS* digitally on the YALSAblog at <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/yals/>, as well as browse supplemental *YALS* articles and resources.



## FROM THE EDITOR



**Crystle Martin**

**T**his year is the 15th anniversary of YALS! It has offered those who serve teens in libraries innovative ideas for a decade and a half, and this issue on Leadership Development is no difference. Leadership Development is part of the priority area Leading the Transformation of Teen Services, continuing this volume's theme focusing on priority areas of YALSA Organizational Plan, which also included Advocacy and Funder and Partner Development.

The issue covers leadership from developing your own leadership skills to leading your institution. Carrie Sanders, Youth Services Coordinator for the Division of Library Development and Services, Maryland State Department of Education, focuses her feature article on how to lead and also discusses her leadership development journey. Elsa Ouvard-Prettol, Library and Media Instructor at Natomas Charter School, continues the idea of leadership development of self and how it connects to leading the organization.

The Trending Section includes two articles that focus on teens and leadership. One of the pieces is by John Chrastka, executive director of

EveryLibrary, focusing on developing tomorrow's civic leaders by learning to be civically engaged. The second piece is by Hannah E. Spratt, a student in library and information science, and Denise E. Agosto, a professor in the College of Computing and Informatics at Drexel University, who builds on the idea of creating teen leaders, this time through helping teens understand and identify fake news. The staff and teens at Teen Central at the Central Library of the Boston Public Library describe cultivated leadership opportunities for teens in their Features article.

In the Features section, several of the articles focus on leadership at the organization level. Kate McNair, Teen Services Coordinating Librarian for the Johnson County Library, describes the process she and her colleagues went through together to incorporate the Futures report into their library's strategic plan. Dru Tomlin, Director of Middle Level Services for the Association for Middle Level Education, connects the importance of educational leadership as part of a thriving library.

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## Masthead

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IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; subscriptions@ala.org.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Young Adult Library Services is the official journal of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association. YALS primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education for librarians serving young adults, ages twelve through eighteen. It will include articles of current interest to the profession, act as a showcase for best practices, provide news from related fields, publish recent research related to YA librarianship, and will spotlight significant events of the organization and offer in-depth reviews of professional literature. YALS will also serve as the official record of the organization.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Sarah Hill**

I can't believe I'm already writing my last *YALS* column as president! It's been an exciting and productive year of reorganization within YALSA so that new initiatives in the Strategic Plan can be implemented. Next year will be busy, especially in the area of this *YALS* issue, leadership development. For years, YALSA has sponsored an ALA Emerging Leader, as well as a Spectrum Scholar (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/spectrum-scholars-emerging-leaders>), but part of our strategic plan is to make a more concerted effort to create leaders with a "teens first" mindset within and outside our organization.

While there are many ways to be active in YALSA, I think the first step to become a leader within YALSA is to become active on one of our many task forces and committees. The president-elect uses social media and the YALSAblog to post a formal call for committee members in the fall and spring, and the weekly *YALSA eNews* is used to let members know when task force volunteer opportunities are available. Don't be afraid to apply or to contact the president-elect to see what position might be a good fit for you. Check out the Get Involved webpage

(<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/getinvolved/getinvolved>) to find out more information. Once you're active in a work group, you may find yourself thinking: "I could chair this." If you're interested in chairing a committee or task force, let the president-elect know why you'd make a great chair—sometimes that's all it takes!

Once you're accustomed to leading groups, think about taking the next step. I became interested in running for the YALSA board after I served on the Illinois School Library Media Association's board. All our current YALSA board members have had different paths to board work—some are teen, school, or academic librarians, some are researchers, some are department managers, and some are library managers. But all of us are serving to help create positive change in our organizations, while developing our own leadership skills. Serving on library association boards helps develop big picture thinking, while being an opportunity to give back. This year has been extremely rewarding for me—I wouldn't trade it for anything. Are you interested in running on next year's

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### INDEXING, ABSTRACTING, AND MICROFILM

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# What Does YALSA's National Research Agenda Have to Offer You?

Discover how  
YALSA's National  
Research Agenda  
can impact your  
practice



As a practitioner, you may wonder what YALSA's new National Research Agenda on Libraries, Learning, and Teens 2017–2021 (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines/research/researchagenda>) can do for you. Well, the truth is, this research agenda was specifically crafted with you and your teens in mind. This is the first time since the release of the Futures Report in 2014 that the research agenda has been updated. The landscape of libraries and teens use of technology has changed drastically since 2011, when the first agenda was developed. It is important that the research agenda evolve to meet the changing needs of library staff and teens, which complement the changing priorities of YALSA. There is a genesis from one research agenda to the next. The 2011 research agenda influenced the Futures Report, laying a foundation for it based on research it had generated. The Futures Report laid the foundation for YALSA's 2016–2018 Organizational Plan and emphasized the importance of making teens, not librarianship, the center of YALSA's focus. This latest research agenda builds on those previous efforts with an eye to the future.

### Priority Areas

The new agenda focuses on five priority areas. Each area tackles a different aspect of teens' first librarianship.

#### The Impact of Libraries as Teen Formal and Informal Learning Environments

This priority area focuses on what libraries offer teens to help them learn. It covers traditional areas that libraries have excelled at for years, like

supporting and promoting reading and traditional literacy, as well as areas that may feel newer in terms of your practice, like STEM and connected learning. It focuses on supporting the development of teens and promoting an environment conducive to learning within the library. This might seem new to you or you may already be very familiar with these concepts, but the point of priority area is to promote research that helps you know what approaches and programs are the best for positively impacting all of the teens in your community.

This area addresses the following research questions:

1. How does funding for teen services correlate to providing high impact informal and formal learning opportunities for teens?
2. What differences in college and career readiness do teens exhibit based on their participation in library related formal and informal learning opportunities?
3. How are young adult twenty-first century and emerging literacies skills supported and enhanced through the use of libraries?
4. What are the possible intersections between youth peer culture, interests, and academic subjects that library staff can use to build meaningful learning among youth that takes advantage of both the library's and the community's existing resources (virtual, human, community, etc.)?
5. How can library staff help teens develop emerging literacies, creating new ways of interaction and thinking?
6. How might library staff create opportunities for youth to connect their home, community, and



- emerging literacies with traditional library programming?
7. How can the Connected Learning Framework be effectively employed in school and public libraries to develop meaningful and powerful literacies and twenty-first century skills instruction?
  8. How does the integration of youth voice practices in teen library services have an impact on teen learning through libraries?
  9. How can public libraries and schools work together to develop connected informal and formal learning opportunities for teens?
  10. How are libraries creating and using new models of program evaluation and outcomes-based measurements to assess the effectiveness of teen informal and formal learning opportunities?

### **Library Staff Training, Skills, and Knowledge**

This priority area focuses specifically on you! It examines how research can create better professional development for practicing library staff as well as impact the training of library staff of the future. It also encompasses research to describe the impact of teen services library staff on the lives of teens. This is an area where little to no research currently exists but would be extremely valuable to you when providing a rationale for funding and resources. Demonstrating impact through research is an important tool for advocacy. Outcome measures are needed to better illustrate the role of library staff as facilitators of learning and connections to opportunities for teens.

This area addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the prevalent staffing models for public library service to teens that best demonstrate a strong impact on supporting teen informal and formal learning needs?
  2. How do the skills and knowledge that a professionally trained teen services librarian brings to a library impact teen twenty-first century skill development, college and career readiness, and development of critical literacies?
  3. What skills and/or knowledge are required of librarians and library staff to successfully support informal and formal learning opportunities for teens?
  4. What skills and/or knowledge do library staff need to be able to empower nondominant youth to voice their needs and interests?
  5. What skills and/or knowledge to library staff need to empower youth voices?
  6. How does the introduction of coaches, mentors, and experts into teen library services help to expand library staff knowledge, skills, and ability to support young adults in their informal and formal learning endeavors?
  7. How can associations such as YALSA best work with library schools and professional learning networks to guarantee that library staff have the skills needed to support teen needs and interests?
  8. How do we ensure that library staff continue to be trained in new approaches to facilitating learning?
- Equity of Access**
- Equitable access is not just about owning technology, it is about having consistent access to digital tools, the Internet, and coaches or mentors, as well as having time to develop skills around technology use and online activities. These skills include digital and media literacy, to name just two, and help prepare youth for their future. Research is still scant on how skilled teens are at using technologies to access accurate information without formal support in learning those skills. Understanding how different teen populations develop and use skills in these spaces would be very useful in serving teens.
- This area addresses the following research questions:
1. How can librarians and library staff best ensure access to a variety of materials for teens in the face of challenges, including intellectual freedom?
  2. How can librarians and library staff guarantee digital equity in their collections and programmatic activities including access and content variety?
  3. What are the effective library practices for embedding access to technology, resources, and learning within families and communities?
  4. How do teens themselves enact, create, and develop information practices and their associated literacies as they move between segments of their everyday life: school, after-school, leisure, health, social, etc.?
  5. How does a lack of access to technologies in schools and libraries limit digital equity for teens?
  6. What barriers exist in the information practices of today's teens and how might libraries address them?
  7. What role have libraries played in reinforcing these barriers and preventing or limiting the information practices of teens?
  8. What is the impact of lack of access to new and emerging technologies in schools and libraries on teens' successful and safe use of technology for informational and recreational purposes?
  9. How can libraries respond best to socioeconomic, ethnicity, gender, and ability differences in supporting access to technology?
  10. How can libraries support the development of digital literacy skills among youth who have limited access to technology or other resources?

## HIGHLIGHT

11. How does the library's historic focus on information access impact the ways in which digital equity practices are embedded into service?

### Cultural Competence, Social Justice, and Equity

Recognizing and understanding the changing demographics of today's teens is necessary for library staff. Research can illustrate what these changing demographics are and how best to serve these teens. If we are committed to creating equitable, bias-free learning spaces, cultural proficiency describes part of the skill set we need.

This area addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the techniques that library staff are using to successfully engage with teens to build reflective and responsive collections?
2. To what extent does the current body of young adult resources adequately meet the needs of today's diverse teens?
3. How can the emerging literacy skills of low-literacy teens, English-language learners, and reluctant readers be enhanced through the services that libraries provide?
4. How do factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, class, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status, language spoken and read, and geographic location (i.e., rural vs. suburban vs. urban) shape need for and use of library services and resources?

5. How do youth of color perceive libraries and library staff in their schools and communities?
6. To what extent do library staff understand their own cultural biases and blind spots with respect to supporting the needs of youth of color?
7. What are the models or conceptual frameworks that might drive the development of library programs that bridge development of emerging literacies between a teen's home and community?

### Community Engagement

Community engagement is a process in which library staff build relationships and understanding of the needs of the community in which they work. One opportunity for community engagement and increased connections between libraries and the teens they work with is through Research Practices Partnerships. To succeed in community engagement, this research will help you better utilize partnerships to work with youth development stakeholders. It will help you develop and implement participatory design strategies, community discovery processes, assessment techniques, and relationship building outside of library buildings.

This area addresses the following research questions:

1. How can we leverage participatory design methods to support community engagement and teen library services?

2. What training do library staff need to effectively implement successful community engagement techniques?
3. What are the models in community engagement and community discovery that libraries need to implement to best serve teens?
4. How do library staff engage with underserved teen communities including those representing teens living in poverty, those from underrepresented cultures and ethnic groups, and those in rural, suburban, and tribal areas?
5. What are the library infrastructure barriers that limit community engagement opportunities and how can they be overcome?
6. What are the benefits and models to teens, their families, and communities when libraries embed research practice partnerships into their work?
7. What is the impact on teens when library staff implement community engagement activities?

### Where to Go to Find New Research

If you are interested in keeping up with the new research, you can check out the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* (<http://www.yalsa.org/jrly/>), the Research Roundup column in *YALS*, and the Research Committee posts on the YALSAblog (<http://yalsa.org/blog/category/research/>). ■

## FROM THE EDITOR

(continued from page 2)

The Highlights section, which features YALSA related articles, includes an article by Linda Braun, YALSA CE Consultant, about changes to YALSA's Mentoring Program to support members

better in their leadership development. It also includes an article that illustrates what the new YALSA Research Agenda, approved by the board at Midwinter 2017, can offer practitioners.

Don't forget that the YALSAblog includes additional materials that complement the print *YALS*. You'll find that content at: <http://yalsa.org/blog/category/yals> ■





# Learning from Each Other: Successful Mentoring/Protege Relationships

Explore the mentor/mentee relationship and what YALSA is doing to make mentoring more effective



Linda W. Braun

**L**ater this year YALSA will unveil a new virtual mentoring program. This revised opportunity will be for library professionals who have been in the field for many years, and for those who are newer to the work. The new program will focus on short-term pairings that give YALSA members the chance to learn from each other at a particular time of need. As we continue to design and develop this program, I've been thinking about the qualities of a good mentor and the qualities of a good protege. Read on to find out what I've come up with.

## What Qualities Does a Good Mentor Have?

### Able to Listen

The first thing that comes to mind when I think of mentor qualities is the ability to listen. As I think of the people who have mentored me over the years (and, by the way, I still have people who I consider mentors even though I've been in this work for thirty-plus years), they have all focused on listening to what I asked, what I needed, and what I was interested in. They didn't simply tell me what to do or how to do it. They asked questions that led me to articulate what I was looking for and then were able to help me find what I needed.

### Can Facilitate Thinking

All of the mentors I've worked with have been able to facilitate dialogue, thinking, and next steps. Mentors who are successful ask questions that spark insight or an idea for a direction to take or a project to take on.

