

young adult library services



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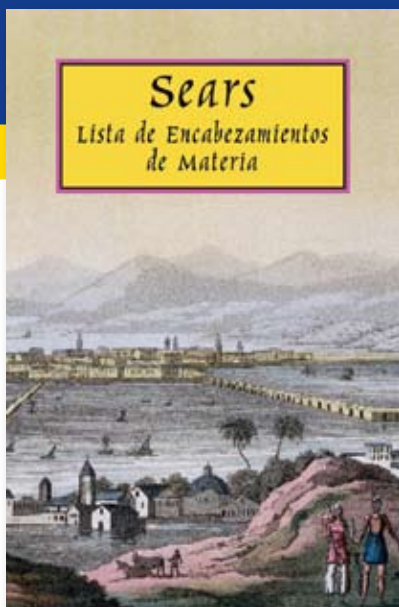


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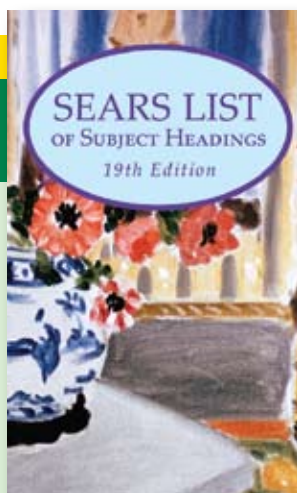


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About This Cover

This selection of books from YALSA or honored by YALSA may help you serve teens in special populations. From L-R: *Keesha's House* by Helen Frost (2004 Printz Honor Book); *Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults*, Fifth Edition edited by Amy Alessio for YALSA; and *Hole in My Life* by Jack Gantos (2003 Printz Honor book). *Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults*, Fifth Edition, is available at the ALA Store, www.alastore.ala.org.

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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.

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from the Editor

RoseMary Honnold

At this writing, I've just returned from attending ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim and have *almost* finished sorting and distributing the books, t-shirts, bookmarks, information, and deciphering the notes I had packed in my 86-pound suitcase. Have you ever tried to explain what on earth you do at a convention of librarians to nonlibrarian friends? It is often as incomprehensible to them as why you want to work with teens. Which is exactly why I love to go to the conferences—to be with like-minded people who share a mission to connect teens with libraries and books and understand why we willingly exhaust ourselves attending meetings and events for five long days or more, twice a year.

This issue of YALS features articles about outreach to special teen audiences. Discussion for this issue started at one of those conventions of librarians. For every special teen audience who has found the magic of libraries, there is a special librarian who has a story to share of the trials and errors and successes of their experiences, and their stories can inspire the rest of us. Read about Amy Cheney, whose program reaches teens in the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center, and Wendy Morano, teen services librarian at the Hilltop branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, who pays monthly visits to a class of physically challenged students at Westmoor Middle School. Check out how school library media specialist Kathy Seever inspired a future librarian and how YALSA and REFORMA are working together to reach Latino teens. Jami Jones tells us how to help traumatized and depressed teens and Samantha Hastings gives us some great ideas on how to connect with the audience we all have: those hard-to-reach, busy teens. Soon we realize that all of our teens are part of a special audience and all of you working to connect with them have a story to tell. Reading the speeches of award-winning authors talking about their works is frosting on the cake.

Conferences, workshops, books, YALS, YAttitudes, Twitter, wikis, blogs, discussion lists—all of these communication tools are available to you to learn *and* share how to reach our teens in the myriad special audiences they belong to. Just as you find another librarian's story informative and inspirational, someone will find your story equally so. Check this out: Writers and reviewers from twelve states contributed to the past two issues of YALS: California, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, and Utah. If your state is not listed, let that be a special invite to you to submit an article or volunteer to review for YALS (writers get fame but no fortune, and reviewers get free books!).

And here's another reason to become part of the YALS team:

EDITOR continued on page 3

Engaging the YALSA Community

from the President

Sarah Cornish Debraski



What does community mean to you? To me it is a group of people who share a fellowship, typically over a common interest or connection. More than that, a community provides emotional and intellectual support and stimulation. YALSA members (more than five thousand!) are all so very different. We are students, retirees, authors, school librarians, public librarians, and more. We live all over the country (and abroad!) in every imaginable type of community. The one thing we all have in common is our desire to not only serve teens, but serve them *well*.

The theme of my presidential year is Engaging the YALSA Community. During my year as YALSA president it is my goal to work with the membership to ensure there are great activities, resources, and services for every member, no matter what their role in young adult librarianship may be. I will strive to make sure our association is meeting the needs of *all* members, including those who do not have the opportunity to attend our conferences. The first step in this process was a new member survey. I will establish a task force to analyze the results and make recommendations on the basis of survey data.

The YALSA community already participates in committees, interest groups, and discussion lists. Some of these are very specific to a special interest, such as yalsa-lockdown—the discussion list for those serving incarcerated youth—the Gaming Interest Group, and the Teaching YA Literature Discussion Group. Most of these were established in direct response to membership petitions. Our committees provide a valuable level of professional engagement for many members. But how else can members become engaged? How can we be sure that no members feel overlooked?

To be a truly functional and useful association, engagement needs to be a two-way street. YALSA needs to provide for and listen to members, and members need to participate and communicate with each other and with the association leadership. Participating in surveys and contributing to the wiki are some ways of doing this. The recent survey results should indicate other ways YALSA members want to participate and how YALSA can facilitate that. While one organization cannot be everything to everyone, we can all work to make YALSA the best professional as-

sociation for everyone.

This issue of YALS focuses on outreach to special teen audiences. It highlights how librarians who do a very specific type of job have found their niche in YALSA, while also providing useful insights to librarians working with the general public. I feel this is a great start to enhancing ways for members to connect with other members. Even if you've never thought you served a special teen audience, you may realize after reading this issue that you do. After reading this issue you will find yourself inspired to reach out to teens in new ways, and maybe to reach out to fellow members.

I'm proud to be a part of the YALSA community. It's a priority for me to see that YALSA members are valued for their differences as well as their similarities and that our organization is responsive to everyone. No one YALSA member is more important than another. It is together, as we form a community, that we find success. And success for ourselves means success for teens.

YALS

EDITOR continued from page 3

You can say you write for an award-winning publication. See that purple logo on the cover? In July, YALS received an Award of Excellence for Journals and Magazines

over 32 pages from the APEX Awards for Publication Excellence, selected from a pool of more than eight hundred journals and magazines. Congratulations to Valerie Ott

and the contributors to YALS in 2007 and 2008 who helped achieve this distinction!

YALS

Printz Award Winner Speech

By Geraldine McCaughrean

I don't know why we authors strive so hard to make our fiction a plausible representation of Life: Real Life is so utterly implausible. If it weren't, how would I ever find myself here, receiving the Printz Award? I'm still busy being grateful to HarperCollins for even taking this book, and to Catherine Onder for editing it. I shall have to change through five gears before I can begin to thank the Printz Committee for giving it a prize.

When I finished *The White Darkness*, I had no idea if anyone would even publish it: it was so odd, so discursive, so off-the-wall. I could have no more left it unwritten than change my mind at the delivery room door of the maternity hospital. But to my mind, I'd already got quite enough out of writing it, without having it published, too: quite enough joy from having it published in the UK, let alone taken on in America; been on quite enough of a journey within myself, without it bringing me here, as well.

I never quite know, ahead of time, what a book is going to be about. I sled-hauled this one through all manner of subjects. But I suppose there were two main themes. One is the continental distance between passion and mere sex. The other is the imagination, as a priceless refuge from suffering: a resort, an emergency exit from the here-and-now, when life's too much. Considering we are the only creatures en-

trusted with imagination, we do undersell its mystery; that ability, on a whim, to swap this world for another of our choosing. It's the faculty that enables us to be human. After all, the best people in this world are the ones who can empathize with their fellow human beings, aren't they? The worst are those who can't or won't imagine how it feels to be on the receiving end of cruelty or selfishness or despotism. And like any other muscle in the body we need to keep flexing our imaginations day in and day out. I don't hugely mind if teenagers don't read books—if books are not their "thing"—so long as they maintain an inner world of the imagination.

If there is a purpose to young peoples' fiction and it's not simply a branch of the entertainment business (which I wouldn't mind so very much!) it is probably the empowerment of the reader. On Page One of any book, the reader quite literally inhabits the hero or heroine of the story—puts on her clothes, starts seeing with her eyes, thinking with her brain cells. And while our reader is there, captive between the pages of that book, it's the perfect opportunity to gift her the kinds of qualities she wistfully wishes for: resourcefulness, popularity, bravery, strength, resilience, wit, happiness. Fiction can even grant us the happy ending we can never be assured of in real life. That's very empowering for a teen-

ager beset by the worries and uncertainties of adolescence.

Of course secretly, authors are a selfish breed. When we're writing, we're far too busy swapping identities with the hero, granting ourselves all the gifts we wistfully wish for ever to notice the needs of the reader. . . . But we'd better draw a veil over that. I do think empowerment is the very best reason for putting a book into a young person's hands.

Of course it takes two. If the magic works, it is because the reader has made it happen. As Ursula le Guin said:

The unread story is not a story. It is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it makes it live.

So insofar as it's possible to do so from this lectern, I'd like as well to thank everyone who's read *The White Darkness*. The blogs I've found on the Internet that I prize most are the ones that say,

I don't know about this book. I loved it because I'm just like Sym, but I don't know if anyone else is. I thought it was only me.

To them I'd like to say, "I thought the same . . . and it isn't—honest." I'll be so happy if at least some young readers get the point, derive pleasure from it—no book is to everyone's taste, I know.

Oh, and I do hope no one will find it educational. There's an unfortunate trend in the UK towards suggesting that reading fiction is good for kids. Not only is it counterproductive, it's not even true. Books aren't nutritious. Like vitamins or roughage. No one will die of not reading another story. Storybooks are not spinach! After all, what can fiction actually do? Only dye your thoughts a different color, hang your skull with tapestries, take you time-traveling to

MCCAUGHREAN continued on page 18

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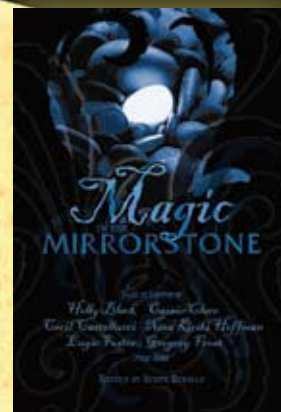


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Printz Award Honor Speech

By Judith Clarke

Firstly, I would like to thank the YALSA and the Michael L. Printz Committee for selecting *One Whole and Perfect Day* as a Printz Honor Book for 2008. It's a great honor.

And I'd also like to thank YALSA for its promotion of and services to young adult fiction, not only in America, but all over the world. It's largely due to their efforts that young adult fiction has become an established and respected genre, and for myself and on behalf of fellow writers, I'd like to express my gratitude for their tireless efforts, their work, their interest—indeed one might say, for their devotion to the cause.

I would also like to thank my American publishers, Front Street Books, and especially Joy Neaves and Nancy Hogan; my Australian publishers Allen and Unwin, my editors Erica Wagner and Sue Flockhart and my agent, Margaret Connolly. And my thanks to all the friends who supported me during the writing of this book—especially Frances Sutherland, whose delightful house I have used for Lily's house in *One Whole and Perfect Day*, the house that doesn't live up to Lily's expectations of what a proper house should be—but then teenagers, even the ones in books, can be rather exacting.

I'm sure there are very few of my fellow writers who haven't been asked, many, many times, that familiar and enduring question:

"Where do you get your ideas from?"

I find it difficult to answer, at least when I'm confronted by an actual living person standing right in front of me and waiting for a reply—I shuffle and shift about (as if looking for a door marked exit) and finally mumble something like, "I don't really know," or the equally vague and rather off-putting, "Here and there."

But "Here and there," vague though it may sound, is the true answer—I get my ideas from wandering about, whether it's in actual physical places, around the town or countryside, or letting my imagination wander around memories and recollections of places, people, and real or imagined conversations. And it's particularly true of this book, which has so many people and so many stories, and where I've used remembered landscapes, incidents, and conversations, extended and shaped into a fictional whole.

Sometimes one can get the fundamental idea for a book or a character long before one writes it, and the original germ of *One Whole and Perfect Day* was given to me one afternoon in 1994 when I was waiting for a bus in the Sydney suburb of Bankstown, and an old man came and sat down on the bench beside me. This old man was the original of Lily's grandfather, Stanley, and it's around Stanley, the head of the family, that *One Whole and Perfect Day* is made.

In the 1950s, when I was a child, Bankstown was a drab working-class suburb of Sydney—its population was almost entirely Australian, and few people, except for returned soldiers, would ever have met, and certainly not come to know, a person from southeast Asia. In 1994, when I met the original of Stanley, Bankstown had a large southeast Asian population, and this was reflected in the changed character of the town center, with its Chinese groceries, travel agents, hairdressers, medical practices—so that, if you'd returned there after an absence of decades, as Stanley does in the chapter called "The Old Place," you might find it barely recognisable.

"Thought I caught the train to Bankstown," the old man at the bus-stop grumbled, "looks like I mucked it up and got on the morning flight to Singapore."

I had him marked down as a nasty old racist, which I suppose he might have been; it was years before I learned that losing a familiar landscape, particularly if it's the landscape of your childhood, can be almost as saddening as losing people. And also that racial prejudice can often be (not always, unfortunately) a product of ignorance and inexperience, almost what one might call a lack of opportunity.

In the book, Stanley isn't a bigot, though his granddaughter certainly thinks he is—he simply *sounds* like one. His family, especially Lily and his grandson's prospective mother-in-law, set him straight.

Although the original impetus for the novel came from that encounter with the old man at the bus stop, *One Whole and Perfect Day* is, like all my books, primarily about family. Or perhaps rather, the *idea* of family: what family is supposed to be, and isn't; what mums and dads and sons and daughters and even grandparents are "supposed" to be, and aren't, preferring to be themselves entirely.

Lily is an independent girl, her father left the family before she even had time to be born, and at sixteen, with her brother

deserting the ship as well, she's practically running the household, and has no time for teenage fripperies, even for falling in love. Yet tough-minded though she is, Lily is still sensitive that her family—not to mention her house—isn't what other people have, isn't "proper." I think a lot of teenagers have this feeling—it's surely part of adolescent uncertainty about oneself, projected onto anything one possesses, anything that is part of *you*, whether it's figure or face, clothes or hairstyle, house, or family.

Lily still longs for some kind of ideal, or "proper" family set up, not to mention a "proper" brother who doesn't keep dropping out of things and a "proper" mother who doesn't bring lame ducks home. She worries about the stresses and quarrels in her family, her father's defection, her mother's vulnerability, her brother's quarrel with his grandpa—she's not experienced enough to realise that even the most proper-seeming families have problems they may keep hidden. And she wants to have the kind of happy perfect family occasion which doesn't break up half way through so that

its members can get on with their proper business, which is, naturally, fighting. She wants one whole and perfect day. And she gets it, despite the difficulties, or at least, she gets the dawning of it—what may happen later is anybody's guess.

What is this mysterious entity called family? On the cover of the Australian edition of *One Whole and Perfect Day*, Maureen Macarthy, a fellow young adult fiction writer, describes the book's subject as "family and love and friendship and the ties that bind." I'm particularly fond of this last phrase (the ties that bind—I think it appears in the Johnny Cash song, "Walk the Line") because I believe that's what family is basically about. Family is basically a community of affection, and it doesn't have to be a conventional family unit (an old man and his cat could be a family) and the people in it don't have to fit conventional role models.

In the book that I'm just completing, it's the absence of this community of affection which leads to a young girl's unnecessary death, and in the book I'm

about to embark upon, it's the community of affection which welds a small group of children (not blood related) and two most unusual parents, into what I would call a family. The heroine, Roberta, is an orphan. She's being brought up by two country and western singers, friends of the parents who died in a car smash when Roberta was a baby. "I was thrown clear!" Roberta always tells people when she meets them—it's a way of testing them out, finding what they're made of. And it's Roberta who notices that she and her unlikely friends, four children and two unrelated and unusual adults, have become a sort of family—"Love is where you find it," she concludes, a little sardonically.

And where I, too, conclude, with thanks again to the ALA and YALSA, the committee of the Michael Printz award, publishers, editors, friends and readers. And also to the camerapeople of Allan and Unwin, through whose skills I am able to, in a sense, be here with you today. I wish all of you, not one, but *many* whole and perfect days. **YALS**



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Printz Award Honor Speech

By Stephanie Hemphill

Shiver 'til my teeth chatter,
wobble on fawn legs.
The podium flashes like a buoy
for my drowning nerves.
I stare at the clothed crowd
and cling to verse.

Good evening fellow book lovers. Thank you for being here to share this night together. As you might hypothesize, I am in my comfort zone writing and reading in line breaks. And my usual approach to public speeches is to rely on my acquired vocabulary, or to search a thesaurus for fancy language to mingle with my poetic skills, so that I might, perchance, say something *impressive*. But tonight, I want to speak to you not from my head but from my heart.

Emotion and personal experience surged onto Sylvia Plath's paper. Her blood jet was poetry. One of the things I find most inspiring about Sylvia's writing is its ability to unloose the beautiful raw. Her fearless edge captures teens, and the teens inside us, desirous to unclench their teeth. So in Sylvia's spirit, even though it is fetal and frightening for me, I share with you tonight a confessional speech: something that you can't read in my book or in an article; something I just learned to articulate.

Working on *Your Own, Sylvia* was an intensely personal experience in ways that I

pate. Over the months that I wrote this book the circumstances of my life mirrored Sylvia's.

My marriage to another writer was ending. I was journaling nearly every day. Baking and consuming way too many treats was my solace. I found myself overbooked and overwhelmed to the point of physical illness, as Sylvia often was. It seems as though I "method wrote" this book. I sent my mother daily letters home. And in praise of Sylvia and confessionalism I'll share one, a postcard, unedited, so please be forgiving:

October 3, 2005
Dearest Mother,

It was shivery on our morning hike—not see-your-breath cold but that moment when you feel, even in California, that summer is behind you.

I'm not a believer in writer's block but my words are stifled lately, and I feel the pressure of the unwritten, and it scares me that perhaps I have nothing else poetic to say. Still I intend to sit and try to work and write badly until I write well. Words are skill after all, so I'll practice until I can toss the ball into the basket.

I hope autumn is lovely where you are—leaves on parade, air ripe and spicy. Give my love to Daddy.

—Steph

Like Sylvia, I have always had a close relationship with my mother . . . but not one without conflict. Like Aurelia Plath, my mother frets over the many miles that separate us, my adventuresome spirit, my fragility, and the stresses inherent in a writer's lifestyle.

Are you ready, Dad, because you're next? Aren't confessional speeches fun? My father, like Otto Plath, has always been a towering figure I strive to impress. That's it; you can exhale now. I love you Daddy.

There are many other similarities between Sylvia's circumstances and my own, but to avoid inducing slumber I'll share a final one with you. October 2005 was the month in which most of *Your Own, Sylvia* was written, and furiously so. October 1962 proved to be Sylvia's most frenzied and prolific month, the month in which most of her famous poetry collection *Ariel* was written. I am not comparing the works here: what Sylvia wrote is immortal; what I wrote is a guide to that star.

Books are no more than journals until someone reads them. Our hope for *Your Own, Sylvia* was that it would lead others to experience or re-experience the brilliance of Sylvia Plath's art. The German composer Paul Hindemith once said, "Music is meaningless noise unless it touches a receiving mind." I look out into this room knowing that it is all of you, our heroic and dedicated librarians, the Young Adult Library Services Association, and especially the Printz Committee, who have brought receiving teen minds to this book and, more importantly, to Sylvia Plath. There is no doubt that the influence of the Printz Honor will continue to bring new readers to this book. I humbly thank you for this recognition. You have made our greatest

dreams for *Your Own, Sylvia* come true.

Every book is a collaboration, not just the work of the name under the title, and this one more than most. So I thank you Cecile, my marvelous editor, your mad genius birthed this book and bathed it daily. Many thanks are also due Jack, Cecile's assistant. I thank everyone at Random House and Knopf, especially Nancy, for supporting this book without compromise. Much love and many thanks to my writing group and friends and family: you gently read early drafts, persistently nudge my writing to a higher standard and unabashedly support my career. And I would have no career without my agent Steve; there are not words enough to thank you. You are my personal guiding star.