### Knows the Field Today

Being in the field for thirty-plus years, as I have, doesn't do anyone any good unless the experience gained during those years can be placed in the context of the current world of libraries. A good mentor isn't just focused on how things have always been done; they are focused on how to take that experience and translate it to the needs of teens and libraries today.

### Aware of Own Expertise

No one is good at everything. When thinking about being a mentor, the professional needs to consider where their own expertise lies. A good mentor asks, what experience do I have that can help others succeed in the work? It's also important to be aware of knowledge gaps and to be open with potential proteges about those gaps.

### Is Self-Reflective

A mentor who is successful is one that continues to reflect on their own professional experiences and growth. They are able to articulate why something was or wasn't successful in their professional life and able to help the protege reflect on their own work and how to make changes in order to be successful in that work.

### Is a Cheerleader

A successful mentor will cheer on the protege and sincerely want the protege to succeed. This can mean sending emails or texts or tweets to find out how the protege is doing, particularly when the protege is testing out something new, and providing feedback that will honestly help the protege move forward in the work.

# HIGHLIGHT

## **Provides Feedback**

The mentor shouldn't just listen to ideas and speak about their own experience. The mentor needs to listen to what the protege has to say, hear about the protege's experiences, and provide feedback on how to improve or change an idea or revise an activity in order to improve experience.

## **Is Available**

A mentor who is too busy to listen or facilitate is not going to be really helpful. Anyone thinking of taking on a mentoring role with a colleague needs to carefully assess his schedule and make sure he has the time to listen, facilitate, and support the needs of the protege. A mentor might have all of the other qualities listed here, but if they aren't available to actually do the mentoring work that's required, then they aren't going to be a good match for any potential protege.

## **Is Open to Learning**

One of the greatest benefits of being a mentor, from the mentor side of things, is the opportunity to learn from those who have different experiences, may be new to a field, or have different points of view. A good mentor shouldn't only expect to share knowledge from their experience. The mentor should also be willing and able to improve their own skills and knowledge through the mentor/protege experience.

## **What Qualities Does a Good Protege Have?**

### **Is a Good Listener**

A protege needs to be open to what the mentor has to say and open to the possibility that their own ideas about how to move forward aren't necessarily the best ideas.

### **Is a Good Questioner**

When working with a mentor, the protege needs to articulate what they want

to learn and ask questions of the mentor. It shouldn't only be the mentor's job to prod the protege for information.

### **Trusts the Mentor**

A protege has to believe that the mentor has the skills and experience required in order to support the protege's needs. Trust means a willingness to try out some of the ideas suggested by the mentor, even if they seem far-fetched, and providing feedback on what worked and didn't work.

### **Is Self-Reflective**

It's not only mentors who need to reflect on their own experience and skills. Proteges have to realistically reflect on what they know and don't know, what they want to learn, and why past professional experiences have succeeded or not.

### **Takes Responsibility**

There is only so much that a mentor can do for and with a protege. That's why the protege has to take responsibility for acting on the activities, advice, and support of the mentor. It's up to the protege to actually see what, from the mentor/protege relationship, works and doesn't work.

### **Is Able to Determine Professional Needs**

A protege can't expect that a mentor will easily know what types of support are needed. A good protege will have put some thought into what their needs are and is able to articulate those needs, and why they think the needs exist, to the mentor.

### **Is Flexible**

A protege may go into a mentoring relationship certain that the process is going to go a certain way, or expecting a certain set of outcomes will be achieved. However, a good protege is able to be flexible in the mentor/protege work and is willing to let go when a particular path is demonstrated

as not being the right one to take in order to succeed.

### **Is Able to Take Risks**

When working with a mentor, the protege should be willing to try things out that might seem uncomfortable. It's through taking risks and trying new things that a protege will really learn about how to succeed in the profession.

### **Is Willing to Admit Failure**

If a protege is going to try out some of the ideas developed with the mentor, then it's likely not everything will go as planned. That's not a bad thing. If the protege can then discuss with the mentor what worked and didn't work and analyze the why of the failure, then that will certainly help with future professional growth and development.

### **Has Time for the Relationship**

It's imperative that a protege has the time required to work with a mentor. A protege needs to be able to answer emails or take part in various forms of live interaction. The protege needs time to try things out and report back. And, the protege needs time to ask questions, be self-reflective, and listen to what the mentor has to say.

## **What if There Is No Chemistry**

When paired together, a mentor and protege need to work as a team with respect, trust, and honesty. While each member of the pair may have all of these qualities, a mentor/protege pairing might not be as successful as hoped. Sometimes personalities simply conflict. The pair should be ready and willing to acknowledge when something is not working and move on from the relationship. Each participant needs to be willing to analyze why the relationship didn't work, and before taking on another mentor/protege experience rethink what is hoped for as the outcome of the relationship.



A failed mentor/protege relationship does not mean giving up the possibility of being a mentor or a protege forever. It's a learning experience and an opportunity to try again with new knowledge and skills in place.

## It Never Stops

My career in the library world has spanned several types of positions and turned into something I never expected when I began working with youth. I have to say that without the support of mentors who demonstrated to me what was possible to accomplish I would not have had the opportunities in my career that got me to where I am today. Sometimes the mentorship was totally informal, and sometimes it was formal. I've worked with mentors who had experience in exactly the work I was doing at the moment (for example, a teen

library staff member who mentored me when I worked in teen services), and I've had successful experiences with mentors whose professional work was very different from my own (for example, an academic librarian mentored me while I worked as a library consultant). I still sometimes feel the need for a mentor and am fortunate that I am able to connect with people, primarily through the professional network that YALSA provides, who can mentor me through various professional experiences. I expect my days of being a protege are far from over.

## Next for YALSA

At the 2017 Midwinter Meeting, the YALSA Board approved reenvisioning the mentoring program ([www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/MentoringReboot\\_MW17.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/MentoringReboot_MW17.pdf)), which lays

out a new plan to make YALSA's mentoring reach more members and better serve their needs. Stay tuned to YALSA's various communications outlets—including *YALS*—for updates on the association's new virtual mentoring opportunities. If you have thoughts about being a mentor, a protege, or about YALSA's virtual mentoring program as a whole, let me know by commenting on the YALSAblog post that complements this article. The post is available at: <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/2017/07/01/yals-summer-2017-mentoring-thoughts>.

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LINDA W. BRAUN is the YALSA CE Consultant, an Independent Learning Consultant, and a Past President of the association.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

(continued from page 3)

ballot for the YALSA board? If so, please contact Sarah Sogigian, the chair of the current Governance Nominating Committee, at [sarah@masslibsystem.org](mailto:sarah@masslibsystem.org).

YALSA leadership isn't for everyone, which is why one of the priorities of YALSA's strategic plan is to institute a three-track leadership development curriculum for frontline library staff, managers, and senior leadership for YALSA and the profession. Linda Braun, YALSA's Continuing Education Consultant, is using the Educopia Institute's Nexus Lab: Layers of Leadership Across Libraries, Archives, and Museums (<https://educopia.org/deliverables/nexus-lab-layers-leadership-across-libraries-archives-and-museums-september-2016-draft>) design frameworks to develop YALSA's "teens-first" leadership training. Take a look at the draft document—there are six stages: leading self, leading others, leading the

department, leading multiple departments, leading the organization, and leading the profession. Each category is then broken down into the following: my daily challenge, key leadership tasks, skills to perform tasks, changes I (and others) want to see, and greater outcomes. The training for the first cohort will occur by the end of 2017, and I think it's going to be amazing.

Thank you to all of the YALSA board members and YALSA staff for your hard work and for your help during my presidential year. I'm looking forward to serving on the board as past president and helping Sandra Hughes-Hassell during her presidential year. As past president, I will be serving on the first Board Development Committee, which, until the recent bylaws change, was called the Governance Nominating Committee ([http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/BoardDevelopmentCmte_MW17.pdf)

[BoardDevelopmentCmte\\_MW17.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/BoardDevelopmentCmte_MW17.pdf)). Our committee will do much more than find qualified candidates for the YALSA ballot. We'll be helping YALSA members grow into leadership positions in the division, hosting board orientation training at conferences, and offering board assessments to help guide board training activities throughout the year. If you have governance experience (in YALSA or other organizations) and are interested in serving on the inaugural Development Committee, please contact Crystle Martin, since as president-elect this fall, she will be appointing members.

Read on to find out more ways that you can become a leader in your library, in your community, and in your profession. Thanks again for the opportunity to serve as leader of this amazing organization.

Best,  
Sarah Hill ■



# Research Roundup: Learning to Lead the Organization

Making the  
transition from  
follower to leader



ELSA OUVRARD-PRETTOL

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 the summer issue, this Research Roundup column focuses on leading the organization. For each item listed below you'll find a short overview of what the research resource is all about and some ideas about how you might integrate the findings and recommendations into your work with youth.

Are you a manager? A supervisor? Maybe, like me, you feel you are a great follower. I have been working in my current position, as the sole full-time library staff, for eight years; and I have developed my position as well as our library collections and the services we offer, and slowly but surely, my department is growing. I have also, over the last four years, been increasing my participation in local, state, and national library associations and events.

As I keep thinking about how my Library Services department can best respond to my community's needs and interests, as well as how I can grow professionally, I have been thinking about what leadership is. Through this exploration, I started thinking that maybe I can be a leader. Maybe, in some small ways, I had already taken steps on the path to leadership. That was an intense moment for me, as I had never thought of myself as a leader.

So, whether you are already in a supervisory position or consider yourself more of a follower, this Research Roundup aims to give you tips to get you well on your way to being

a leader for your library and your community.

## A Leader's Attitude

Current research on library leadership agrees that library leaders know that a library is at the heart of their community, and that the emphasis should not be on what the library *owns* but on what the library *does*. Thus, library leaders need to focus on discovering, understanding, and responding to their community's needs.

I encountered an expression that I particularly love in the article *A Career Like Hers* by Rebecca Miller (*Library Journal*, Jan. 2014): "Books out, people in." That is what Louise Berry, former director of the famous Darien Public Library in Connecticut, used to say, and this is a great, simple, and quick way to remember our most basic mission. The general public, who may hold onto stereotypes of the librarian as a shushing old lady or views the library as an institution of the past, has everything to gain from our work. It is the work of library leadership to bring together the library (staff, collections, and services) and its community.

"Books out, people in" got Ms. Berry and her library staff to try things in anticipation of their community's needs, like having a "rolling list of just-returned items displayed on a large screen, to staying open until 10:50 P.M. during finals week in support of students, to building in longevity with a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold facility."

Erin Hollingsworth's *Barrow's Living Room* article (published in *Tribal College Journal* in the fall of 2015) is a particularly riveting account of all the services and events that the Tuzzy



Consortium Library (Barrow, Alaska) has been able to put together, thanks to their leadership's focus on the community and not their holdings. They have partnered with the school districts, local public and private organizations, the state library, local clubs, and many more, to channel their power into one goal: serving the community.

Historically, the longevity of libraries has been due in large part because they are integral to, match, and reflect their communities. From scrolls and parchments to e-books, from DVDs to food drives and circulation of umbrellas or sewing machines, libraries keep evolving, and that is thanks to leaders who have listened to their community's needs and supported their staff to develop professionals to meet those needs.

Leadership can be demonstrated through several characteristics, which I have been fortunate to observe in the leadership team at my school. Leaders:

- hire people who fit well with our school culture and have the same vision and values;
- trust them to do their job on their own;
- hold themselves and others to high standards;
- provide (internal and external) professional development for everyone within reach and even go beyond those standards;
- listen to our community (staff, faculty, students and parents);
- make decisions based on our community's needs and interests.

## A Leader's Influence

So what are library leaders doing today to meet their community's needs? As mentioned earlier, the focus of the profession has shifted away from the collection and librarians as gatekeepers of knowledge to services and partnerships with other organizations. Various types of libraries (public, school,

academic, state) collaborate to bring services to the general public. Libraries tap into local associations to focus on a particular subgroup of their community. They also open their doors to local groups that are already successful on their own.

Libraries implement a wide variety of innovative programs every year: the Human Library (see [humanlibrary.org](http://humanlibrary.org)) and the Library of Things (see the Library of Things at the Sacramento Public Library: <http://www.saclibrary.org/Services/Library-of-Things>) are two programs that have lately been spreading like wildfire across the nation. But what works in one community will not necessarily work in another. Instead, two things need to be replicated: the leadership's *process* and their *attitude*. The *process* includes designing policies, collections, and services with the community's needs and interests in mind—not just the leaders' own needs and interests—while their *attitude* focuses on the people (both staff and patrons) and supports the staff and patrons to be successful, including experimenting with new ways to better serve their community.

Three main leadership characteristics can produce a wealth of positive results:

First, successful leaders understand that *professional development* empowers library staff, generating the next library leaders. Several articles on library leadership demonstrate the importance of "Lead the Change" ([http://lj.libraryjournal.com/lead-the-change/programs/engagement/#\\_](http://lj.libraryjournal.com/lead-the-change/programs/engagement/#_)). *Library Journal's* interactive professional development workshop, and other opportunities such as library conferences, in-house professional development—or even something as basic as giving library staff time to work on their projects—make a world of difference. This support proves that leaders trust their staff's decisions and gives the staff chances to build their self-confidence,

skills, and aptitudes, as well as the opportunity to give things a try—and reflect from both failures and successes. This is well exemplified in Ian Chant's *Stepping Up on Usability* (*Library Journal*, Feb. 2014), in which Director Patricia Uttaro explains how the Lead the Change program emboldened her library staff to take control of some library policies and change them to improve customer service.