Sylvia Plath is one of our great American poets. It is my considered opinion that she should be read along with Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Langston Hughes and Emily Dickinson, and sometimes she is. I realize that she can be difficult for some readers, but I believe that once you learn her story the poetry opens up.

Sylvia Plath once said, "Let me live, love and say it well in good sentences." Thank you again for this honor, and congratulations Geraldine, Judith, Elizabeth, and Amanda—I blush to be in your company. I wish everyone a lovely evening and many great sentences. **YALS**

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Printz Award Honor Speech

By A. M. Jenkins

The first thing I want to do is thank HarperCollins, and especially my editor, to whom this book is dedicated. I have been both lucky and privileged to work with Anne Hoppe. The great thing about Anne is that she not only loves her work and takes pride in it, she also has the editorial talent to back it up. She's perceptive, respectful, and a deep thinker. No writer could ask for a better partner.

The second thing I want to do is thank my agent, Steven Malk. Steve and I have been together for many years, and over those years his work has provided my family with a stable base through periods of stress and upheaval. In so doing, he's protected my kids at times when they've been most vulnerable, and that is a debt I can never hope to repay.

The third thing I want to do is thank the Printz Committee. *Repossessed* just doesn't seem like the kind of book that would have a chance at an award like this. It can be a very quick read; you can zip through it just like *that*. It's also got some humor in it—and neither of those qualities seems to encourage awards consideration in any of the arts. On top of that, the book wasn't getting a lot of buzz beforehand (sorry, Anne; it's true). It

seems to me that the odds of nine people coming to an agreement to honor an under-the-radar, funny, fast read are about the same as those of a bolt of lightning striking me where I now stand.

I have to admit I almost feel as if I'm up here under false pretenses. Not because of the humorous/quick read/unbuzzed thing, but because the comment I hear most about *Repossessed*—the thing most people seem driven to talk about—is that it's a reminder to appreciate the details of everyday life.

When I first heard that, I thought, "Oh, yeah, I guess that's true." To me, it's just part of who the main character is. As far as I recall, it's one of the things that sparked the story for me; I was thinking about Satan, as of course we all do when we're driving the kids to school, right? We mentally remind ourselves that sometime today we gotta go by the grocery store to get some dog food; we sign last-minute permission slips with one arm in the back seat; we realize we forgot to take the clothes out of the dryer last night; and of course we wonder what *we* would do if we were angels once beloved of God who had been cast into the fiery pits of hell.

Suppose you're a fallen angel. You used to be a nice guy, once. You wouldn't have been one of God's right hand beings

in the first place, if you weren't a nice guy. But you lost God's trust for whatever reason, and so you've been incarcerated in the foulest of all possible jails, for thousands upon thousands of years.

Now, let's suppose that one day you're suddenly free. What's the first thing you do?

I'm thinking, the first thing *I'm* going to do when I get out of hell is: I'm going to stretch, inhale a nice big breath of fresh wonderful air, and take my own sweet time enjoying the feeling of *not* being locked up and miserable. I'm not going turn right around and start picking on somebody else a la *The Exorcist*. The first thing *I'm* going to do when I get out of hell is appreciate *not* being in a fiery pit, thank you very much.

To me, that was a given about the story, before the very first word was even on paper. So—to me, as I was working—it wasn't what the book was truly about, but part of the wallpaper against which the real story was written. I'm not saying that if you see it differently, you're wrong. I'm saying that if you come up to talk to me about it, and I give you a silent stare, I'm not being snotty. I'm casting blankly about for some kind of reply.

So, what's the book about, to me?

When I write a book, I'm usually exploring at least one idea. There has to be something—some idea or question—that compels me enough to hold me through years of writing and rewriting the dang thing. In *Repossessed*, the main idea that kept me engaged and motivated throughout the writing process was the idea of *rejection*. Every character in the book deals with it in one form or another.

Now. This is the kind of occasion where I think I'm supposed to say something universally memorable, something fit to be published and passed on to others. But I figure since it's my award, I get to say what I please. What pleases *me* is to say

something to *you*, the people who are here in this room tonight.

What I want to talk about is “rejection” in terms of one specific character in the book: Jason, Shaun’s little brother. Jason’s thread is one you’ll see in many of my books. In fact I realized, after *Reposessed* came out, that it’s a companion book of sorts to another I wrote called *Out of Order*. If you combine some of the characters in *Reposessed*, you might come up with someone very like Colt, the main character in *Out of Order*. Now, Jason is very different from Colt. But—like Colt—he is someone that every librarian in this room has met on multiple occasions. He’s the kid you never see until one of his teachers forces him to choose a book for a book report. He comes in under duress, often annoyed about having to waste his time being in a library at all. He quickly scans the shelves for the very thinnest book he can find that will meet his teacher’s criteria, but that isn’t embarrassing to be seen with, although he will only be seen with it during the time it takes him to get to his locker and toss it in the bottom, whence it may or may not ever return.

Over the years, I’ve tutored kids in reading both as a volunteer and in a paid capacity. Usually I’ve tutored first and second graders, so I’ve seen the Jasons and Colts when they’re just getting started on their reading careers. Let me tell you, when you have to translate every letter to an individual sound, and then pull all the sounds together into a word that means something, and then all the words together into a sentence that makes sense . . . when you are busy doing all those things, it is very difficult to enjoy a story.

Most kids get better at it with time and practice. A very few will never be lucky enough to catch on. Some will catch on, but they’ll never catch up with that Type A student over in the corner. But here’s

the thing: whether they catch up or not, these kids know from the very beginning of their school careers that they’re not picking it up as quickly as most kids their age. What’s more, everybody else knows they’re not picking it up. The teacher knows it, their friends know it, every student in their grade knows it.

From the time these kids were small, they have had a negative experience *every single time* they enter a building that has a lot of books in it. For the Jasons and Colts of this world, walking into a place with books—like a classroom or library—means walking into a place where everyone around you knows that you’re not good enough.

I was a huge reader when I was a kid. I think the vast majority of you were probably the same way; to us, a room full of books was (and still is) an invitation to a thousand exciting journeys. To Jason and to Colt, that same room is an invitation to a thousand humiliating failures. To a kid like Jason or Colt, books represent falling short. They represent being stupid and slow when it feels like everyone around you is smart and fast.

And this is where you who are librarians come in.

You know this kid. You know Jason, and you know Colt. He may be sullen. He may be shy. He may be surly, just because *you’re* the adult who happens to be in charge of the room he’s in. He may be intentionally obnoxious. Maybe he writes on the library tables—or worse, carves into them with a ballpoint pen. Maybe he tries to look at naughty things on the Internet. Maybe he shoots spitwads at people then looks innocent. Maybe the least harmful thing he’ll do in your library is sleep the entire class period, maybe. But the one thing he is *not* going to do, in your library or out of it, is read a stinkin’ book, not unless somebody threatens him with a slow and unpleasant demise. And a lot of the time,

he won’t even read it then.

But bless you all, when you see this kid coming, you shove down the suspicion that *this* is the punk who stuck chewed up gum in one of the flash drive ports. You force yourself to pry your clenched teeth apart so that the kid will see what you hope passes for a pleasant expression. If you’re very tenacious—and if you’ve had your morning coffee—you might even manage a smile.

Because you know that you are probably the one thing that has a chance of ever making this kid *not* hate walking in the door of a room filled with books. And more than that, you have the calling, the “reading is my soulmate” calling, and because of it you can’t help yourself. You are driven to try, again and again, to plant a seed in what is obviously dry and bitter soil.

From your end I know it often looks like a fruitless effort, but the thing I want to tell you tonight is that it matters. Even the smallest and seemingly most useless gesture *matters*. I’m telling you as a tutor of the Jasons and the Colts. I’m telling you as a writer who gets an occasional letter from a kid who never finished a book till he read mine. I’m telling you as the parent of a Jason or two myself: it *matters*. Your efforts *are* appreciated. And sometimes they *do* bear fruit, down the line where you won’t get to see.

So the last thing I want to do tonight is—just for a moment—to set aside the Printz awards and honors, to set aside my supposed authorliness, and to speak on behalf of those who never asked me to speak for them; those who, being shy or surly or obnoxious, would not give me permission to speak for them even if I’d asked it. I speak for them anyway.

On behalf of the Jasons and Colts of the world, I say:

Thank you. **YALS**

Printz Award Honor Speech

By Elizabeth Knox

Being honored by librarians means a lot to me. Let me explain why. I got my first library card when I was eight, when we moved from a state house in the Hutt Valley, a post-war government housing development, to an architect-designed house on a west-facing hill of a new subdivision in the capital. My parents were determined savers and all my life there'd been the section and house to pay off, so there hadn't been money to spare for books. There were books in the house though, and when I first learned to read I played a kind of game with my new trick by dipping into any attractive books I found, like *Paradise Lost* or *Don Quixote* with the Gustave Dore engravings. I wasn't reading, only scanned sentences. We had a few picture books, mostly acquired through one of Dad's socialist friends—books with grim stories about the perils of being uncooperative, such as *Pussies Mustn't Fight*, a book which ends with two kittens having torn themselves to three-colour shreds and gobbets. We had the Soviet books and my mother's *Swiss Family Robinson* and *Heidi* and *Tales of the Knights of the Round Table*—all of which my older sister read to me. So I'd been promised a library card, but that promise wasn't any more significant to me than that of a new school and a room I only had to share with one sister. But Dad was very big on the

library card. What I didn't know then was that he had, in effect, been saved by a librarian.

When my father was thirteen he got into trouble with the law and his mother, whose husband had never recovered from the first world war and had abandoned the family, decided she couldn't cope with him. He became a welfare boy, which in wartime and under the Manpower Act meant being sent to work somewhere as a low-paid laborer. He was put into the care of a dairy farmer, an alcohol-abusing skinflint, a taciturn Kiwi version of some Dickensian villain. Dad slept behind the farmhouse in a whare—a tiny, dirt-floored shelter without electricity. At the dinner table the farmer and his wife watched every bite that went into his mouth, and the only free time he had was the hours on Sundays between milking.