Second, leaders see a *positive cycle of community participation* in the library. Partnerships allow libraries to serve more people in their community than they could have reached alone. Partnerships can develop programs that use different styles of learning, which will entice more people to use the library. Partnerships also model collaboration skills to children and teens, setting them up for success in their academic and professional lives. This was explicitly mentioned in *Barrow's Living Room*, the article about an Alaskan library: "People are excited to get involved because they see value in what the library offers." When it is time to support libraries in the voting booth, people will know why they vote for them.

Finally, leaders see the value of *growing partnerships and collaborations*. More opportunities for partnership and collaboration snowball as news of successes spreads by word of mouth. The expansion of partnerships and collaborations creates a dynamic cycle of needs being assessed and projects being developed in response, and an assessment of which needs were met and which still need to be met. The library becomes the brain of the community, collaborating with the other vital organs in the community to appraise its well-being and its issues, responding to them, and constantly reevaluating what needs to be done, for the gain of all.

As I reflect on what I have read and learned, I am very excited for the

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next year. I plan to implement these new leadership skills by supporting my library staff to grow professionally, listening to my faculty and students about their needs, and improving or creating services for our community. My number one priority as an emerging library leader is to provide the best services possible and help our community grow. I am striving to give our students a better academic environment, to assist them in their scholarly success, and to ensure that the library staff at my school is engaged and proactive, and thus ready to take the torch

whenever it is needed. Our complete commitment to the community will return to us tenfold as they will better understand the value of libraries, use libraries, and protect libraries as an asset when difficult times arise.

Libraries are needed now more than ever with tightening resources and uncertainty, and it is up to library leaders to take their libraries, staff, and communities through these hard times. Leaders will know how to motivate their staff, harness their energy, and focus it on the needs of their particular communities. Whether you are

starting on your path to leadership or are a seasoned leader, what will you do today to serve your community, and how will you energize your staff or coworkers to help you? ■

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# Creating Tomorrow's Civic Leaders by Learning to Be Civically Engaged Today

Engaging political  
literacy as part  
of leadership  
development



John Chrastka

**W**e teach a wide range of literacies every day at our libraries. From first language literacy to technology literacy to financial literacy, your programs are focused on helping youth attain the skills they need to become self-directed learners, discoverers, and doers. One critical literacy that often lacks a coherent or intentional approach in library programs is political literacy. I would argue that the same approach to other literacy trainings needs to be extended to teaching skills about politics, policy, and political action. If we want to see our young patrons excel as citizens and contributors to our society, training for political literacy skills should be added to our programs and services. Knowing how government works, how laws are made and adjudicated, and how we choose to tax ourselves is at the core of political literacy for all. It can start with social studies and civics curricula in the schools, but it is unfortunately true that many schools lack the resources to teach these valuable skills. A library YA program is the perfect venue for teaching and experiencing political literacy outside of class time or in the absence of a formal curriculum.

There are important soft skills that need to be taught in political literacy trainings beyond information about how a bill becomes a law. These interpersonal communications skills are character traits such as empathy and self-awareness. Politics is a human interaction, and that part of the human condition cannot be overlooked. In YA settings, teaching political literacy should include building a knowledge base that either addresses gaps in formal civics education or extends

independent learning through study, inquiry, and practice. It can and should also include training and experiential learning on the process by which people of different opinions, beliefs, and values engage in dialogues about their priorities and points of intersection. It must have a strong and deep commitment to inclusivity across the American experience. If the goal of any Youth Services program is to empower our youth to become independent and able adults as well as future leaders, then training, coaching, and facilitating political literacy through library programs should be a key aspect of the work.

My colleagues at Generation Citizen (<http://generationcitizen.org>), an experiential learning organization that integrates civics and the teaching of civics into curricula in urban and rural schools around the country, have some practical insights to share. I asked Sarah Andes, Director for Programming at Generation Citizen, what she sees as the biggest barriers to civic participation by young people. My bias in asking the question of her, a civics educator and political literacy practitioner, was to learn if the barriers came from the youth themselves or from adults not trusting in their innate competencies. Her answer was substantially different than my biases.

*I think that knowledge is a huge barrier to civic participation by young people. They want to do good—statistics indicate that more now than ever before. But they are not considering government or politics as a way for them to do change. It's likely because there is a lack of guided opportunities for engagement. They haven't explored these opportunities at a family basis or institutional basis. The media and popular*

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*images don't suggest that engaging in politics is an honorable, effective, or commendable path to pursue change.*

What I take from her answer is a fundamental insight to working with your teen and youth groups. But it also names a key challenge for any librarian hoping to teach political literacy skills: how do you become politically literate yourself? If you personally lack a vocabulary about public policy and tax policy, it is difficult to support an engaged dialogue among your students or the teens at your library. If you are not personally a political practitioner, it will be hard to guide instruction and discovery on the tools and techniques for civic change. If you cannot see yourself leading or participating in advocacy or activism work for issues you care about, it will be hard to authentically encourage the tweens, teens, and youth in your programs to try, fail, and try again. In approaching the topic of advocacy and activism for YA librarians, I'd like to challenge you to begin—or deepen—your own political literacies with some experiential and participatory learning.

I believe your ability to help youth and teens become better advocates starts at a staff meeting and not a meeting of the Teen Advisory Group. There are several good civics tools we recommend as aides and guides for your programs that I'll discuss in the following. In a normal programming setting, I'd suggest that you review them and become familiar with them before setting them loose on your TAG. These civics games are elegant in their simplicity and ease of use. However, if my thesis that we need to become more politically literate ourselves before striking out to facilitate or teach it is true, then I'd strongly recommend that you bring the following resources to your departmental meetings. Not for “show and tell,” but for “do and learn” yourselves.

A new organization called PolitiCraft aims to encourage game-based learning for civics and civic education. PolitiCraft ([www.politicraft.org](http://www.politicraft.org)) is a card game designed by social studies teachers and endorsed by the National Council for the Social Studies to teach the principles of civics through in-person interactions. It provides real-world iterative opportunities to think through multiple paths to solutions for communities. Another organization in the youth and civics space, iCivics ([www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org)), produces great online civics simulations for ages ten and up. Their game simulations take participants through topics that affect towns, cities, counties, states, and our nation. The game play for both PolitiCraft's card game and iCivics online simulations are short enough for in-class and after-school work. The topics are expansive enough that these games can be returned to as a technique during a longer civics curriculum or multi-session program.

These civics games encourage participants to actively engage each other in a narrative approach to solving problems rather than through an adversarial or individual-achievement framework. This narrative approach works well for considering local, state, and national civic and social issues. Part of a narrative is telling stories and sharing information. The other often overlooked part of a narrative is in asking questions to solicit more stories and information. Deliberative listening is rightly described as a cornerstone of effective civic engagement programs such as those taught by the Harwood Institute ([www.theharwoodinstitute.org](http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org)), and supported in a World Cafe ([www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)) model. A game like PolitiCraft is radically leveling, though, about who has the power to ask questions and respond to answers because the game deck itself is the facilitator and convener, and not an outside (or even group-nomi-

nated) moderator or interlocutor. The endpoint of any PolitiCraft or iCivics round is to challenge the players on how they would carry out what they modeled and discussed in the game in their community. For youth, whose voices and insights are not always valued in formal, multigenerational civic engagement settings, or for youth who need the practice that comes from low-stakes game play to build skills and vocabulary, a gamified approach to civics—one without a predefined right answer—can be especially helpful.

All of this self-preparation breaks through key barriers to teaching or supporting political literacy training for the community you serve. Two factors that matter a great deal in motivating any person to be civically engaged can be addressed by the questions: (1) is their level of trust in government high enough to let them believe that their involvement in government will matter; and (2) do they have a personally valid, affirmative answer to the question, does each vote count? Any individual's likelihood to participate in the political process—from young activists to the oldest voter—is their belief in the integrity of the political process. People who express strong reservations about an office or issue on the ballot, or who have a low level of trust that their vote counts are significantly less likely to vote or participate. People who are unaccustomed to talking about policy are less likely to be confident in their own opinions about what policies should be.

One challenge for youth advocates is that technology and app/web/social-based actions have taken the place of deliberative, long-term engagement to find a solution for many populations. The new Facebook Town Hall app is a perfect example of one-click engagement with politicians. The immediacy of the app



replaces an intimate experience of the process. An action in this context does activate empathy or outrage but doesn't educate or deepen political literacy skills through participatory practice. A second challenge is that civics lessons tend to focus on policy and politics and examples from the federal government. Congress, the White House, and the Supreme Court are easy to write about compared to the differences between how towns, villages, cities, townships, and counties work. While understanding the federal model is a part of being politically literate, decisions are made at all levels of government. A third challenge for advocates is a tendency for civics to focus on the president and Congress as political actors rather than on local elected and appointed officials. It may be easier to talk about a presidential election—where the issues are driven by the media and the candidates are in many ways remote—then it is to talk about the race for your mayor or county commissioner. Those humans live down the street. Not to suggest that national and major issue campaigns don't have relevance on the lives of our youth, but the vast majority of decisions about how taxes are raised and spent, how school policy is arrived at by a board, how the library is governed, how the streets are paved, and how the garbage is collected are local. And the local is, upon personal engagement, often pretty intense.

The team at Generation Citizen has an approach within their curriculum to breaking through the one-click slacktivist tendencies and transcending the national-to-local divide by rooting their classwork not in textbooks or current events but through in-person interviews and real-world experiences of local politics and players. Sarah Andes again shares a powerful insight that library communities can learn from:

*How does a textbook understanding of the federal executive, legislative, and*

*judicial branches work in my town? How does that translate into the local level? A lot of local executive branch work happens in town, city, or county departments. The local legislative branch work happens in board, council, or commission committees. So, who runs those departments, and who is on those committees? Skills building goes beyond textbooks. It is a dual-pronged approach that includes both interviews and experiential interactions. Interviews are requisite.*

I am inspired by Generation Citizen's approach to using a limited number of print and online resources and moving

policy means that every student on the project team moves from theory to practice very quickly. The civics games I mentioned previously are preparatory and not the learning itself. Game play helps develop vocabulary and demonstrate usage to improve political literacy skills. If you're ready for an even deeper dive, the team at the Hechinger Report have put together a great dossier of civics resources (<http://hechingerreport.org/making-america-whole-via-civics-education>) for staff training and programs.

“

**If you cannot see yourself leading or participating in advocacy or activism work for issues you care about, it will be hard to authentically encourage the tweens, teens, and youth in your programs to try, fail, and try again.**

students into a context where they meet actual people in government. It's more than a meet and greet in their curriculum, though. Students are challenged and supported to choose an issue that matters to them as a cohort. They are supported in their research and discovery about the policy, funding, and impacts of that issue. Then, it moves from the classroom to city hall:

*What is your local government structure? Take the issue to town/city departments. Talk to the relevant director and committees chairs. Building familiarity with local government resources is key. Reach out to other staffers—in departments or for an elected official or a city government person.*

Using an approach to actively participate in the development of

Experiential learning hones political literacy skills.

For YA advocates, the first step to supporting youth as self-advocates is to sharpen your own political literacy skills. I'd like to see you and your colleagues start playing those civics games as a first step. At EveryLibrary (<http://everylibrary.org>), we want to see these games played at departmental meetings and during all-staff meetings prior to any strategic planning or facilities planning process. We expect our community members who come to focus groups and answer planning survey questions to be equipped to articulate their vision and hope for library services. This assumes a high level of facility with



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the language of policy and a practical understanding of the process of civic deliberation and dialogue. But moving from game play into participating in your own library's, union's, or community's policy discussions is the next step. I'd suggest that you also start participating in policy issues at your own local level. With your own

skills honed and sharpened, you will be a much more effective political literacy trainer for your YA programs and for peer-to-peer support within the library. EveryLibrary is here to help, pro bono, on planning an approach that is relevant to you. We're here to also help you persuade your admin team that this game play and

personal experience is a wise use of staff time. ■

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JOHN CHRASTKA is Executive Director of EveryLibrary, the first nationwide political action committee for libraries.

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# Fighting Fake News: Because We All Deserve the Truth

Programming ideas for teaching teens media literacy



Hannah E. Spratt and Denise E. Agosto

In past decades, a main role—perhaps *the* main role—of librarians and other information professionals has been providing people with access to information. With information access becoming increasingly easy via technology at home, at school, and at the public library, the role of teaching people of all ages how to evaluate information quality and authenticity is now of equal or even more importance than providing access. However, the recent surge of people participating in social media has led to unvetted sources and fake news on the Internet appearing in unprecedented quantities. The proliferation of fake news is a serious issue that affects teens at both the individual level and at the broader societal level, impacting social, political, economic, and other local, national, and international developments. Based on a 2016 study about young people's ability to assess messages and bias in information on the Internet, the Stanford History Education Group concluded that "democracy [can be] threatened by the ease at which disinformation about civic issues is allowed to spread and flourish."

Libraries Transform (<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/librariestransform/>), an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA), has made information literacy skills and fighting fake news a priority for the future of library services, and young adult (YA) librarians must answer this call as well. Promoting media literacy is key to teaching teens how to differentiate between fake news and legitimate news on a daily basis. In the longer term, promoting media literacy is key to combating the spread of misinformation and fake news in society. By helping teens attain media literacy skills and become conscientious consumers

of news, YA librarians can reduce the circulation of fake news stories.

Simply encouraging teens not to read and share fake news on social media can go a long way toward slowing down the circulation of misinformation. Being well informed of current events can also help teens to identify fake news. The first step toward achieving these goals is to educate teens and arm them with media literacy skills, or skills that enable users to "access, analyze, evaluate...and participate" with information online (Media literacy: A definition, 2017).