On that farm my father learned to ride, the farmer riding beside him and striking the small of his back with a stick so he'd sit up straight. He learned how to strip a cow for the last drops of rich milk, how to kill and dress a sheep, how to strain a fence and use a stumping jack, how to pack the hoof of a lame horse, how to drive a spring cart or tedder, how to drive a two-horse team to pull a plough or disk or harrow or sweep, or a team of six in block and chains hauling a swamp plough. He learned

skills scarcely anyone has now—but no one talked to him.

And then, one day, he discovered the library in Greytown; a public library stocking a wider range of books than his old school and certainly more than the lending bookshop he was going to for his westerns and detective stories. He was enraptured. He discovered again the books that had been read aloud to him when he was younger. He read books by George Eliot and Charles Dickens, the ones he knew, then all their other books. And the librarian, the only other person he saw there most evenings, introduced him to other novelists, and travel books, philosophy, science, religion and poetry. The librarian was delighted to have not only a customer but an enthusiast. She would question him about the books he'd been reading, and very tactfully made him realize that the world was far more complex than he had so far thought. She gave him a dictionary and, lying in the whare each night, reading by candlelight, looking up words he didn't understand, my father began slowly to change into the man I knew: the journalist, the editor, the man who could represent a library card to his eight-year-old daughter as something even better than tickets to a circus.

When he did tell me about his time as a welfare boy Dad would refer to that woman, the Greytown librarian, as a true friend through whom he found a whole new freedom.

So my family moved house, I got my library card, and on the my first visit to the Wadestown library took out what I think of as my first book, the first I chose for myself. It was Roger Lancelyn Green's *Perseus the Gorgon Slayer*. I had decoded passages of *Don Quixote* and been read *Heidi*, but this was my first book. I have no memory of anything external to my experience of reading Green's *Perseus*, there was only the story, in which I was absorbed—reading—that magical, solitary, intimate activity.

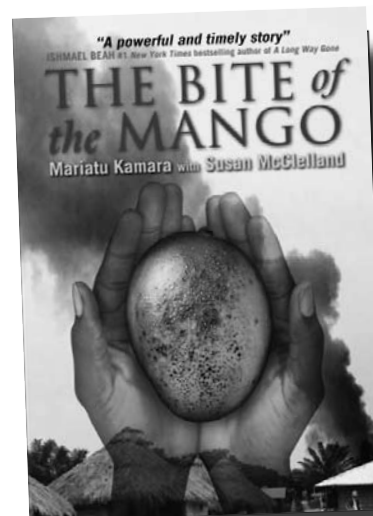
So perhaps I should have become a librarian, rather than a writer. And sometimes I feel that, although I have managed to become a writer, my true aim is somehow to become a book. And, I think, there is something in that odd and impossible aim that led me to write a book for young adults. Because I was already an established writer for adults, I have had to answer questions about why I suddenly decided to write for a different audience. Putting aside the fact that I never did feel that I was writing for a different audience—and that whoever reads my books, *that's* my audience—I'll try to tell you why I'm so glad I made the attempt. And to do so I have to tell another story.

A couple of months ago I was on a plane from Nice to Frankfurt and, because we'd booked late, I wasn't sitting next to my husband. I found myself in conversation with Wolfgang, whose family business was to manufacture bandages and splints and medical corsets in Stuttgart. We'd been asking each other questions about what we did for a living. And one question he asked me was what most influenced my writing. Sometimes we say what's true when it least matters. Wolfgang wasn't my public, he wasn't someone to whom it was in my best interest to represent myself well, and, more importantly, he wasn't a New Zealander. He asked his question and I hesitated. I didn't want to embark on my usual explanation of my childhood imaginary games to someone whose English might have been excellent, but who lacked the whole reserve of the colloquial. I hesitated, and the other thing finally made itself felt, the other thing that was true. And what I said was this:

I think that being a mother has been very influential. I know it isn't universally true that being a parent changes people for the better. But, for enough of us, when we become a parent we turn into a kind of custodian—of our culture,

of civil kindness, of all the good of the world that requires attentive maintenance. Any parent who takes parenting seriously wants to pass on a world in good order, or to fix things if they need fixing. This is a very ordinary truth but it's a big one. So being a parent has made me engage with the world as if thinking deeply and having the facts and keeping the story straight—straight and *rich*—wasn't just my project, but a common project. I wanted to try get things right, not for my own satisfaction, but so as not to let everyone else down.

So that's more or less what I said to Wolfgang, bandage manufacturer from Stuttgart. And why I'm telling you this is that it has a bearing on why I decided to write for young adults. Yes I'm a reader of young adult fiction. And yes, I had always wanted to write one myself. But in the end what made me write the kind of young adult book I wrote was my altered understanding of myself as inheritor and benefactor. I talked to my son and remember being talked to, being taught, being gifted experience. Young adults are sometimes unwilling heirs. They can feel put upon. They can also feel dispossessed, or like renouncing what they stand to inherit. And I guess I wanted to talk to that. To be serious, to try to say, yes, you are here and there will be things you can do, things that are yours to do, even things *you alone can do*. And of course I kind of hope that my having done that is my version of giving a dictionary to the lonely welfare boy. **YALS**



THE BITE of the MANGO

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AVAILABLE FROM YOUR WHOLESALER

Margaret A. Edwards Award Acceptance Speech

By Orson Scott Card

I usually prefer not to talk about my own fiction—I'd rather it speak for itself.

But this seems to be a moment when I really need to account for myself. What have I done that made some wonderfully deluded people think that I should get the Margaret Edwards Award for lifetime contribution to writing young adult fiction?

When I was a kid, I thought books were more important than food. I don't think I bought lunch during the entire time that the Teen Age Book Club order form was open on my teacher's desk.

Instead, my lunch money found its way into the envelope. It took no time at all to order all the books that sounded interesting to me. Then I started in on the ones that didn't sound like I'd enjoy them at all.

I hated most sports, so I ordered *The Kid Who Batted 1,000*.

What did I care about cars? So I bought *Black Flag at Indianapolis*.

I was a boy. Naturally, I had to have *Candy Strippers*.

Oddly enough, I don't remember a single one of the "likely" books that I ordered. But I remember *Candy Strippers* quite clearly. I still know that in *Black Flag at Indianapolis*, they had front-wheel drive, with the engine mounted in the rear,

which my dad said sounded pointless to him. And with *The Kid Who Batted 1,000*, the trick was that the kid never missed the ball—but he always, always fouled. So he'd get on base because he'd wear out the pitchers—they'd have to walk him to avoid pitching to him fifty times. At the end of the book, the game was on the line, and he had to hit for real. And he made it.

And I hate baseball.

Why were the books that didn't interest me the ones I remember best? Flash back to an earlier age. I had just learned to read—my sister helped me get through *The Hidden Staircase*, and I went on the *The Mystery at Larkspur Lane* where, unless I'm confusing my Nancy Drews, the big secret was that the amnesia victim whose last name was Regor was really the missing guy named Roger. Sorry if I spoiled that one for you.

The Alcotts were about children, and were certainly for children—but I didn't begin to understand all that was going on in this book until I was an adult, and a parent. Only then did I understand that Marmee was, if not the heroine of the novel, then its root; Jo was growing up to be Marmee, and so she had to find a man who would be as intellectual and improvident as her father.

I've watched my own kids. My fourteen-year-old, who now reads mostly manga, was reading Lewis Carroll and L. Frank Baum before she went to school. My older daughter was reading *Anne of Green Gables* as a second grader. I had never read the books, but when I picked up the first one it was such tough sledding, and my attention span was so short, that I gave up on it very quickly.

What was going on here? Why was a seven-year-old able to read and love a book that was too hard for me as an adult?

Why do so many children who embrace fiction grow up to be adults who never crack a fiction book?

My son Geoffrey, a voracious reader, suddenly glommed on to Piers Anthony's Xanth books. I had also read the series; I thought Piers did a great job of combining idiotic humor with stories that were better than they probably needed to be.

What worried me and my wife was that Xanth was all he read. Three times through the whole series, without reading *anything* else! We were concerned, but decided not to intervene in any way—I don't think we even made disparaging comments about it.

After the third time through, he packed all the books into a box, took them to school, and gave them to a friend. That was it. He didn't even look back.

I was a youth leader at church. I had a couple of teenage boys for whom the greatest work of literature in all of history was Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes*. I didn't get it. When I was indexing the Porges biography of Burroughs, I bought several of his books. *Chessmen of Mars* was enjoyable. But *Tarzan*? Unreadable. Eventually the biography explained it to me—Burroughs was awful when he was still *writing* his books, his prose so overwrought and adjective-heavy that he made Henry James seem terse. But when he started *dictating* his novels to stenographers or dictating machines, his prose cleaned up

considerably. He was no writer—he was a storyteller.

And yet . . . there were those boys at church who loved *Tarzan*. Couldn't get enough of it. All the things wrong with Burroughs's style should have put them off, should have made the book harder to read. But it had no such effect.

I have learned a few things about what young readers choose to read.

1. No amount of bad or *hard* writing will keep children from the stories they care about. They're so naive and inexperienced they don't know bad writing from good; all the clichés sound new to them.
2. And it goes the other way. No amount of good or much-admired writing will make them like a story they don't care about.
3. You can't make a kid like a book. You can't even make them *pretend* to like a book—that doesn't usually happen till they get to college.
4. There is no such thing as children's literature.

I have to explain that, I know. After all, I'm here to accept an award for lifetime achievement in writing young adult fiction. But, you see, I have never written a single piece of YA fiction. I have not worked with YA editors; my work has never been marketed that way until Tor put a YA cover and a new ISBN on *Ender's Game*—fifteen years after the book first came out, and long after it had become popular with young readers.

Ender's Game was written with no concessions to young readers. My protagonists were children, but the book was definitely *not* aimed at kids. I was perfectly aware that the rule of thumb for children's literature is that the protagonist must be a couple of years older than the target audience. You want ten-year-old readers, you have a twelve-year-old hero.

At the beginning of the book, Ender is six. Who, exactly, is the target audience?

What I was writing was bildungsroman. How do you turn a child into a leader of soldiers? Or, perhaps, how does a born leader survive the misguided, even cruel efforts of adults to train him? My model was Herman Hesse, not *Starman Jones* or *Starship Troopers*, which I still have not read to this day.

Not that Heinlein played no role in the book. My favorite novel of his was *Tunnel in the Sky*—the story of kids on a training mission, suddenly forced to fend for themselves and survive. And I had read and been powerfully affected by *Lord of the Flies*, whose influence on *Ender's Game* should be obvious.

I was writing, then, a story for *adults* that showed how in the real world, in order to defeat enemies real or imagined, we take children out of their homes—often enthusiastic, committed children—and prepare them to risk everything—no, to *spend* everything they have or ever will have, including life itself—for the sake of a cause. And the adults who first received it understood that this was not a kids' book.

After the book came out in paperback, I began to get mail from kids. I was not surprised—the letters invariably began, "I'm in a gifted program," "I'm part of a special advanced class." Of course smart kids could handle *Ender's Game*. Of course they identified with the hero.

But then I began to get another kind of letter. From parents. From teachers.

"I regularly read 'Ender's Game' to my class of nonreaders. I get three chapters in and then I stop. Almost all of them finish it on their own."

And, not long after that, letters from those problem readers themselves. "I hated reading until my teacher made me try *Ender's Game*." "*Ender's Game* was the first book I ever read, and now I love to read."

What do you think that does to a writer, to get letters like that? It made me

feel like I had graduated into the ranks of writers like Alcott and Twain. Or even nearly forgotten writers like Elswyth Thane. I'm not fussy. I was thrilled to have written somebody's book of gold.

What I was not prepared for was the way *Ender's Game* and, later, the *Shadow* books and even the very much *not* YA *Speaker for the Dead*, *Xenocide*, and *Children of the Mind*, were adopted by a significant number of a generation of kids. Make no mistake—the kids themselves led out in this. Most of the teachers I hear from who are now teaching *Ender's Game* to their classes, first read the book themselves because a student made them give it a try.

How does a book that is not aimed at children, that is aged incorrectly for them, that was not marketed to them, nevertheless become a book that some teachers call a surefire hit with students in middle school and high school and, yes, college? (They may be able to vote, but that doesn't mean they're not still kids.)

When Jake Black's *Ender's Game Companion* is published next year, it will include what the Wizard of Oz gave the Tin Man—testimonials. Without naming names, here are a couple of accounts that show what literature means to people who are reading, not to be impressed, but to be changed:

1. *Ender's Game* played an important role in my adolescent life and continues to do so in my adult one. I was fourteen when I was given a copy of it by my math teacher who thought it would do me good. Boy was he right. Before I read it, school was always a hassle to me. I honestly didn't care about what I was learning and I never read a book unless I was forced to. *Ender's Game*, in a way, woke up an intellectual side of me that I never knew existed. It taught me to try and be the best that I could in anything I did. I learned to be patient, strong, and above all I learned

how to be a student. My grades got better and I began to explore the wide open and enchanting world of reading.

Ender's loneliness and his inner struggle is something I identified with as a freshman in high school. It's taught to enter a new place and meet new people but *Ender's Game* gave me the strength to rise to the challenge. It also made me push myself beyond my limits in order to grow.

I am currently in college and I have to read *Ender's Game* before every school year.

2. I found *Ender's Game* on a shelf in my middle school's library when I was in seventh grade. It was an old beat up paperback copy and when I read the back I immediately identified with the story. You see I had a lot of problems in school and to tell the truth I was continually thinking of suicide. I just wanted everything over with, but then I found this book with a character in a similar situation to me. But unlike me he was strong, he fought no matter what, he didn't just accept his lot in life. He actively did everything he could to improve it, he fought back against his tormentors. I can honestly say that *Ender's Game* saved my life and gave me the strength to go on no matter what. To this day I feel a debt of gratitude to this story and the author because without them I truly believe I would not be here to write this.

3. When I was in the seventh grade in 2001, my older brother . . . introduced me to *Ender's Game*. He had the book since he was in fifth grade. After finishing it, I couldn't stop myself from reading it for the second time . . . then the third, then the fourth and so on. I must have read it at least ten times.

Now I'm 20 years old and I'm still in love with the story. Each time I read it, there's always a new personal

realization that comes to mind. I realized that humans can be capable of so many things: love, hate and survival. This book means so much to me because in a way, I saw myself in some of the characters but most especially with Ender. Though I am not a genius like Ender is, I could relate to him because he was a child who had to act strong despite his own personal fears.

Ender's story helped me realize that I too am capable of triumphing over challenges and it doesn't matter whether I'm seven or thirty years old. *Ender's Game* will forever be a part of who I am.

Not everyone who reads *Ender's Game* has this response, of course. My point is that *this is how kids read books*. They open themselves up and pour the story in—if it's a story they can believe in and care about. I'm thrilled that *anybody* receives *Ender's Game* this way.

Reading is fundamentally democratic. Kids don't have to like a book just because some adult thinks they should. And if you push too hard, you only convince them that if a book is "good," they'll hate it, and if they like a book, their teachers will call it "trash."

A lot of adult nonreaders got that way because they reached that conclusion early on and never had a reason to change it.

Let me go back, then, to why kids have responded to *Ender's Game*, and why it is, in fact, YA literature—after the fact.

It's in the first two paragraphs:

The monitor lady smiled very nicely and tousled his hair and said, "Andrew, I suppose by now you're just absolutely sick of having that horrid monitor. Well, I have good news for you. That monitor is going to come out today. We're going to take it right out, and it won't hurt a bit."

Ender nodded. It was a lie, of course, that it wouldn't hurt a bit.

But since adults always said it when it was going to hurt, he could count on that statement as an accurate prediction of the future. Sometimes lies were more dependable than the truth.

What kid hasn't heard that "It won't hurt a bit" lie? I was aiming that at adults who remember the way they were always talked down to, but of course it resonates with kids who are being talked down all the time. But that wasn't the key.

First, Ender nods—he gives the illusion that he accepts the statement. But then, inside his point of view, I immediately tell the reader that Ender knows it's a lie. So what young readers see is: This kid does what it takes to get along with adults, but he doesn't have to believe them.

It goes farther, though. Ender has generalized that since adults always say it won't hurt when it *will* hurt, then he could extract true information from their lies.

Now, to young readers, that can seem revolutionary and cool. They know about the lies, they know about having to lie back in order to get along. But most of them have not taken the other tack—that they can still learn true information by watching to see what people lie about.

Finally, at the end of the paragraph, Ender draws his conclusion: Sometimes lies are more dependable than the truth.

At that moment, even young kids stop and go, Wow. That's cool. That's *true*. I should think that way! Why didn't I already think that way? Who is this kid? I want to be like this kid. I want to be so cool that I look down on the adults who *talk* down to me, without their even knowing it.

Adults experience Ender more from the outside. Like adults reading *Tom Sawyer* or *Little Women*, we see the kids, we understand the kids, we like and care about the kids. We even identify with the kids. But we also identify with the teachers. We understand the project. We see the irony.

Young readers, though, are far more deeply inside Ender's character. They still live in a world largely (or, with younger readers, entirely) shaped by the adults around them. Ender's attitude is revelatory to them.

I had no such plan in mind. When I wrote *Ender's Game*, I was resurrecting a short story that had come in second for, but did not win, the Hugo Award. And I was doing it solely in order to set up the novel I really meant to write—*Speaker for the Dead*.

So when I wrote *Ender's Game*, in a way it was light work. That is, I already knew the story. I barely even bothered to think about the storyline, except that I knew I'd do what I did with the story "Mikal's Songbird" when I turned it into the novel *Songmaster*—I'd go back and start earlier in the tale.

The novelet begins with the line, "Remember, the enemy's gate is down." It starts on the day Ender starts training his new army.

But the novel starts before Ender is summoned to Battle School, and I made it up as I went along. He needed siblings, so I supplied him with mine. He lost the monitor. OK, what now? Well, I'd already shown a kid taunting him as a "third," so with the monitor removed, what would the bully do? And then what would Ender do? No plan, stuff just happened.

The fantasy game? A whim. Just as, in *Speaker for the Dead*, Jane was a complete whim, not in the outline at all, but I liked her and kept her. Ditto with the images in the fantasy game. It felt right to have the computer game do things that no software can do—or ever *will* be able to do, in my judgment.

How? I wasn't clear myself on what was going on. I just knew that it felt right. *Ender's Game* is my least-planned novel. It's also my most popular book. You'd think I'd have sworn off outlining long ago, but no, I can't start a book until I know the ending

and have at least a plausible route to take me there.

And I did have that original novelet to give me the shape of the last half of the *Ender's Game*, plus the idea for the final chapter, where Ender finds out things that even the adults didn't know about their enemy, setting up *Speaker for the Dead*.

The things kids love most about *Ender's Game* are the things that I didn't plan to put there. That means they're responding to what popped out of my unconscious mind and then resonated with me so that I knew I wanted to include it in the story.

The same is true of the elements that the military responds to and uses in training. I have all these bad commanders, and military teachers use them in training of-ficers in leadership. Was I planning to write a leadership textbook for soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines? Of course not. But I had absorbed history since I was a kid, reading Bruce Catton's *Army of the Potomac* and William Shirer's *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. And when I needed it, it popped out onto the page and rang true.

Now I'm going to contrast this with another kind of writing process. I wish I had a buck for every creative writing professor in America who starts his class with the statement, "I don't know much about plot, so we're going to concentrate on style." In class after class, in English department after English department, what is pointed out as good writing is the writing that is most self-conscious, the writing that calls attention to itself. The metaphors and symbols that sit like beauty queens in convertibles, waving at the crowd.

So many young writers believe that this really *is* good writing. And since it's an entirely mechanical process and can be learned by any talentless hack, the hacks embrace it because, by writing this way, they can seem to be at one with the great masters of literature.

We aren't reading Jane Austen today because she turned a phrase so well. She

did turn phrases well, but they were never empty. She told the truth. We cared about her characters because they were living through dilemmas we care about even now. She is satirizing a culture that is long since gone—yet she does it so thoroughly, so brilliantly, that she teaches us how to read and receive her fiction even as we read it.

Let me say that again. We don't have to take classes from anybody in order to read Jane Austen. Her stories are so deep and true that they contain within them all the information you need in order to understand what's going on.