## Fake News and Media Literacy

Today's teens have access to news and related information via numerous mediums, such as television, radio, Internet, newspapers, magazines, books, etc. As the newest of these mediums, the Internet has become an increasingly alluring and accessible information resource. According to recent studies by the Pew Research Center, 62 percent of adults get their news via social media (Gottfried and Shearer, 2016) and 61 percent of millennials say they rely more heavily on Facebook for their political news than any other source (Gottfried and Barthel, 2015). However, teens—and adults as well—often have difficulty understanding whether or not to trust the information they find online. Sole reliance on social media as a news source presents a variety of problems including exposure to fake news via unreliable news sources and a propensity to consume biased or "filtered" information.

Internet users are vulnerable to being caught in a vicious cycle of fake news and misinformation due to how algorithmic filters are used by Google and Facebook to dictate the information

that users see first in their searches and news feeds (Pariser, 2011). As a “filter bubble” develops around Internet users, they gain a propensity to develop biased perspectives with little understanding for the opposition on controversial topics.

Since the majority of U.S. teens rely heavily on social media to receive news and information about current events, librarians should encourage them to get outside their limited news “bubbles.” This means striving to help teens “cultivate mindful habits” of information consumption and in doing so instilling life-long learning habits and a desire for civic action (Jolly, 2014).

One reason why users of all ages might believe fake news is the natural tendency to “believe information that appeals to [one’s] emotions or personal beliefs” (Cooke, 2017). Fake news creators can be highly skilled in writing stories that will appeal to personal emotions and beliefs, starting with a grain of truth and building up fake stories that reinforce their suspicions, worries, or desires.

Recognizing how emotions can play a part in influencing and/or shaping public opinion over unbiased facts is critical for teens living in what some are calling a “post-truth” society. Like fake news, the concept of post-truth has existed for some time; however, the use of the phrase increased by 2,000 percent in 2016 and led to the Oxford Dictionaries declaring it the word of the year (“Post-truth,” 2016). Recognizing that the manipulation of emotions is becoming an integral part of politics and reporting is a crucial step toward being able to create an intellectual separation between facts and emotions when consuming information. It is important to remain vigilant in combating fake news, as it is possible for people to consume false information and then take inappropriate actions (Davis, 2015).

### The Recent Rise of Fake News

Prior to the advent of social media and the Internet, “ordinary people

once relied on publishers, editors, and subject matter experts to vet the information they consumed” (Wineburg and McGrew, 2016). However, social media and the unregulated Internet have made it possible to easily share “misinformation with a click” (ALA Public Programs Office, 2017). The fake news issue received a great deal of press after the 2016 U.S. presidential election, with researchers, experts, reporters, and other individuals questioning how the surge in fake news might have influenced the election results. In the wake of the election, we now have the opportunity to look at the spread, motivation, and influence of fake news with teens in a context to which they can directly relate.

Why has there been such a surge in false information online? Often the motivation behind circulating fake news is purely profit. If people click on fake news headlines, fake news writers can earn advertising money for each click. Individual creators of fake news stories can make thousands of dollars per month from advertising revenue (Ohlheiser, 2016). This means that fake news writers, and even “real” news writers, are heavily motivated to create the most sensational headlines they can, and in most cases they can create fake news with impunity—there is no oversight agency to prevent them from doing it.

As a result, many users—adults as well as young people—have trouble understanding where the information they find online comes from and knowing which information sources to trust and which not to trust. A largescale Stanford University study found widespread confusion among middle school, high school, and college students when it came to assessing online information. Students in the study had difficulty differentiating between news content and advertising content, and most lacked an understanding of how biased perspectives affect news and other information messages. The

Stanford study found that: “(W)hen it comes to evaluating information that flows through social media channels, [students] are easily duped” (Wineburg and McGrew, 2016, p. 4). The researchers concluded that “Overall, young people’s ability to reason about the information on the Internet can be summed up in one word: **bleak**” (Wineburg and McGrew, 2016, p. 4).

### Fake News and Libraries

As libraries continue to provide greater access to the Internet and to technology for teens and young adults, it is critical that they also begin taking a more active role in the perpetuation of digital and media literacy competencies (Hobbs, 2011, p. 15). It is becoming increasingly possible for fake news to spread quickly without any system of checks and balances. Many teens and adults are encountering misinformation and fake news on a daily basis via social media and the Internet without being aware that the information they find is misleading or wrong. Librarians can teach young people to assess and vet the information they encounter, enabling them to play the information vetting role once played by publishers, editors, and experts.

YA librarians are well positioned to help teens develop healthy practices for consuming news and other information online. Providing guidelines for identifying fake news and evaluating the overall authenticity of online news resources is a form of media literacy education that is appropriate for both public and school libraries. YA librarians can also teach teens to consume a healthy news diet including information from multiple media outlets, each offering different perspectives on the news. The end goal of such services is to cultivate a generation of conscientious news consumers who are able to navigate a post-truth society by remaining well informed about the world while also being effective and critical users of library resources.





## Conclusion

In accordance with the 2016 ALA State of America's Libraries ("State of America's libraries," 2016), librarians and other information professionals are moving beyond a focus on providing access to resources toward providing more interactive information services and information education. When people ask, "Why do we need libraries and librarians now that everything is online?" a good answer to this question is that librarians can play the role of information educator, not just providing access to information but helping to empower users by teaching them to understand which information to trust.

All this is to say that access to the Internet means little if someone is unable to discern between fact and conspiracy theory (Alvarez, 2016, p. 24). Thus, fake news is an information literacy issue and one that should be of primary concern to YA librarians. The programming and service ideas we offer here can help you to teach teens how to become more information literate and to avoid falling prey to fake news—because we all deserve to know the truth about our world and what is happening around us.

## Where to Find Resources for Teaching Teens about a Healthy News Diet

Professional information services and news organizations, such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the ALA, YALSA, and National Public Radio (NPR), have begun to provide simple guides to assist consumers in recognizing and debunking fake news and other misleading information they encounter online. Librarians can post guidelines in technology centers or distribute composited guides to teens as a form of passive programming. They can also create hands-on

educational programming to teach teens how to use the guides. The sidebar to this article lists several more specific passive and active programming ideas as well as a selection of resources to help build and implement these ideas in the library.

Regardless of the format of educational delivery, it is important for librarians and other educators to teach teens how to distinguish between types of fake news, as not all fake news is pernicious in nature. For example, there can at times be a fine line between satire and fake news, but "fake news" has the intention of disseminating false information, not for comedy, but for consumption" (Alvarez, 2016, p. 24). Satire serves the purpose of acting as a critique to talk about current events, but it cannot be effective if consumers are unaware and share the satirical pieces in a literal sense (Davis, 2016).

## Activities and Programs for Teaching Teens about Fake News

Teens themselves can be the best advocates against fake news among their peers. YA librarians can encourage teens to not share a story if they are not sure it comes from a reliable source as a good first step toward combating the fake news crisis.

The following list includes ideas for moving beyond this simple first step toward creating active and passive library programs intended to teach teens how to identify fake news and how to become healthy, critical news consumers and evaluators.

Active programming idea #1: Fake news is not new. The concept of fake news can be scary, but it's important to realize that it's not a new phenomenon. Share the history of fake news with teens and allow them to engage with it through a variety of mediums (i.e., primary resources such as pamphlets from the French Revolution criticizing Marie Antoinette along with a letter written by her or newspaper articles from the *New*

*York Journal* and the *New York World* in the 1890s elaborating the Cuban revolution from Spain).

Active programming idea #2: Fake news today. Look at current fake news and discuss how and why it is circulating through mainstream social media. At the end of 2016, BuzzFeed compiled a list of "Biggest Fake News Hits on Facebook" (Silverman, 2016) (<https://goo.gl/MFfpTX>). Examine this list with teens and see if they have encountered any of these stories or other fake news stories. Ask them how they came across the story (i.e., Did they see it promoted in their news feed or was it shared by a friend or family member?) and ask them to share stories of how it changed their thinking or otherwise impacted them.

Active programming idea #3: Analyze the impact of social media. Look at how information is shared differently on Facebook, Twitter, and SnapChat and ask teens to analyze which platform they find the most effective for sharing information. Consider if there are certain circumstances in which information is more successfully shared via social media than other mediums. Also ask if there are limits to the type of information that can be shared on social media.

Active programming idea #4: Learn the difference between satire, propaganda, and opinion. Teach teens to identify the motivation for a news story and how it impacts the reliability of the story. Guided analysis of satirical websites, such as The Onion, Cracked, and ClickHole, can teach teens to recognize satirical content and to understand the intent of satirical news creators, as opposed to the intent of fake news sources.

Passive programming idea #1: Share experiences with fake news. Create an interactive area in your tech center for teens to share personal experiences with fake news that they have encountered. Encourage them to share how they identified the news as fake. Leaving stories posted in a shared space (handwritten on slips of paper pinned on a bulletin

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board, posted to an online bulletin board, pictures drawn on paper and hung on a mobile from the ceiling, etc.) can be a great way to help create awareness of fake news and to help prevent others from falling prey to the same stories.

Passive programming idea #2:

Identifying fake news. Post guides in the tech area to help teens identify visual cues that can indicate fake news online. More in-depth guides can be created for library patrons to take home that include the visual cue guidelines as well as analytical probes.

Passive programming idea #3:

Utilizing fact-checking sources. Provide teens with handouts containing information about different fact-checking resources both online and at the library. Several resources are suggested following. For a more active programming approach,

to pop culture. In addition to making a concentrated effort to seek out a variety of news sources, encourage teens to utilize apps and other technology tools to expand their news source monitoring by posting fliers around the library, each featuring a different news source and explaining its strengths and weaknesses.

### Selected Recommended Resources

#### Identifying Fake News

Crockett, Lee W. "The Critical Thinking Skills Cheatsheet [Infographic]." *Global Digital Citizen Foundation*. December 12, 2016. <https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/critical-thinking-skills-cheatsheet-infographic>  
"How to Spot Fake News."  
IFLA. Last modified April 4, 2017.

The end goal of such services is to cultivate a generation of conscientious news consumers who are able to navigate a post-truth society by remaining well informed about the world while also being effective and critical users of library resources.

you can create short, hands-on sessions on how to use these resources effectively. It can also be helpful to make these resources accessible from your library's home page.

Passive programming idea #4:

Reading from diverse news sources. Many people don't realize that the news they consume online as a whole is inherently biased due to the "filter bubble" effect. Encourage teens to seek news from sources outside social media by posting lists of more reliable news sources to meet information needs ranging from politics

<https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174>

"Breaking News Consumer's Handbook: Fake News Edition." *On the Media*. November 18, 2016. <http://www.wnyc.org/story/breaking-news-consumer-handbook-fake-news-edition/>  
"Evaluating Information – Applying the CRAAP Test." *Meriam Library, California State University, Chico*. Last modified, September 17, 2010. [http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval\\_websites.pdf](http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf)

"Ten Questions for Fake News Detection." *News Literacy Project*. Accessed April 1, 2017. <http://www.thenewsliteracyproject.org/sites/default/files/GO-TenQuestionsForFakeNewsFINAL.pdf>

### Online Resources for Fact-checking

#### Associated Press Fact Check

The Associated Press is a nonprofit independent news organization dedicated to covering news stories from around the world. AP Fact Check is an online resource provided by the Associated Press that offers additional resources for popular news. <https://www.apnews.com/tag/APFactCheck>

#### American Press Institute

The American Press Institute is a nonprofit educational organization that conducts research and training, and creates tools for journalists with the intent to promote reliable news media in a digital age. They provide fact-checking resources on a wide range of resources from politics to public interest. <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/training-tools/fact-checking-resource/>

#### Detector de Mentiras (Lie Detector)

Detector de Mentiras is the first U.S.-based Spanish-language fact-checking project. It is a part of Univision, a commercial media company focused on Spanish-speaking audiences. Audiences are able to suggest fact-checking topics. <http://www.univision.com/noticias/detector-de-mentiras>

#### FactCheck.org

FactCheck.org is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization that strives to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. They analyze the accuracy of what is being said in the news and media by U.S. politicians and affiliates. <http://www.factcheck.org/>



### PolitiFact.com

PolitiFact is run by the independent newspaper the *Tampa Bay Times* and is devoted to fact-checking claims that pertain to American politics. They analyze statements and rate their accuracy on a truth scale. Also associated with PolitiFact is PunditFact, a site dedicated to fact-checking pundits. <http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/>

### Snopes.com

David Mikkelson, a professional researcher and writer, created Snopes.com in 1994 to share research on urban legends. Over the last two decades, Snopes.com has grown to become one of the largest fact-checking sites on the Internet and is recognized as such by organizations like the ALA and NPR. <http://www.snopes.com/>

## Recommended Sources for Bursting the Filter Bubble!

### AllSides.com

AllSides is news provider dedicated to providing multiple angles on the same story. They do not create their own

content but provide users with multiple sources from left- and right-wing news providers. The mission of AllSides is to combat the polarization of politics in our society that is a result of information being filtered by social media websites and search results. <https://www.allsides.com/>

### Escape Your Bubble

Escape Your Bubble is a Chrome extension that replaces ads with positive political articles from the opposite political party. Upon downloading the extension, you are asked, "Who would you like to be more accepting of?" and given the option of seeing more positive Republican or Democratic information.