Style can't be taught, and isn't worth teaching. The only thing you can learn to do with style is destroy it—that's what Strunk & White's *Elements of Style* is designed to do, to kill you as an individual writer. Our creative writing programs turn out endless streams of symbol hags and metaphor junkies who haven't a clue how to tell a story that anybody would care about.

Some of them *accidentally* know how to tell a good story, and so we love their books, but the reviewers and critics all "wisely" echo the professors and talk about their style as if that had anything to do with the value of the book. No.

It's the story, always the story.

Kids know this. Only adults are dumb enough to forget it.

The single biggest division in American literature is between good stories . . . and so-called good writing. What passes for sophisticated literature is too often nothing but style, voice, flash, and dazzle.

Kids are not deceived. They'll slog through bad writing and not mind—but *never* through bad story.

So what is children's literature, really? It's good storytelling.

There are subject matters that children simply aren't prepared to understand. There are topics that should not be addressed because some subjects actually damage children if they're confronted with

them too young. But anybody who thinks children's literature is a secondary form of the storytelling art is wrong. It is the primary form.

Stories are more important to children in their formative years than they are to adults whose ideas are already set. Stories give shape to the world they picture in their heads. Children allow stories to change their lives.

So to me, at least, sophisticated literary adult writing is an occasionally interesting subset of literature, preferred by an audience so deluded they think they're the only people in the room. Great works can be written for that audience, and about three times a decade, actually are.

If you follow children around, they won't always lead you to great storytelling, either. *Captain Underpants* is doing something else. In fact, *Captain Underpants* is the closest thing, in children's literature, to what is called, in adult writing, "edgy." And, in my opinion, they are each other's equivalent in depth and intelligence.

Entertainment Weekly just named a Cormac McCarthy exercise in self-display as the best novel of the past twenty-five years. They relegated *Goblet of Fire* to second place, and dismissed the first three books as kid stuff—which says more about

their need to seem cool to their elitist friends than it says about *Harry Potter*.

But they completely ignored the best novel written in my lifetime—and I include my own in that reckoning. I'm speaking of *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield. It is so many layers deep that I could teach it for a whole semester and still not run out of new things to talk about. Yet the story is so gripping that I sat in my car and burned gasoline to hear the end of a chapter as I listened to the brilliant audio performance.

Everything that the college professors purport to admire is present in Setterfield's book. But instead of having all the techniques sit on the top like that beauty queen, where less-than-bright undergraduates can readily find them, they are seamlessly integrated into the story so you are never aware of the symbolism, which allows them to have their greatest power to influence your unconscious mind.

How do you create a story like that? By creating the story and letting the metaphors and symbols take care of themselves. By creating characters and relationships and a society, and letting style take care of itself.

By writing, in short, as if you were writing for impatient children. Not children who are impatient with bad writing. But children who are impatient with time-

wasting fiction that exists only to impress a jaded audience.

So as I accept, gratefully, this award for lifetime contribution to writing young adult literature, I could not be more surprised—and more proud. But you would not have given me this award if so many kids had not, entirely on their own, discovered and embraced *Ender's Game*. Because neither you nor I would have known that I was even writing YA. And, in fact, I would not have been.

A noted science fiction writer and critic once dismissed the entire field of science fiction as a "branch of children's literature." I could not agree more. He meant it as a slur. I wear it as a badge of honor.

My books weren't on that *EW* list of the best hundred books of the past 25 years. I'm in excellent company that way.

But my books are on the top ten list, even the top five list, of a lot of teenagers and preteens, and my stories are part of the deep memories of a lot of adults who discovered my works when they were young. That is the cutting edge of literature, and always will be. That is what the Margaret Edwards Award is about. My works have received no higher honor, and *could* receive no higher honor, than the one you have given me today. **YALS**

MCCAUGHREAN continued from page 4

the curtain walls of the universe; question your conscience; blast the window-shutters off your soul and let in the sunshine.

So do let's maintain a little British reserve here and not overstate the worth of something no bigger than a box of chocolates. If I had my way, I would give

all books to young people in the same spirit of insouciant love as chocolate, and ask zippo in return, not so much as a book report.

Writing is not a competitive sport, either. I know that my book is no better than countless others published during this last

rich and teeming year of words. But being up here really does make me feel (as Sherman Alexie might put it) like an authentic member of the Tribe of Authors.

So thank you very very much. **YALS**

While fourteen-year-old YALSA was figuratively entering high school, a sister organization was being born. REFORMA (The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking), was founded in 1971 by Arnulfo D. Trejo to improve library services for the nation's Spanish speakers. The name REFORMA was chosen because it meant "to reform," something Dr. Trejo hoped this organization would accomplish.¹ With twenty-six REFORMA chapters across the nation and thirty-seven years of history, much has been achieved; however, there is still a great deal to be done to reach Latinos and the Spanish speaking in the United States.

In keeping with YALSA's new diversity campaign, it is fitting that YALSA join with REFORMA to reach a very important segment of the Latino population: our nation's Latino youth. According to the 2006 U.S. Census Report, Hispanics constitute 42.7 million, or 14 percent of the United States population. In addition, the census showed that 63 percent of children in 9.5 million Hispanic families are under the age of eighteen.² These represent the "YA" in YALSA and the "REFORM" in REFORMA; namely, an underserved young adult population that needs to be reached.

This article came about as a direct result of a dozen or so YA Latino titles published on a YALSA discussion list. I posted this list onto the REFORMA discussion list along with several questions that puzzled me: Why were almost all of them about the Mexican quinceañera (sweet fifteen) and the Mexican holiday of the Day of the Dead? Why weren't other Latino groups represented (Puerto Rican, Cuban, and so on)? And where could I find more YA Latino titles? These innocent questions led to great conversations on the REFORMA discussion list; with one librarian stating that since Mexicans make

REFORMA and YALSA

Working Together to Reach Latino Youth

By Alma Ramos-McDermott

up the majority of the U.S. Hispanic population, it made sense that books would be written about their culture. She agreed with me that there was plenty of room for all the Latino groups to be represented in the literature, and suggested that aspiring Latino writers representing the other cultures should begin to add to the available writings.

A very interesting insight was offered by another REFORMA librarian who mentioned that in our libraries many second- and third-generation English-speaking Latinos are being lumped together with first-generation, mainly Spanish-speak-

ing Latinos, even though second- and third-generation Latinos have different needs. He suggested having books available to give them a variety in genres; however, they should have Latino characters with whom they could identify, and should also include topics of family dynamics and self-esteem.

The original list of titles that I posted began to grow as others on the REFORMA discussion list suggested favorite Latino authors, and included GLBQT titles. A great collaboration began to take place as one of our members volunteered to collect titles to post onto her blog, while the chair of the Children and Young Adult Services

ALMA RAMOS-MCDERMOTT is a 2006 ALA Spectrum Scholar, and a 2008 MLS graduate of Simmons College, Boston, with a school librarian concentration. She is a member of YALSA, REFORMA, and AASL, and is on the Diversity Taskforce for both AASL and YALSA and the CAYASC committee of REFORMA. She was an elementary school teacher in Brooklyn, N.Y., for twenty-one years before deciding to change careers, get her second masters degree, and become the librarian she dreamed of being ever since she was eleven years old. She is a newlywed, now working as the Library Teacher at Pollard Middle School, Needham, Mass.

Committee (CAYASC) offered to take over the growing list to have CAYASC members look through it to make additions and revisions. As of the writing of this article, a longer list of YA Latino titles is in the process of being posted on the REFORMA website by CAYASC.

The annotated list of YA Latino titles at the end of this article is a direct result of many REFORMA librarians collaborating to reach our Latino youth. The summaries came from my readings, REFORMA librarians on the discussion list, the CAYASC committee, and the Austin (Tex.) Public Library Hispanic teens book review website.³ Since reaching America's youth is part of YALSA's mission, it is important that YALSA members have a sneak peek at these titles so you can start ordering those not currently in your libraries for your Hispanic teens.

In addition, with the launching of YALSA's new diversity campaign, it is essential for librarians to show diversity on their bookshelves. Diversity in the ranks of librarians is an issue that YALSA is seeking to address through the diversity campaign and the recent funding of their first-ever Spectrum Scholarship; however, I feel that diversity should also extend to the books that we have in our libraries. The patrons we serve will learn about other cultures and peoples through what we have available for them to borrow. This partial list of young adult Latino titles will give you a good start toward that goal.

For more resources, and the latest updated list of YA Latino titles, go to the Children and Young Adult Services page on the REFORMA website (www.reforma.org). In addition to the Young Adult Latino titles, you will find a link to "Online Resources for Librarians working with Latino Children," put together by CAYASC. It contains information on locating Latino books, planning Latino programs, finding publishers and distributors of Latino

books, as well as a link to a sixty-two page document by the U.S. Department of Education detailing more than sixty programs across the nation for Latino youth. All of this information, and more, awaits you on the REFORMA website.⁴

Collaboration is very important in reaching the Latino youth of our nation. What better way to continue this collaboration than for REFORMA and YALSA to join hands, pool our collective resources, and do all we can to make sure that the children under the age of eighteen in Latino homes are adequately served by all librarians who are interested in the youth of the future? If you're not a member of REFORMA, I suggest you join this rapidly growing group of librarians who want to keep Dr. Trejo's vision of improving library services for the nation's Spanish speakers alive. Membership information is located on the REFORMA website.

While we're diversifying our bookshelves, let's also diversify the groups we belong to in ALA. You don't need to speak Spanish to become a member of REFORMA. REFORMA welcomes YALSA members to start a new joint partnership, one in which the young adults in Latino homes are served by the best of both worlds—REFORMA and YALSA. Collaboration is the key to this partnership. Let's become the keys that open new worlds of knowledge for the Hispanic teens we serve.

Junto podemos—together we can.

Latino YA Titles

Estrella's Quinceañera, Malin Alegria, Simon Pulse, 2007.

Estrella doesn't want a gaudy quinceañera, but her mom still gets carried away. (grades 7–10)

Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico, Malin Alegria, Simon & Schuster, 2007.

When Southern California high school senior Sofi lies to her parents and crosses the border for a weekend party, she has no idea that she will get stuck in a Mexican village with family she has never met before, unable to return to the United States and the easy life she knew. (grades 9 and up)

Finding Miracles, Julia Alvarez, Laurel Leaf, 2006.

Fifteen-year-old Milly is an average American teenager until Pablo, a new student at her school, inspires her to search for her birth family in his native country. (grades 6–9)

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents, Julia Alvarez, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2004.

The story of the Garcia family's adjustment to life in the United States. The Garcia girls tell their stories about how they came to be at home—and not at home—in America. (grades 9–12)

Once Upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the U.S.A., Julia Alvarez, Viking, 2007.

Alvarez weaves in interviews with quince girls, her own memories of coming of age as an immigrant, and the history of the custom itself. (grades 7–10)

Bless Me Ultima, Rudolfo Anaya, Quinto Sol Publications, 1972.

Set in a small New Mexican community during World War II, Antonio speaks of the dignity, traditions, and mythology of Chicano life. (grades 9–12)

Araña: The Heart of the Spider (a graphic novel series), Fiona Avery, Marvel Comics, 2005.

Fiesty teenager Anya Corazon is saved from death by a mysterious mage named Miguel. Now, Anya is pledged to fight alongside Miguel and the Spider Society. First, she must prove herself to the society, and keep her father and her friends from discovering her new secret. (grades 7–9)

Jumping Off to Freedom, Anilú Bernardo, Arte Público Press, 1996.

Courage and desperation lead fifteen-year-old David and his father to flee Cuba's repressive regime and seek freedom on a raft headed for Miami. (grades 7–10)
Trino's Choice, Diane Gonzales Bertrand, Piñata Books, 1999.

Frustrated by his poor financial situation and hoping to impress a smart girl, seventh grader Trino falls in with a bad crowd led by an older teen with a vicious streak. (grades 7–9)

The Tequila Worm, Viola Canales, Random House Children's Books, 2007.

Sofia grows up in the close-knit community of the barrio in McAllen, Texas, and then finds that her experiences as a scholarship student at an Episcopal boarding school in Austin only strengthen her ties to family and her "comadres." (grades 6–9)

The House on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros, Knopf, 1984.

Esperanza Cordero is a young girl growing up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago with all its hard realities of life. She captures her thoughts and emotions in poems and stories to rise above the hopelessness and create a space for herself. (grades 9–12)

Call Me Maria, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Scholastic, 2006.

Fifteen-year-old Maria leaves Puerto Rico to live with her father in the barrio of New York City. (grades 6–9)

Riding Low on the Streets of Gold, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Piñata Books, 2003.

This vibrant collection of 11 poems and 12 stories is made up of memoir, poetry, and fiction by Latino writers who muse on *las luchas*, or struggles, of young people's daily lives: the universal coming-of-age experiences and the specific issues of Latino youth. (grades 6–12)

Adios to My Old Life, Caridad Ferrer, MTB Pocket Books, 2006.

As a talented singer-guitarist with a dream of going pro, Alegria Montero is getting fed up with the endless, boring parade of *quinceañeras*. She's longing for something bigger, and *Oye Mi Canto*—a new reality TV show that's searching for the next Latin superstar—is definitely that. Ali figures that auditioning seems like a good way to get her overprotective father to take her ambitions seriously. (grades 6–8)
Raining Sardines, Enrique Flores-Galbis, Roaring Books Press, 2007.

The artistic Ernestina and the analytical Enriquito use their ingenuity to save a herd of wild horses and stop an evil landowner from spoiling their Cuban village. (grades 6–8)

In the Shadow of the Alamo, Sherry Garland, Harcourt Children's Books, 2001.

Conscripted into the Mexican Army, fifteen-year-old Lorenzo Bonifacio makes some unexpected alliances and learns some harsh truths about General Santa Ana as the troops move toward the Battle of the Alamo. (grades 6–8)

Chasing the Jaguar, Michele Dominguez Greene, Harper Teen, 2006.

After having unsettling dreams about the kidnapped daughter of her mother's employer, fifteen-year-old Martika learns that she is a descendant of a long line of curanderas—Mayan medicine women with special powers. (grades 8 and up)

Lorenzo's Secret Mission, Lila Guzmán and Rick Guzmán, Arte Público Press, 2001.

In 1776, fifteen-year-old Lorenzo Bannister leaves Texas and his father's new grave to carry a letter to the Virginia grandfather he has never known, and becomes involved with the struggle of the American Continental Army and its Spanish supporters. Includes the historical figures of Bernardo de Gálvez and George Gibson. (grades 6–9)

Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child, Elva Trevino Hart, Bilingual Press, 1999.

A memoir describing the life of a child

growing up in a family of Mexican American migrant farm workers. (grades 6–8)
White Bread Competition, Jo Ann Yolanda Hernández, Arte Público Press, 1997.

Luz, a ninth-grade Latina student in San Antonio, wins a spelling competition; however, her success triggers a variety of emotions among family, friends, and the broader community. (grades 8 and up)
Cinnamon Girl: Letters Found Inside a Cereal Box, Juan Felipe Herrera, Joanna Cotler Books, 2005.

Yolanda, a Puerto Rican girl, tries to come to terms with her painful past as she waits to see if her uncle recovers from injuries he suffered when the towers collapsed on September 11. (grades 8–10)
CrashBoomLove: A Novel in Verse, Juan Felipe Herrera, University of New Mexico Press, 1999.

Sixteen-year-old Cesar struggles through high school after his father leaves town. (grades 8 and up)
La Linea, Ann Jaramillo, Roaring Books Press, 2006.

Miguel is set to leave his Mexican village to join his parents in California, but his little sister is determined to join him. (grades 6–8)
Breaking Through, Francisco Jiménez, Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

A sequel to *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*. Having come from Mexico to California ten years ago, fourteen-year-old Francisco is still working in the fields but fighting to improve his life and complete his education. (grades 6–8)
The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child, Francisco Jiménez, Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

These independent but intertwined stories follow the family through their migrant circuit, from picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots, and back again, over a number of years. (grades 6 and up)

And Now Miguel, Joseph Krumgold, Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

The young son of a New Mexico sheep rancher longs to go with the men when they take the sheep to the Sangre de Christo Mountains. (grades 6–8)

The Girl from Playa Blanca, Ofelia Dumas Lachtman, Piñata Books, 1995.

When Elena and her little brother, Carlos, leave their Mexican seaside village to search for their immigrant father in Los Angeles, they encounter intrigue, crime, mystery, friendship, and love. (grades 7–12)

Call Me Henri, Lorraine M. Lopez, Curbstone Press, 2006.

Henri has big dreams for his future but first he has to get his school to let him take French instead of English as a Second Language. (grades 6–9)

Heat, Mike Lupica, Penguin Group, 2007.

Pitching prodigy Michael Arroyo is on the run from social services after being banned from playing Little League baseball because rival coaches doubt he is only twelve years old and he has no parents to offer them proof. (grades 6–8)

Drift: A Novel, Manuel Luis Martínez, Picador, 2003.

At sixteen, Robert Lomos has lost his family. His father, a Latin jazz musician, has left San Antonio for life on the road as a cool-hand playboy. His mother, shattered by a complete emotional and psychological breakdown, has moved to Los Angeles with Robert's little brother. Robert has a plan: duck trouble, save his money, and head to California to put the family back together. Trouble is, no one believes a delinquent Mexican American kid has a chance—least of all, Robert himself. (grades 9–12)

Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida, Victor Martinez, HarperCollins Children's Books, 1999.

Manny relates his coming-of-age experiences as a member of a poor Mexican American family. (grades 6–8)

Cuba 15, Nancy Osa, Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2005.

Violet Paz, a Chicago high school student, reluctantly prepares for her upcoming “quince,” the celebration of a Hispanic girl's fifteenth birthday. (grades 6–10)

Emily Goldberg Learns to Salsa, Micol Ostow, Razorbill, 2007.

Forced to stay with her mother in Puerto Rico for weeks after her grandmother's funeral, half-Jewish Emily, who has just graduated from a Westchester, New York, high school, does not find it easy to connect with her Puerto Rican heritage and relatives she has never met. (grades 7–10)

Graffiti Girl, Kelly Parra, MTV, 2007.

A Mexican American high school student in a small California town is drawn into the underground world of graffiti art, feeling that it is the only way to express herself artistically and still remain true to her cultural identity. (grades 9–12)

Sisters: Hermanas, Gary Paulsen, Harcourt Children's Books, 1993.

The lives of a fourteen-year-old Mexican prostitute, living in the United States illegally, and a wealthy American girl dramatically intersect. (grades 8–12)

Crazy Loco, David Talbot Rice, Puffin, 2003.

This collection features nine stories about Mexican American kids growing up in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas. (grades 7–12)

Haters, Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, Little, Brown Young Readers, 2008.

Having tried for years to deny her psychic abilities, high school sophomore Paski has disturbing visions about the popular girl at her new high school in Orange County, California. (grades 9 and up)

Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A., Luis Rodriguez, Curbstone Press, 1993.

In this memoir, Rodriguez describes his experiences as a former gang member in and around the South San Gabriel Valley

during the late 1960s. (grades 9–12)

The Republic of East L.A.: Stories, Luis Rodriguez, HarperCollins, 2002.

Twelve gritty, hard-hitting snapshots taken from the lives of careworn characters struggling to survive amid crime, poverty and racism in the barrio of East Los Angeles. (grades 9–12)

Esperanza Rising, Pam Muñoz Ryan, Scholastic/Blue Sky Press, 2002.

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression. (grades 6–9)

Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood, Benjamin Alire Saenz, HarperCollins, 2006.

Sammy faces the challenges of “gringo” racism in 1969. (grades 9 and up)

The Whole Sky Full of Stars, René Saldaña Jr., Random House Children's Books, 2007.

Eighteen-year-old Barry competes in a nonsanctioned boxing match in hopes of helping his recently widowed mother, unaware that his best friend and manager has his own desperate need for a share of the purse that may put their friendship on the line. (grades 6–9)

Finding Our Way, René Saldaña Jr., Wendy Lamb Books, 2003.

A collection of short stories depicting life growing up Hispanic in America. (grades 7 and up)

So Hard to Say, Alex Sanchez, Simon & Schuster, 2006.