### New York Times

Hess, Amanda. (March 2017). "How to escape your political bubble for a clearer view." *New York Times*. Accessed April 1, 2017. [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/03/arts/the-battle-over-your-political-bubble.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/03/arts/the-battle-over-your-political-bubble.html?_r=0)

### Pew Research Center

Amy Mitchell, Jeffrey Gottfried, Jocelyn Kiley, and Katerina Eva Matsa. (Oct

2014). "Trust levels of news sources by ideological group." *Pew Research Center*. Accessed April 1, 2017. [http://www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/pj\\_14-10-21\\_mediapolarization-01/](http://www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/pj_14-10-21_mediapolarization-01/)

### Read Across the Aisle

Read Across the Aisle is an iPhone app that, when downloaded, nudges users to read articles outside their "bubble." This app encourages users to read news from multiple sources in order to become better informed. <http://www.readacrosstheaisle.com/> ■

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## Guidelines for Authors

*Young Adult Library Services* is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association. *Young Adult Library Services* is a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with young adults (ages twelve through eighteen) that

showcases current research and practice relating to teen services and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

For submission and author guidelines, please visit <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/yals/submissions/>.

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# Leading Self: Thinking about Leadership as Part of Professional Growth

Expanding your  
leadership  
through personal  
exploration



Carrie Sanders

**W**here can I make the greatest difference?  
Where can I grow the most professionally?

**T**hese two questions have become my mantra, my guideposts in my professional library career. They definitely were not the first things I thought about in 1985, fresh out of library school, swept into the new era of Boolean searching and the first peek at online databases. The Internet was not yet on our horizon. But as I moved through the years in academic and special librarianship positions and found my way back to children's librarianship (where I always thought I would be), these two questions slowly rose to the surface as I grew in my experience, my profession, and my choices as life took me from one position to another. I see now that they have helped inform my leadership journey.

The Educopia Institute and the Center for Creative Leadership, with funding support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, offers a leadership model called the Nexus LAB: Layers of Leadership Model. The seven leadership layers begin with self and broaden to consider growth within one's department, multiple departments, the organization, and one's profession. I will use the Leading Self layer as a lens to focus this leadership reflection. Each layer in this leadership model identifies a key role and specific skills, but I will focus on the four key leadership tasks in which I need to excel in order to develop my leadership according to the model (in addition to thinking about my two guiding questions, mentioned at the beginning of this essay).

## 1. Creating and Maintaining a Professional Reputation that Projects my Leadership Interests and Abilities

Assessing my leadership capabilities:

- Intentionally Planning My Career With Leadership in Mind
- Planning, Implementing, and Monitoring My Personal Leadership Development
- Writing and Implementing a Professional Development Plan
- Expanding My Strategic Career Networks
- Expanding My Leadership Responsibilities
- Identifying and Asking for Projects That Stretch My Leadership Skills/Shared Skill Set
- Developing Career Growth Strategies
- Sharing What I'm Learning About Leadership With Others

I have always been a goal setter; a self-challenger to finish things early; a doer to cross things off my to-do list; a striver toward an organization or an achievement that would help me gain new skills and personal growth. I can reflect on college days and recall that I maintained friends throughout diverse groups and ages within my social sorority. These friendships allowed me to enter chapter meetings, committee work, or a social gathering and be comfortable with whoever sat next to me. This comfort and neutrality within





the group contributed to my appointment as president of the chapter, and it continues to serve me well in the different organizations and work environments in which I have worked throughout the years.

I wanted to become a librarian when I was about ten years old, because the library was my favorite place to be, and that never wavered. My first job at the age of fifteen was as a page in the children's department of my local public library. I petitioned to start graduate school for a library degree early, starting library coursework before my senior year in college. While librarianship was always the focus, I unintentionally expanded my career networks and skill sets on my journey through different settings: academic (law school) to special (law firm and consulting firm) to public (children's department) to school (school librarians and instructional coach) to now state library agency. This wide range of work experiences helped develop proficiencies in bibliographic instruction, content expertise, technology skills, program development, instructional design, classroom management, and professional development administration in addition to the more traditional library skills. There were projects along this journey that stretched me: navigating legal online searching in the early years of Nexis and Westlaw; creating a marketing presentation for a manager at a consulting firm and learning the UNIX operating system; building a summer reading program from the ground up without automated systems; writing school media and technology curricula; learning about and leading guided information inquiry instruction; and coordinating three one-book/one-school studies that included author visits. Curiosity and new interests have guided my career path, along with the courage to tackle what those new interests meant in terms of projects or knowledge. My

path has now taken me into another new field—state librarianship—and I continue to stretch as I learn more about STEM, statewide funding and collaboration; summer reading in an automated world; and the statewide view of librarianship. I like to call all this professional learning and new growth *library yoga*. Just as there are yoga positions that serve as the foundation for more advanced moves, new experiences or projects have expanded my career networks and leadership responsibilities. While some of these were intentional as part of annual goal setting, or identified professional development, others happened spontaneously.

## 2. Developing and Sharing Professional Expertise

—*Understanding My Professional Strengths and Weaknesses*

Seven years ago, I received the opportunity to be part of the first Indiana Library Leadership Academy. After my year-long work with this group, I was able to mentor a member of the next cohort. While our specific job skills differed (she a cataloger; me a school librarian), I could share strategies and tips with her as she began work on her capstone project and pose questions for her to think about as she honed skills to challenge herself and those around her. I will provide mentorship to another group of library leadership candidates this summer. What I bring to this group will be different than my mentor experience several years ago. These mentorships offer development opportunities for me as well, as I learn from consultants in attendance and listen to the other mentors sharing their experiences and expertise, acquiring new knowledge as I meet new colleagues and have new conversations. Sharing, a major part of mentorship, is just that—exchanging ideas and knowledge to expand one's vision or thoughts.

Developing and sharing professional expertise is cyclical. My question—Where can I grow the most professionally?—takes me places where I can explore and grow. When I began my career as a school media specialist with little knowledge about guided information inquiry. Close work with experienced colleagues in this instruction, classes, and lots of collaborative projects facilitated my growth to where I led others in this instructional method, conducted professional developments, and published articles on the topic. I know my strengths, and I know what challenges me. Some challenges are long-standing (e.g., budgetary analysis, coding, mechanical expertise). These things just do not come easy for me. On the other hand, there were tasks early in my career (e.g., public speaking) that now come easily, due to time, maturity, and practice. When something causes anxiety or uncertainty, I research the topic or seek help from someone who does this task with ease to help reduce the stress. This past year brought me to a new state, a new job, and a new field of librarianship. Despite being a librarian veteran of many years, I very much felt like a newbie again, and that's okay. I ask questions . . . lots of questions! To continue growing, I push myself to attend at least one session at conferences outside my expertise, join a committee that is not in my comfort area, or read a professional article or book on an unfamiliar topic to continue library yoga . . . to stretch my brain and skills in new ways.

## 3. Learning of and Sharing New Trends that Impact my Institution and Expertise

I am still growing. As I said, I am now working in a new field of librarianship, gaining a new perspective. After many years of attending similar conferences on familiar topics, I just returned from

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a new conference that focused on summer learning. My past experience with summer reading from the 1990s became new again through this conference experience: different perspectives, different issues, different people. My role as the state's youth services coordinator also prompts new analysis of summer reading on many levels: participation tracking options, summer learning trends, early literacy emphasis, family engagement, teen involvement, disadvantaged youth, cultural challenges, partnerships with schools, and the list goes on.

something new keeps you young. As much as there is something you can teach someone else, there is someone right next to you (or a stretch away) who has something new for you. This is what I love about librarianship. As ALA says, "Libraries Transform." They do—for the customers who come through our doors, but also for us, as we continually evolve in our knowledge, skills, and ideas. I know the knowledge, skills, and ideas we need today in librarianship look very different than in 1985 or any year in between. What we need

guide my programming or ordering decisions. I have supported The Center for the Book's Letters about Literature program for several years as a school librarian promoting this literary opportunity with my students, and also as a judge of the letters and an attendee at the winners' reception. Experiences with youth in environments outside the library provide a fresh perspective that extends my abilities in working with them and leading others who work with them, as well. A new library yoga position.

**Just as there are yoga positions that serve as the foundation for more advanced moves, new experiences or projects have expanded my career networks and leadership responsibilities.**

I have experienced youth services from many angles: from a suburban community perspective (Glenview, Illinois) to an urban school perspective (Indianapolis township school) to the state level . . . but a different state! My growth seems often to include a new variable.

But one does not need to move from a different position or to a different state to gain a vantage point as a leader. This can come from looking for that new angle, that fresh perspective, the challenge that will push you beyond your skill set. Be ready to partner with someone new or with a group you know little about. These are the library yoga positions that surprise you in what you can do and how far you can stretch into a spot you have never been before. Humility is a good thing; learning

tomorrow will definitely differ from today. Trends will impact us all in different ways; watching them and thinking about what they mean in terms of personal growth and those around us is key. More library yoga.

### **4. Engaging in External/Community Activities that Sharpen and Expand my Leadership Thinking and Skills**

Being involved in my community has always helped sharpen my professional lens, especially when it comes to working with youth. Being around youth at church, through my own children's activities, or other cultural organizations, enables me to see interests, attitudes, and preferences that



### **Leadership Development is a Continuous Process**

The Nexus LAB: Layers of Leadership model includes a daily challenge for each layer. The daily challenge of the Leading Self layer is: How do I navigate my organization in order to have impact, learn, and grow both technically and as a leader?

This challenge reminds me of the two questions I have been asking myself the last few years in my career: Where can I make the greatest difference? Where can I grow the most professionally?

I made the move into school media, requiring an additional certification, at a midpoint in my career. I had so much energy and enthusiasm when I began this new field of librarianship, but I knew I was working with fewer career years than if I had followed this path in 1985. I challenge myself to make the most of every experience and to seek new ones that will push me in new ways. Due to a professional opportunity for my husband, I found myself in 2016 making significant professional and personal changes I never would have foreseen. We moved into a new home in a new state, and I began a job in a new city that took me into a new field of librarianship. I worried I might be too old for all this. There have been new challenges, new friends, new growth, but I discovered I can do this. I take each challenge



as it comes, and I know that I am still learning and growing. My move prompted lots of flexibility, but even without a move, times and things change. Thinking changes. There is always the need for library yoga!

To grow as a leader, consider your core skills where you are comfortable and know your abilities. Also consider your passions or a trend that excites you. Challenge yourself to try a small modification to one of your core skills or to explore a passion or trend. Target a different age group for a program. Reach out to a different community partner that will offer a fresh perspective. Collaborate with a colleague in a different county or district on a project. While my examples of tweaking are extreme—new city, new field of librarianship—these extremes are not necessary to expand your thinking, your skills, your perceptions. Try that one new yoga move, or hold the yoga position a few seconds longer. Each new attempt will lead to another, and you will see your confidence and knowledge increase. I try to forge relationships with everyone around me. As much as I enjoy sharing my expertise with others, I know I am learning from them at the same time. I realize when I help others, I am helping myself. Be the one who can walk into the room and sit with anyone. Work with everyone.

Where can you make the greatest difference? Where can you grow the most professionally? ■

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After serving several years as a children's librarian in Glenview, Illinois, and as a school librarian and instructional coach in Indianapolis, Indiana, CARRIE SANDERS currently lives in Baltimore, Maryland, and serves as the Youth Services Coordinator for the Division of Library Development and Services, Maryland State Department of Education.

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# Leading with the Futures Report: From Talk to Action

Connecting teen-first priorities with those of your library



Kate McNair

**T**he first time I read the Futures Report, I printed it out and sat down with a highlighter. By the time I reached the end of the report, I had highlighted almost everything and filled every page with notes, stars, and comments such as “Yes!” and “We should be doing this.” It was almost too much to handle!

A lot of what I found in the Futures Report spoke to something I already knew, but wasn’t sure how to articulate or put into action. Library services to teens was (and is) changing, and I wanted to make sure that my library was ready for the next step. But where to begin? So many aspects of the report called to me, and they all seemed urgent and important. How could we possibly accomplish it all?

### Starting with Conversation

First, I had to recognize that I couldn’t do it alone. In moments like this, I am reminded of a question asked by my colleague Cassidy Coles, “A tiny speedboat can go fast and change directions quickly, but a cruise ship carries thousands of passengers . . . do you want to get to your destination fast or bring lots of people with you?” The library is a big ship, but when we move (even if it is slowly) we bring our whole community with us. So, the first thing to do was to get this report into the hands of my colleagues and take that first step together.

We started with conversation. We had just instituted a new department meeting format that allowed for an hour of development before our monthly youth services meetings. Administration encouraged staff to spend that time using our new Lynda.com

subscription to explore new technology, meeting in small groups to discuss TED talks, and more. I was fired up by the Futures Report, and I knew what I wanted to talk about. I made a four-month plan to break the report into bite-sized pieces (no more than eight pages that could be read over a break or in a slow time on the desk).

We started with the executive summary, to give staff a quick taste of what we were going to jump into. I hoped that maybe six to eight staff members would be interested in coming to the discussion, and we had almost twenty at our first meeting! We could have spent much more than an hour talking about the executive summary, and staff was eager to jump into the full report.

We ended up meeting for the next six months (our staff’s inquisitive nature and enthusiasm for the report lead to long meetings, and much more to talk about than time to discuss).

These discussions were a great opportunity to reflect on our community and the library services we provide to teens. Like many libraries, we spend so much time doing the work, that sometimes the evaluation and reflection falls by the wayside (which the report points out is something we must change). Using this report as a guide, we were able to really think about the services and programs we offer and how our community is changing and growing. Staff was invested in these discussions, doing their own research on the demographics of our communities to bring to the discussion, diving into state education standards to share with the group, and researching what other libraries were doing (See the discussion questions in the YALSA blog companion post).





## Find the Common Ground

Like me, the staff was eager to take action, but a little overwhelmed about where to start. As individuals, we all had a part of the report that called to us, but we knew that we could have the greatest impact if we took collective action. Shortly after the report was released, our library also announced a new strategic plan with three broad goals of education, community building, and convenience. The plan's implementation was only outlined for twelve months of the four-year plan. After the initial twelve months, the goals of the plan became so broad and general they were of little help for staff looking for guidance. We recognized opportunity lay in the gray area after those initial twelve months, and looked for the common ground between the Futures Report and our new strategic plan to guide our way.

To find that common ground, we turned to every librarian's favorite analog tool, the Post-it! I took my trusty highlighter and went back to the report to identify specific goals in the call to action. Section II of the report outlines an envisioned future of library services to teens that I found particularly fruitful (the statements about the future are concrete enough to really help the reader see a path forward). I transferred these goals to Post-its. (It was over one hundred Post-its even after I condensed similar ideas down, so I highly recommend learning how to print on Post-its to avoid hand cramps!) I did the same for our strategic plan (pick a different colored Post-it!), and we were ready to begin looking for commonalities.

We wanted to finish this before summer reading kicked off, so we decided to meet three times over the course of a month and a half for ninety minutes each time (we could have easily taken two hours). Our first meeting was basically creating a giant Venn diagram. I put all the Post-its



Our library's strategic plan displayed on the left, the Futures Report on the right. Let's find the middle ground.



Staff worked to find alignment between our strategic plan and the Futures Report.

from the Futures report on one side of a room, all the Post-its from our strategic plan on the other, and we started finding ideas that meshed. We put goals that we thought went together in the middle of the room.

The process was a great way to get familiar with all the goals of our strategic plan. But it wouldn't have worked as well if we hadn't been familiar with both documents upfront. Those first months of conversation were crucial to flowing smoothly forward. Like I said, the cruise ship of the

library may move slowly, but once we start picking up momentum, we can't be stopped.

It was great to see staff moving around the room, talking to each other about the goals, discussing in pairs and small groups if two goals were similar, or if these could be considered working toward the same goal. In the end, we had matched about two-thirds of the Post-its and were left with about 50 goals that didn't align into the middle of our Venn diagram. Finding the middle ground marked the end

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Alignment found! We grouped goals into broad themes or categories. On the right, you can see goals that didn't match up. Not that they aren't important goals, but we decided to spend out time working in the areas where both documents aligned.

of our first meeting, but there was a lot of middle ground. We grouped the matched goals into general themes and prepared for our next meeting: mapping what we already do to our new goals.

### What We Already Do

This next meeting required (you guessed it!) more Post-its. We came together again with our themes and goals laid out. We then brainstormed everything we already did to meet those goals: homework help, test prep databases, young adult advisory councils, school partnerships, volunteer programs, and so on. The list was long and rewarding to make (sometimes you just don't take the time to realize everything you do).

We then started mapping those programs, services, and activities to the themes and goals. When we were done, we had a large (colorful) map of priorities from the Futures Report and our strategic plan and the work that we were doing to accomplish those goals. This visual representation helped us to see where we had gaps (which goals we were not working

on) and what we were doing that didn't serve any of our goals (things we could cut or adapt).

### What's Next?

Finally, more than a year after reading the report for the first time, and eight months after starting discussions with staff, we were ready to plan our first collective steps toward putting the Futures Report into action. The cruise ship was turning slowly, and everyone was on board and working together.

We had read the report and internalized it. We had found the common ground between the report and our strategic plan. And we had identified the gaps between where we were and where we wanted to be. Now it was time to plot the course to our destination. We looked at the big map of the aligned goals and what we were doing, and we started talking about priorities. What were the greatest needs that we should meet? How much could we accomplish? Were seven goals too many? Three too few?

Through discussion, we agreed on four collective goals we wanted to work toward.

- 1. Academic achievement and skill building through volunteering:** We knew that we wanted to focus on academic achievement. By mapping out what we already did, we realized we had lots of programs that helped our teens with traditional classroom work (research help, homework help tutors, online test prep, etc.). Many of our schools are moving to project-based learning and require community service credits to graduate. If we could expand the capacity and quality of our volunteer program, we could provide a needed service to teens in our community. And if we could incorporate more college and career ready skills into the program we would help prepare them for success after high school. We identified one of our branches as having a rock-star volunteer program and invested one year of development, measurement and assessment to that program (wrapping up this summer). Based on our findings, this Fall we will begin offering training for all staff on how to build successful volunteer programs at their branches.
- 2. Digital literacy:** As a major part of our strategic plan, we wanted to expand what we were already doing in our makerspaces and reference desks to teach teens digital literacy. We recognized that we serve a diverse community (suburban to rural) and that broadband Internet is not available to everyone. We are working to expand our WiFi networks and to explore partnerships that help bring Internet connectivity to our teens after library hours. We also wanted to expand our teens' ability to create content digitally. This summer we will host our first mobile coding classes (traveling to four locations with the help of a kit of laptops). If this is successful, we hope to take more content creation tools on the road.



### 3. **Building community partners:**

The staff is the most valuable asset of any library. We wanted to develop a greater capacity in ourselves to find and build partnerships within the community. This fall we plan to map out our collective community connections and share our skills and tools to foster relationships.

### 4. **Improving our spaces for teens:**

Taking a cue from the Futures Report, we want teens to use the *whole* library, not just a corner reserved for them. We took that to heart and have revamped our teen services training for staff to target all staff members (previously it has been attended by mostly youth services staff). The training now focuses more on learning and engagement than on just readers' advisory. This spring we began studying teen spaces in buildings that are going to be renovated soon, taking note of how teens are using the spaces so that those observations can inform our plans for the future.

## **Moving Forward**

Staff has enthusiastically embraced these four goals and is working toward our envisioned future. We aren't to our destination yet, but the ship has turned, and we are moving in the right direction. By the end of 2017 (more than two years since we started this process), we will have taken the first steps in all four of our goal areas. By 2018 we will be looking toward a new strategic plan, and I hope that this process will help us inform that plan and guide how we move forward from here. Doing this work helped us get staff on the same page, moving in the same direction, and engaged with both our strategic plan and the Futures Report.

## **Donning the Captain's Hat**

Leading the discussions, alignment, and planning activities taught me a lot about myself, my library, and my leadership style. My leadership style can probably

be best categorized as "leading by example." I like to do things, but not really explain how or why I do them. This works great when I am working alone, in my own speedboat, but isn't conducive to the cruise ship environment. I could have done all this alignment by myself, in a day, and passed down my decree to everyone and moved forward. But by fighting my nature to jump into the speedboat and hope that others followed, I had the pleasure of working with some of the most inquisitive and passionate librarians you could ask for.

“

In moments like this, I am reminded of a question asked by my colleague Cassidy Coles, "A tiny speedboat can go fast and change directions quickly, but a cruise ship carries thousands of passengers . . . do you want to get to your destination fast or bring lots of people with you?"

By bringing together staff from different branches and experiences, we developed a shared language and shared goals. As we move forward, we can now have our own autonomy, our own speedboats, and set out in our own directions. But when we find success, we know how to come back to the group and bring everyone forward with us.

## **Charter Your Own Cruise Ship**

The Futures Report is inspiring! The call to action is loud and clear and drives readers to make a change, which is magnified when we all step

together, at a national, regional, local, and building level. I know that the changes we are making at the Johnson County Library wouldn't be as impactful if we hadn't collaborated on priorities and solutions. I encourage you to try something similar to get your staff all on the same page, ready to step together. If you do, here are three lessons I learned:

- *Don't be afraid of going slow.* If you are like me, then you want to let loose the throttle of your speedboat like you are Jason Statham in

the final chase scene of an action movie. But remember, that tiny boat carries only you. The cruise ship moves much slower, but carries more people. Get comfortable with going slow, and then going slower, because to serve the most teens, we need to bring everyone on the journey.

- *Make space for staff to discuss.* We could never have jumped straight into alignment. Staff needed to get familiar and comfortable with the Futures Report. Although I had read the report several times, I found new joy in discussing it with others, and hearing their insights. It also helped

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me understand what they are passionate about, and how we can tap into that interest in the future.

- *Library staff are hungry for direction.* I knew that I liked reading the Futures Report, but I did not anticipate how voracious our staff was for the report. I was pleased to find staff reading ahead of the pages we were about to discuss because they just couldn't put it down. We constantly ran over time on discussion because there was so much to talk about. We even had staff who didn't traditionally work with teens join the discussion because they knew it was time for a change. What I

realized is that, in the absence of a strategic plan with clear goals past the first twelve months, staff was hungry for a direction, a goal-post, an oasis in the distance. They wanted something concrete to collectively work toward.

You can align the Futures Report with any other guiding document.

- Your personal performance plan or yearly goals
- Your library or school district's strategic plan
- Your state library's five-year plan (available on the IMLS website: [www.imls.gov/grants/grants-state/five-year-plans](http://www.imls.gov/grants/grants-state/five-year-plans))

Remember, once you get that cruise ship turning, you will be surprised by what you can accomplish and who will be beside you as you make the journey. ■

Kate McNair is the Teen Services Coordinating Librarian for the Johnson County Library where she provides outreach programs and services to young adults. McNair is a YALSA Board member. Her current personal leadership goals include managing her own initiative and building mentorship skills in herself and others.



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# Educational Leadership in Your Library: Lighting the Fire of Learning

Exploring the connection between learning and leadership



Dru Tomlin

Whenever I think about the role of an educational leader, I always return to the words of poets. Most often, I think about William Butler Yeats, who remarked that “Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.” A leadership vision begins when one personally defines education, and Yeats’ eloquent statement has always resonated within me as I have attempted to do that. Educational leadership, therefore, is more than finding better ways to deposit knowledge and information into empty vessels. Rather, an educational leader (at a school, library, home, etc.) should be driven to help others rekindle their fire—that desire to learn—and to support them in that cognitive combustion. In addition, an educational leader should also trumpet the message that learning does not have a finish line. Instead, we learn continually so we can cultivate the boundless garden of our own possibility.

Therefore, the leader of an organized structure of learning (whether a school or a library) should be conscious of the role of that place. A school, for instance, should do more than provide the physical and structural support for each student’s didactic pursuit. It should offer an intellectually safe place to learn, a space that is free from harmful elements that detract from the pursuit. Similarly, a library should also inspire, nurture, and challenge its stakeholders and its own staff by building upon each person’s innate talents and helping forge new talents and interests for the future. It should be a welcoming place, where self-expression and inquiry are valued and the diversity that naturally blossoms in such an environment is nurtured.

Finally, a place of learning should be a rewarding space; each person should feel valued, and his or her voice and pursuit should be celebrated. Leaders should, therefore, be more than building “holders” who are content to maintain the status quo; they should be building “movers” who believe in the possibilities of their environment and of the people served there.

## Leading Through Learning

In order to encourage and inspire others, the leader of any educational space must first be an enthusiastic role model engaged in her or his own continual pursuit for learning. She or he must see herself or himself as a constant student—always passionately searching and questioning. When a leader shows passion for her or his own learning, it inspires others to do the same. On the other hand, if a leader looks upon her or his own role as a task and a function, then others will define their lives that way as well. They may never internalize the pursuit for learning; rather, it will be a job to finish and a task to check off. Therefore, an educational leader must demonstrate through her or his actions and words that learning is their primary and very personal responsibility. And one key way that a leader can show her or his commitment to learning: use the two objects on either side of their head. In other words, it all begins quite simply with the ears—and the act of listening with compassion, understanding, and empathy. An educational leader understands that a place of learning grows when all of the voices within that space are heard, and it is her or his main job to listen and learn from those voices.

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### Leading Through Change

In addition to being the chief fire starter, learner, and listener, an educational leader is also the key changing force in an organization. She or he has a vision of what can be and possesses the dedication to make that vision a reality. However, the leader should also realize the importance of everything around her or him: people, physical surroundings, and histories. This realization is vital as we examine how schools and libraries are built, shaped, and grown on the bright road forward.

The educational leader is nothing without other people, who she

leader creates “change agents” and builds future leadership for the organization. Finally, the leader always keeps in mind the people served by the vision. If it is a school, the main stakeholders are the students and their families; if it is a public library, the main stakeholders are the community. The leader always keeps them in mind as every part of the vision is determined.

### Understanding the Variables

A leader must also acknowledge the different variables that are inherent

### Leading to the Future by Understanding the Past

Finally, a leader must pay attention not only to the future, but also to the past. By acknowledging the history of an organization, the leader shows everyone involved that she or he acknowledges and values it. The leader cherishes past successes and examines past flaws to create future possibilities. If the leader ignores the history of an organization, then she or he is approaching his or her situation with a brand of arrogance that can be very harmful. It can injure the stakeholders’ perceptions of changes yet to be made and, consequently, the possibility that any changes can be made.

In many ways, being a leader and having leadership means that one is the catalyst that ignites change, the earnest listener that inspires empathy, and the collaborative architect that builds hope. It also means that a leader sees possibilities—like holding a prism up to a bright light. When held properly, one can see each facet and color of the light. By examining each part of the light, one can appreciate and use the light itself more completely. Therefore, a leader looks at the organization as a whole and each of its parts separately—ignoring nothing—to focus its brightness in new directions. ■

**Rather, an educational leader (at a school, library, home, etc.) should be driven to help others rekindle their fire—that desire to learn—and to support them in that cognitive combustion.**

or he must transform into “change agents.” She or he knows that no vision can come to fruition without the “buy in” of the people who must implement it on a daily basis. Thus, the leader is cognizant of the people he or she serves—what are their aims, their individual and collective personalities, their predilections, their flaws? All of these questions must be addressed by the leader before his or her vision begins to take shape. The leader also realizes who in the organization will easily align with them and who will need additional coaxing, and the leader knows how to delegate his or her authority to others so that the vision can take shape. By giving others responsibility for the success of the vision, the

in the physical surroundings of an organization. How will the vision be implemented in the physical space of the school, for instance? What needs to be changed or amended to fit the environment? Another variable in the physical environment is the surrounding community. The leader understands that she or he cannot ignore the community’s culture and their desires when putting his or her vision in place. They are as much a part of the physical surrounding as the organization itself. They are essentially the unseen support for everything that goes on in the organization; if they do not support what is happening in the organization, then they will no longer support it.

DR. DRU TOMLIN, Director of Middle Level Services for the Association for Middle Level Education, is an eager participant in the craft of pedagogy and the art of educational leadership, who has also been an earnest high school and middle school teacher, middle school and elementary school administrator, and professional development consultant for more than twenty years.



# Teen Leadership Development Through a Teen Gaming Program

Learn how to  
create impactful  
leadership  
opportunities for  
your teens



**Ally Dowds, Catherine Halpin, and Jess Snow,  
with contributions from Ananda Hines, Khalid  
Ibrahim, Jorge Ortiz, and Khalid Mohammed**

**T**o create the space, now called Teen Central, that reflects the interests and needs of teens in the community, we focused on HOMAGO, an acronym for hanging out (lots of seating options, laptops for usage), messing around (a gaming lounge with three gaming systems for teens to access and consume games/media, programs to participate in, and to mess around with), and geeking out (the Lab, a digital makerspace for teens to create, learn, and collaborate). Teen Central is the recently renovated (February 2015) state-of-the-art, designated teen space in Central Library of the Boston Public Library. One of the priority focus areas of the space is offering programs that have direct teen input. Two examples of such programs are the Teen Tech Mentor program and the Teen Gaming Specialist program.

## **Creating Positions to Make the Space Truly Teens First**

Teen Central boasts a state-of-the-art video gaming space, called the Media Lounge, with three different gaming platforms: Wii U, Xbox, and PlayStation 4. The space is equipped with two 80" monitors with gaming platforms on each one along with an in-house collection of forty-plus video games that have been curated by teens. As one may guess, this space has no problem selling itself and is often one of the most heavily used spaces in Teen Central. But the space needed more teen input, involvement, and a core to support several focus areas of the larger vision of Teen Central, programs such as career readiness and programming based on input from teens and con-

nected learning.

The programs supported several focus areas of the vision of Teen Central, especially programs that support and introduce teens to career readiness and programming based on the input from teens and connected learning. We have included the job descriptions and curriculum so that you can easily replicate it in your own library.

The Teen Gaming Specialist program was developed out of direct teen input to have fulfilling and interesting work experience for teens. The program hires and trains two teens for the program and utilizes the Boston Public School calendar to help with planning and coordinating.

## **Focusing on Leadership Development**

Two Teen Technology Mentors are hired to work in our Media Lab during the school year for six hours each week. The Lab has five Macs and five PCs that are loaded with creative software providing teens with access to professional tools in an informal environment where they can freely learn, create, and share their projects. Typical workshops held in the space range from graphic design, video and music production, to 3D modeling and computer coding.

## **Do the Programs Require a Budget?**

Both the Teen Gaming Specialist and Teen Tech Mentor program are paid opportunities for teens to dig deeper into the technology in Teen Central and develop and implement programs for other teens in the space. The cost for each program is: an hourly wage of

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### Teen Gaming Specialist Job Description

The Teen Gaming Specialist works with the Teen Central staff in developing and coleading eight programs across the academic year in the Media Lounge. As part of the specialists' role, they write a column of up to six posts for the Boston Public Library teen blog on video game reviews, updates on teen programs pertaining to gaming, and reflections on programs they have

designed and implemented. In addition, the Teen Gaming Specialists participate in a total of six job-readiness programs (including resume building, interview skills, and professional panels), and the teens finish the Teen Gaming Specialist program with a portfolio in Prezi of the programs they have designed and the skills they have gained, as well as a professional resume.

### Teen Tech Mentor Job Description

The Teen Central Technology Librarians work with the Mentors to train them in the different software programs and assist them in developing workshops they will facilitate for their peers. The Lab is a space dedicated to the creation of digital media and STEM programming within Teen Central. The Teen Tech Mentors visit other local technology centers available to youth to connect them to additional resources accessible to teens in Boston. Mentors are given

the opportunity to take field trips to offices of local companies to expose them to different work environments related to education and technology. Teen Tech Mentors also participate in several job-readiness programs, such as resume building, interview skills, and other professional panels. At the end of the Teen Tech program, Mentors will have a portfolio of the workshops they have codeveloped and facilitated, highlighting the skills they have gained, as well as an updated resume.

\$11 for four hours a week for thirty-two weeks during the school year, which has a yearly cost of \$1,408 (for two mentors \$2,816). A program of this specificity and focus would be of interest to many teens, and while the pay is a draw, there will be teens who are interested in gaining these skills and participating in such an engaging program on an unpaid basis as well. These programs can be desirable for teens who may need or want to earn community service hours (more than fifty hours would be a good start),

volunteer hours, or an internship program.

### From the Teen Gaming Specialists and Teen Tech Mentors

Jorge and Ananda are the Teen Gaming Specialists, and while one may think being a gaming specialist is no work and all fun, both of them have spent many hours organizing gaming tournaments, blogging about the latest trends and game releases, as well as thoughtfully building Teen Central's



Ananda and Jorge, Teen Gaming Specialists

video game collection based on industry reviews, teen patron requests, and collection gaps.

Khalid M and Khalid I are this year's Teen Tech Mentors and both have a shared interest in technology, although their personal interests fall on either end of the software spectrum. Khalid M is definitely more technical and immersed in ways computer science and coding can be adapted, manipulated, and designed, while Khalid I enjoys exploring graphic and digital design through Illustrator and Photoshop. Together, their latest achievement has been assisting preteen patrons with the creation of their ninety-second Caldecott Book trailer for the children's book, *Finding Winnie*.

These opportunities support teens' deep exploration of their interests and passions in the gaming and technology fields as well as encourage the development of leadership, professional, and industry skills. As this year's positions near their end, the TGS and TTM reflected on the program, the projects they have crafted, and the overall experience working for the Boston Public Library.





## Teen Tech Mentors: Khalid M

### What does the Teen Tech Mentor program mean to you?

I really don't think I can sum this up in a sentence or two. The program is a source of experience, knowledge, learning, and developing technology programs and leadership. It also provides access to possible career pathways that I may not have known about. The Teen Tech Mentor program is an after-school employment opportunity for teens to learn and utilize software programs, and to teach them to their peers. So far, I have been able to learn, use, and teach Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, GarageBand and Logic Pro, Ableton, 123D and Tinkercad, Comic Life, Unity, and probably others that I can't remember. Moreover, I have been able to use circuitry and minicomputers like littleBits and Arduino. So, yeah, the Teen Tech Mentor program means a lot to me, from gaining experience and leadership, to knowledge of various applications and mediums.

### What programs have you created/developed/implemented? How did you gather input from teens?

My coworker, Khalid, and I have created one program from scratch and have co-led and aided in many others. We had pioneered a program on circuitry, which was aimed at teaching tweens (youth between the ages of eight and twelve) what circuits are and how to make a rudimentary one, such as a light or sound maker. The tween would attach the power bit to the modulation bit and so on.

On the day of our program, we had run short of materials. We had our littleBits, our example, and instructors. What we had run short of was tweens, to the point where we had one. The student was named Owen, and he was nine years old and extremely technology-savvy. He showed us a website

where he had placed games he created using Scratch. Owen was enthusiastic about the project, stating that it would be easy to do. He told us that circuits are located in all electronics, and serve to give them structure and power supply. He had flown through the introduction of the bits, and created the wireless buzzer within thirty minutes.

Since my partner and I had no further projects to assign, we had Owen create to his delectation. He built a fan and wheel contraption where he could control which part would run and when. In the end, we felt that we had led a great program. Although we were hit with the hindrance of one tween, we had him learn about

## Teen Gaming Specialist Curriculum

The Teen Gaming Specialists (TGS) have a specific focus from week to week. For example, for the eight months the TGS program runs there are a total of eight programs the Specialists will design and implement. As part of the process, they have time built into their schedule to gather direct input from teens, to design flyers, practice the programs, reflect on the programs, and write blog posts on the program. In addition to the specific number of workshops and blog posts, the

program also focuses on exposing the Teen Specialists to career readiness programs. Programs include panels with professionals from a variety of careers such as vet technicians, chefs, IT staff, and so on. The idea is to expose them to new potential career paths, give them the opportunity to learn about different careers directly from professionals, and have a chance to ask questions. The career readiness programs also include interview skills workshops, a resume-building program, and more.

## Teen Tech Mentors Curriculum

In September and October, the Youth Technology Coordinator and Youth Technology Librarian trained the Mentors in using the Lab's software, equipment, and implementing technology programs. Also in October, field trips were arranged to visit local tech companies and other technology centers in the community. This provided a context for other technology resources available to teens in Boston, and also connected them to real-world examples of how technology is being applied in Boston workplaces. In

November and December, Teen Tech Mentors assisted the Technology Librarians in presenting workshops in the Lab. During January through May, they played a more direct role in the Lab with each mentor delivering four programs (for a total of eight) for their peers. The desired outcome is that the Teen Tech Mentors will have developed skills in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, as well as information, media, leadership, and technology skills.

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Khalid and Khalid, Teen Tech Mentors

circuitry and apply that knowledge to building custom circuits.

At the end of the program, we asked Owen what he had learned, as well as what he thought of the program as a whole. We plan to use his input when thinking about how to tackle our next program.

### **What future programs are you going to create?**

In the near future, Khalid and I will be running self-made programs revolving around Adobe Photoshop, 3D modeling through 123D, and quite possibly an Ableton or GarageBand music program.

### **What skills do you feel you've gained from the Teen Tech Mentor program that you didn't have before?**

I have gained a plethora of skills from the Teen Tech Mentor program. I have learned how to use music creation

software like Ableton or GarageBand or visual media creation such as Photoshop or Illustrator. There was the 3D modeling with Tinkercad, the circuit creation with Arduino, as well as learning how to make video games using Unity. In all honesty, the amount of lessons and techniques I have learned is innumerable. Aside from the technical standpoint of technologies and how to use them, there is the art of leadership—specifically in a self-made program. Field trips—going to places such as Lego, Wentworth Institute of Technology, South End Technology Center, and Facebook—have combined education with the tech industry, giving us exposure to these places of work. All in all, the Teen Tech Mentor program is a myriad of experience and skill, with what I have learned ranging from creating games and art to leadership and program creation.

## **Teen Tech Mentors: Khalid I**

### **What does the Teen Tech Mentor program mean to you?**

Salutations! My name is Khalid. The Teen Tech mentor program was a gateway to many different opportunities and people for me. I was able to find new ways to complete school projects and creative ways to interpret these projects via computer technologies. I also had the opportunity to teach others what I have learned.

### **What programs have you created/developed/implemented? How did you go about doing this? Did you gather input from teens?**

We have developed programs based on teaching others creative software such as 123D, Tinkercad, Comic Life, Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. Among these softwares, we have developed programs to teach eight to twelve year olds how to use the invention kit, littleBits, and the CAD design tool, Tinkercad. Throughout our time as Teen Tech Mentors we made flyers for upcoming programs in an effort to gauge excitement among tweens as well as develop new suggestions for program ideas. We also were able to establish how a hands-on program should look throughout our time as Teen Tech Mentors. At first, it was very nerve-racking to begin running our own program by ourselves, but after a while, we got the hang of it as we deepened our understanding of the many different programs we interacted with. Also, to see how technology works on a larger scale, we visited many different venues such as Facebook, Wentworth Institute of Technology, the Lego location in Boston, along with the South End Technology Center, and the Computer Clubhouse in Boston. These places showed us how basic programs that we are learning can transfer into the real world and how they are used in everyday, large corporations.



Jorge and Ananda, Teen Gaming Specialists

### **What was your program you created and why?**

On the day of our first program, we made a hands-on presentation for littleBits. We were making wireless buzzers with a tween named Owen. Owen was very enthusiastic in completing and mastering the order of circuitry and in finding new ways to work with littleBits. He found new ways to manipulate the kits and combined many different ideas with his already established knowledge of circuitry. Not only did he put together and get the wireless buzzer to work, but he also began experimenting with the LED lights and how to make the sound play along with making certain lights flash. It was a great success!

### **What future programs are you going to create?**

In the future, Khalid and I hope to be able to complete a program on Photoshop and Illustrator, having tweens pick their favorite cartoon characters and be able to combine and print them with this software. Hopefully, we will be able to implement many more programs and new

ideas into what we do every day and teach them to others—all thanks to the Teen Tech Mentor program at Copley Library.

### **What skills do you feel you've gained from the TTM program that you didn't have before?**

From our Teen Tech program, my coworker and I have acquired many different skills that can be put to use in many different environments such as school, at home, or even simple, recreational use of technology. We are now able to edit, scan, and add to any photo taken on any device through Photoshop. With Illustrator we can make our own logos and send our designs out into the world. With Tinkercad, we can

welcomed. I have two younger brothers who have influenced my gaming career to its extreme, and so anything that I can do to break stereotypes against girls and video gaming, I am willing to do. Video gaming is my passion and source of respite, therefore this program was a huge opportunity.

### **What programs have you created/developed/implemented? How did you go about doing this? Did you gather input from teens?**

During our time as Teen Gaming Specialists, I hosted a program based on gaming skills, tips, and techniques for the games we have here in Teen Central. Jorge has created a program based on making video game music backgrounds with GarageBand.

“

I really don't think I can sum this up in a sentence or two. The program is a source of experience, knowledge, learning, and developing technology programs and leadership.

mold designs from paper or things we see on the Internet and craft them into a tangible end result by using 3D design tools.

### **Teen Gaming Specialist: Ananda**

#### **What does the teen gaming specialist program mean to you?**

Well, hello there! My name is Ananda. I've learned countless things and met many people that I wouldn't have experienced without this program. Every Monday and Tuesday, I go to school knowing that I will come to a space where I feel I belong and am

Together we've hosted many gaming tournaments.

### **What was the program you created and why?**

I thought up a program for skills, tips, and techniques for common video game goofs. I thought I could enlighten my fellow gamers with a few things to think about the next time they play general games. I found in my observations of those who played games in the gaming room that some had trouble when they faced certain competitors. It almost instantly gave me the idea to help them out. Therefore, I created a program to open the



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eyes of gamers and introduce a new way of gaming.

### **What skills do you feel you've gained from the TGS program that you didn't have before?**

I guess I'm still trying to strengthen my courage to get over my slight phobia of conversations with others and trying to get them interested in the programs we create. Ha-ha! I guess prior knowledge would be good. Anyhow, within my job I am forced to interact with others who are older than I am, but I have learned that they also share the same interests as me, and allow that to be an opportunity for me to show them that: as a girl I know that what I am preaching is gospel, that I know my stuff, and that I belong here in Teen Central. I get to tell people who understand me how much work and dedication I put into my gaming. I am more confident than I thought I was before this program.

### **Teen Gaming Specialist: Jorge**

#### **What does the teen gaming specialist program mean to you?**

Greetings! My name is Jorge. The Teen Gaming Specialist program was a way of finding an opportunity to interact with others who share a passion for video gaming. It all started when a librarian, Catherine, came to my school to tell us about the library. I actually needed money; however, my passion for gaming seeped in and urged me to fill out the application, which began my journey. I also found connection to bigger opportunities.

#### **What programs have you created/developed/implemented? How Did you go about doing this? Did you gather input from teens?**

In order to do so, we've made several attempts to gather information

from teens within the gaming space. More times than expected, many teens have suggested gaming tournaments. Though hosting gaming tournaments is easy as well as enjoyable, we are required to have other programs, which every now and then become hard and stressful to brainstorm what the teens might like. Many times teens are really busy with homework, which is understandable, and don't respond enough to definitively point to ideas for a program. Before each of the programs we create, we rehearse them a few times before the real deal, which helped a bunch.

#### **What was the program you created and why?**

I created a program for video game music backgrounds/soundtracks with GarageBand. I decided to host said program because it mixed my two passions of music and gaming together. It was an opportunity for both me and my future career. It was also a way for others to hear my ideas and for them to feel comfortable and share theirs with me.

#### **What skills do you feel you've gained from the TGS program that you didn't have before?**

I also felt uncomfortable with situations in which I have to walk around and communicate with people that I don't know from a can of paint. But, when it's your job, you do it. In the process, this experience made me feel more comfortable doing so. I'm not as hesitant to talk to others. I am more eager to play video games with the other teens in the space, and host events and programs they are interested in. Of course there are moments when my coworker and I have to reprimand them when things get out of control (VERY rarely).

### **Lessons Learned**

Overall, both of the programs are successful in that they provide

leadership opportunities for teens, train and teach 21st-century skills and provide teens with support to develop and implement quality programs. These teen-driven programs can be replicated in your library and be successful too.

Both of these programs provide teens with exposure to industry-based professionals and access to 21st-century skills that supplement their curriculum-based learning from school. This toolbox of professional contacts, a diversified knowledge of technology-based software, and overall leadership experience provide the Teen Tech Mentors and Teen Gaming Specialists with the ability to be dynamic participants in whatever path they choose in regards to furthering their academics or professional endeavors. ■

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## PLUS

# The YALSA Update

## Speak up for Teens and Libraries!

Library funding is in jeopardy like never before. The White House's budget for the coming year proposes the elimination of all federal funds for libraries, as well as the federal agency that supports the nation's libraries, the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Without federal funds and support, our nation's libraries will not have the resources they need to help teens prepare for college, careers and life. But you can help! We're calling on all members to participate 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.

District Days take place between July 29 and Sept. 4, 2017, so invite your members of Congress to come to one of your summer learning or back to school events, or bring some teens to chat with them in their local office! Research shows that in-person conversations with elected officials are the most effective way of educating them about key issues. Everything you need to engage with your members of Congress can be found on YALSA's wiki at [http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/District\\_Days](http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/District_Days)

## Calling all Readers!

YALSA's book and media Award Committees will get appointed in October, and the volunteer form is open now! These groups will start work February 1st. All terms of appointment are for one year.

- Alex Award
- Award Committees' Oversight Committee
- Morris Award
- Odyssey Award
- Schneider Family Book Award (this is an ALA Committee that YALSA appoints one member to)

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, 2018. Before filling out a volunteer form, please review the resources and information on our website at [www.ala.org/yalsa/getinvolved/](http://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 Crystle Martin, YALSA President-Elect, at [crystle.martin@gmail.com](mailto:crystle.martin@gmail.com)

In the fall, The Hub (<http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/>) will also be recruiting YALSA members for its Selected List Teams who will work virtually from Jan. 1, 2018 through Dec. 31, 2018 to compile these lists: Amazing Audiobooks, Best Fiction, Great Graphic Novels, and Quick Picks. For more information, email the member manager of The Hub at [yalsahub@gmail.com](mailto:yalsahub@gmail.com)

## "Unleash Your Story" for Teen Read Week™ 2017

Teen Read Week 2017 will be celebrated October 8-14 with the theme, "Unleash Your Story". If you haven't already, visit and join the free Teen Read Week site at [www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread) for great planning and publicity resources! You can also purchase official Teen Read Week products such as posters, bookmarks, and more at [www.alastore.ala.org/trw](http://www.alastore.ala.org/trw).

## Teens' Top Ten Voting Starts August 15

Teens' Top Ten voting starts August 15 and ends October 14 (the last day of

Teen Read Week™). Teens aged 12-18 are eligible to vote for their favorite titles from the list of 26 nominees. A list of the nominees can be found at [www.ala.org/teenstopten](http://www.ala.org/teenstopten). Encourage the teens in your community to read as many nominees as they can so they're ready for the vote!

The "top ten" titles with the most votes will become the official 2017 Teens' Top Ten titles and will be announced online the week after Teen Read Week.

## Rural, Small, and Tribal Libraries Invited to Apply for College and Career Readiness Project

Rural, small, and tribal libraries can apply now through September 1, 2017 for the second cohort of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and Association of Rural and Small Libraries' (ARSL), "Future Ready with the Library: Connecting with Communities for College & Career Readiness Services" project at <https://tinyurl.com/YALSAFutureReady2>.

The project, now in its second year of implementation, is made possible through funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and aims to create a customized learning program for and with library staff at rural, small, and tribal libraries 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.

For the second cohort, YALSA and ARSL will identify 30 successful applicants who will participate in a year-long experience that kicks off with a two-day orientation in Denver, CO, February 8-9, 2018. Cohort members will receive funding to travel to Denver and additional funds for their library to use to hire temporary staff to cover cohort members' absence.

For the remainder of 2018, cohort members will participate in online courses and discussions with the ultimate goal of

## PLUS

planning, implementing and evaluating a college and career readiness (CCR) service for the middle schoolers in their community. As part of the project, cohort members will 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. Beyond the effort to provide support, resources and training directly to library staff, this project will also create an online community of practice as well as free, customizable resources for use by all libraries.

To be eligible to participate, library staff must work at a library that satisfies at least one of the following requirements:

- has a service area of 15,000 or less;
- is more than 25 miles from an 'urbanized area' (as defined by the US Census); or
- is established by an Indian nation or a public library on tribal lands

Apply now through September 1, 2017 at <https://tinyurl.com/YALSAFutureReady2>.

To learn more and to sign up for updates, including an announcement of when the next round application opens in 2019, visit [www.ala.org/yalsa/future-ready-library](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/future-ready-library).

### **YALSA Receives IMLS Grant for National Forum on Transforming Teen Services Through CE Project**

YALSA, in partnership with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) was awarded a grant in the amount of \$99,784 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The grant funds will be used to host a National Forum on Transforming Teen Services Through Continuing Education, which will address the importance of prioritizing the role of continuing education in teen services and the need for State Library Agency (SLA) staff to gain skills that will help them support and train public library staff in teen services.

As part of the national forum project, a one-and-a-half-day summit will be held November in Louisville where the project's advisory board, SLA youth services staff, and other invitees will engage in in-depth discussions about:

- the skills and strategies needed by SLA youth staff to provide quality CE and support to library staff in the area of teen services
- identifying the critical content areas in teen services that require public library staff to gain new skills and knowledge
- ways to leverage existing continuing education resources and organizational relationships to support the development of SLA youth services staff;
- and more.

Learn more about the National Forum at <https://tinyurl.com/YALSACEProject>. To receive updates on the project, such as when the virtual discussions will be held and to receive a copy of the final report, please complete the form at <https://tinyurl.com/YALSACEProjectUpdates>.

### **Two New YALSA Projects for 2018**

Thanks to grants provided from ALA, YALSA will implement two new projects in 2018—one about building cultural competence, and the other on making diverse resources more easily accessible.

#### **Cultural Competence for Library Staff & Young Patrons**

YALSA, together with ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS), will hold a free, full day pre-conference at the 2018 Annual Conference. The goal of this effort is to help ensure more library staff are equipped with the necessary skills to effectively create and implement programming that supports and promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion. After the pre-conference YALSA and ODLOS will repurpose the content into a webinar series and toolkit, which will be made freely available to all ALA and YALSA members.

### **Raising Awareness of ALA's Diverse Resources**

YALSA will expand its Teen Book Finder app and database to include recommended YA titles from ALA's Affiliates and Round Tables, including the Coretta Scott King Award, Schneider Family Book Award, the Amelia Bloomer list, Rainbow list, AILA's biennial book award, APALA's recommended reading, and more, so that members and library staff would have a fully searchable, one-stop shop for finding recommended YA materials that are inclusive and span a wide spectrum of authors, perspectives, and topics.

## **2017 YALSA Election Results**

#### **President-Elect**

Crystle Martin

#### **Fiscal Officer**

Clara Bohrer

#### **Board Member-at-Large (3 yr. term)**

Jane Gov

Kathy Ishizuka

Jessica Snow

#### **Board Member-at-Large (2 yr. term)**

Franklin Escobedo

#### **2019 Edwards Award Committee**

Michael Cart

Rebecca Denham

Susan Smallsreed

#### **2019 Nonfiction Award Committee**

Heather Dickerson

Christina Dorr

Renee Lyons

Sara Ortiz

#### **2019 Printz Award Committee**

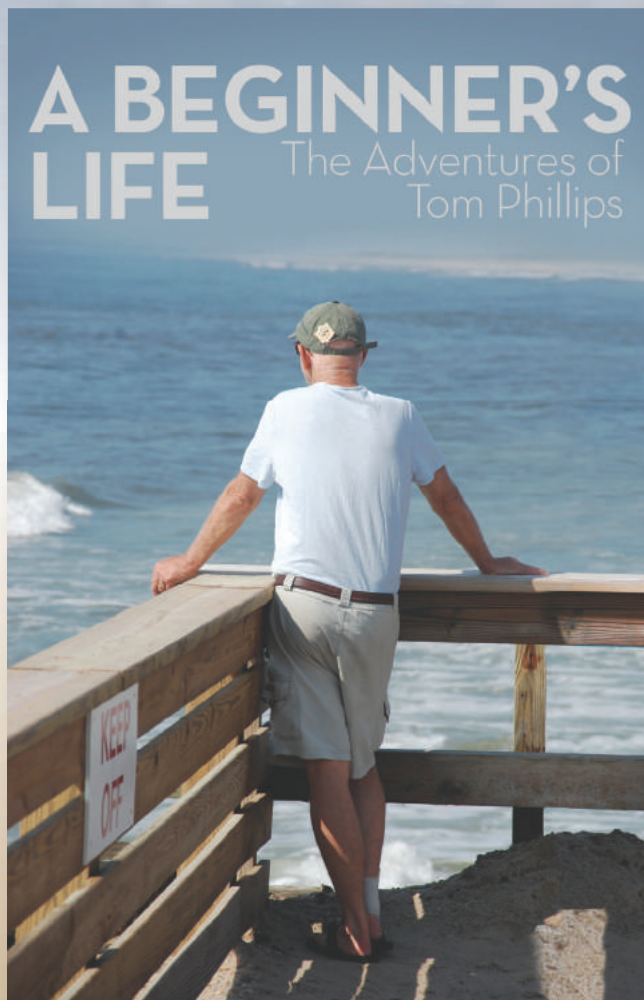
Rachel Fryd

Jennifer Thompson

Anna Tschetter

Paula Willey ■

# A Grownup Book for Young Readers



"Entertaining, thoughtful...insight on living an authentic life."

*Kirkus, featured review*

"A must-read for soul-searching high school seniors. Perfect for book clubs seeking a substantive, accessible non-fiction work."

*Shoshannah Turgel, Librarian  
Grandview High School, Aurora, CO*

"Phillips' stories provide my students with powerful subjects for self-examination. A marvelous book, deceptively simple yet profound."

*Prof. Tom Grant, PhD. Abraham Baldwin  
Agricultural College, Tifton, GA*

"A fun read, and a voice that needs to be heard in our schools."

*Suzanne Broffman, Social Studies Chair  
James Caldwell HS, NJ*

 Find us on Facebook at "A Beginner's Life"



# Summer ADVENTURES Start Here!