Thirteen-year-old Xio, a Mexican American girl, and Frederick, who has just moved to California from Wisconsin, quickly become close friends. When Xio starts thinking of Frederick as her boyfriend, he must confront his feelings of confusion and face the fear that he might be gay. (grades 6–9)

REFORMA continued on page 42

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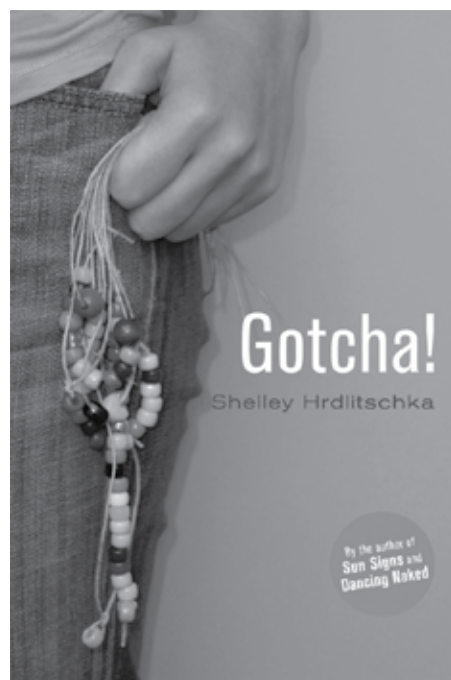
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From Helpful Teen to History Librarian A Recruitment Story

By Kathy Seaver

When my principal told me she was assigning a student to me every day for a ninety-minute block for the entire semester, I was not thrilled. The student was a freshman and she would be “helping” me. In the past, this meant that I was getting a problem student who needed to be out of a class for a reason never shared with me. I would then spend the rest of the semester finding busy work for the student. Little did I know that this time it would turn into a four-year-long great experience for me and a unique opportunity for the student! However, once I met the student, I recognized the gift I had been given. Claire was not a problem student and she had a sincere interest in working in the library.

Claire shared with me her early memories of libraries:

One of my favorite activities when I was little was visiting the public library with my mom and siblings. I loved to go and get new books, which I would promptly go home and devour. My love of books never faded—it just expanded. As soon as I was old enough to participate in the Teen Book Club, I joined, want-

ing to get together with other kids my age who loved books as much as I did. This was when I started thinking that it would be cool to become a librarian and being around all these books all the time.

That freshman year solidified Claire’s idea of becoming a librarian. She said, “Circumstances led to me helping in the information center every other day, and I absolutely loved it! I liked shelving books. Yes, it gets monotonous, but it is oddly therapeutic. I loved decorating for various seasons, and, yes, I thought it was so much fun to use the book scanner!”

It was this enthusiasm that made me think that she was a born librarian and a student that the library profession would love to have. At the end of the semester, I proposed something that had never been

done before in our school. The principal supported the idea that Claire could take library science as an educational option toward graduation credit.

Claire was excited about the prospect. “When Ms. Seaver brought up the possibility that I could come back to the library the next year and learn about library stuff to boot, I agreed right away. My special Library Science Ed-Op quickly became my favorite class of the year . . . every year.”

Her parents also gave their enthusiastic approval. The next step was to create a course of study since the class did not yet exist. The district’s educational option process mandates very specific requirements be fulfilled in the course of study. The option was originally written for a tutoring situation between a classroom teacher and student. I had to be creative to make the course of study fit the library. The mission statement was easy. The student would become an effective user and manager of information literacy to prepare for a career in the library science field. The units of skill area were also fairly simple.

Claire already knew the basic skills of correct Dewey shelving and using the automated circulation system, but I included these units of skill areas because she would still have desk and shelving responsibilities. I based other skill areas of library management, collection development, literacy and reading support, library-based technology, and literacy in information, technology, and media on the Ohio state guidelines for libraries.

The challenge was creating the projects, an assessment plan including exams

KATHY SEAVER is the Information Specialist at Colerain High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she has worked for nine years. Previously, she spent five years as the librarian for three elementary schools in the neighboring district of North College Hill. She is the past president of her local librarians’ association and recently represented librarians as a People-to-People delegate to Egypt.

and quizzes, student portfolio elements, and a workable timeline, which are all part of the requisites. Claire and I also were required to have one-on-one conferences. We were to accomplish all of this while my busy library operated as normal! The course of study ended up being written very precisely to meet all of the requirements with the understanding that, in actuality, we would be flexible with the timeline. The conferences would occur as necessary and when there was an opening in the schedule. Many of these conferences took place between my jumping up to help students with research, navigating a database, finding a book, and so on. The upside was that Claire got a real-world experience in what a school librarian's day is like!

Claire did a lot of observation during the first year. Through observation, she learned how to collaborate with teachers, find and suggest appropriate research tools for students' specific needs, teach Web evaluation and avoiding plagiarism, and present book talks. She became familiar with many other librarian duties as well.

She developed a portfolio that included a new library procedure and policy for computer usage, wrote a PTA newsletter article, created display cases and bulletin boards, and produced a materials consideration file using professional journals and Follett's Titlewave (www.flr.follett.com). Her work was always outstanding and her interests kept growing. She wanted to know more and more about the library science field.

It was a given then that I would offer her the chance to continue her education options. After talking it over with the principal, we decided that she would receive educational option credits for her junior and senior years, too! That meant that I wrote two more courses of study. Her junior year went further in depth to the management side of libraries. She built on her previous skills by actually doing some purchasing, working with students, and doing MARC

cataloging. In essence, she did a lot of work for me! Of course, I always checked and approved her work. But Claire's attention to detail and eagerness to learn left little for me to correct. By her senior year, she was ready for a more challenging assignment.

I needed to think of something that would incorporate all of the skills she had learned, but that would also keep her motivated. Claire loves history and is thinking of combining the library and history fields. The perfect project was to have her create a fictional university history library. She has "built" this library from the bottom up. She included a mission statement, budget proposal, facility plan, collection and equipment consideration plans, and a library staff proposal with job descriptions. She has planned communication venues including designing a webpage and in-service plans for university staff.

To help her explore her options, I made arrangements for her to speak with a public librarian and a history librarian at a nearby university. The public librarian came to the school. Claire had prepared questions for her based on my suggestions and areas she needed for her senior library portfolio. I contacted Miami University, which is an hour from the high school, and asked to arrange a field trip for just the two of us. She had the chance to not only speak with the history librarian at Miami University, but we were also given a behind-the-scenes tour of one of the campus libraries. The highlight was getting to view their rare book collection. I won't be a bit surprised if Claire chooses to become a rare book collection librarian. She was thrilled to examine a six-hundred-year-old book!

To further help her choose which librarian path to follow, I assigned her a final exam essay. She had to compare school libraries, public libraries, and university libraries.

Claire recognizes how much she has learned and grown. Claire has gained self-confidence: She has gone from a freshman

who tended to stay behind the desk and do clerical work to an outgoing staff member. She is comfortable helping students and has learned to spot those students who need help, but who don't ask for it. She assists teachers and confidently takes on tasks that need to be completed without being asked.

Claire also recognizes how much she has learned and grown:

My experiences in the library have helped me get a real idea of what it is to be a librarian. I have done all sorts of tasks, from the less glamorous inventory to creating display cases and bulletin boards. I have witnessed the creativity it takes to get as much as possible out of a small budget. I have seen the looks of gratitude on the faces of students when they are helped to find the perfect books for their projects. The end result, be it empty spaces after weeding, a gorgeous display case, or that look on students' faces is incredibly rewarding. Librarianship is not all about checking out books. People do not realize this less perceptible fulfilling side. My Library Science Ed-Op helped me understand this and also helped me to conclude that this stimulating environment is exactly what I need for my future.

As for me, I am a proud mentor. I hope to offer the educational option to more interested students. I encourage every librarian to offer a similar program. It will not only advocate for our profession, but I promise that it will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your career!

Claire graduated spring 2008. She is accepting a presidential scholarship to attend college and will major in history. She plans on then getting her masters in library science to become a history librarian! **YALS**

YA Q&A

Expert Advice on Tough Teen Services Questions

The following questions were submitted by students in Mary Anne Nichol's Library Materials and Services to Young Adults class at Kent State University in Ohio.

Q. Will I have a job? What are the job prospects for newly graduated young adult librarians?

A: I say yes, you will be able to find a job. But, I think it may require that job seekers be very flexible, both in the entry-level position they take and in relocating to take it. Libraries across the country are looking at different ways to do things. Fortunately for those interested in teen services, in many places serving teens is a dynamic area of growth. However, in libraries that do have physical teen spaces these teen departments may have a relatively small staff size or limited hours. Other libraries have just one position dedicated to teens that coordinates service across an entire library system. But with teen services continuing to be a growth area, many libraries are delivering teen services by including these duties with other jobs, such as reference or youth services librarian positions. Look closely at a job before dismissing it. Even if teen ser-

vices is not explicitly stated, if it seems like a flexible job description it is possible you may be doing teen services as a part of your "other duties as assigned."

I also believe that technology is going to continue to grow as a major way librarians—teen librarians and beyond—deliver service to our customers. Keeping your mind open about technology-based jobs is another way to widen your choices.

Relocating may be an inevitable fact of getting a solid first job. I moved four times in my first five years of being a professional librarian in the mid-1990s. I wouldn't trade any of those experiences for the world! But it did require the courage and dedication to pack up and move to several cities in which my husband and I literally knew no one. Getting that first job may mean making some tough choices, but facing these challenges is usually well worth it in the long run!—*Paula Brehm-Heeger, YALSA Past-President, 2008–09, Manager, TeenSpot, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio*

A: According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics for Librarians (www.bls.gov/oco/ocos068.htm #outlook) there is good news and bad news. The growth of the librarian profession is projected to be slower than average over the next ten years because of budget restraints and patrons becoming more comfortable

with electronic resources. However, there is quite a bit of good news. Nontraditional librarian jobs will grow: systems analysts, database specialists and trainers, webmasters or Web developers, local area network coordinators, information brokers, and jobs for private corporations, nonprofit organizations, and consulting firms. Growth is also expected for school librarian jobs, and many baby boomer librarians will be retiring over the next ten years. Librarian skills plus technology skills or teaching skills will give you an edge in the job market.

Q. How do you balance buying books teens would like with what parents think they should read? How do you balance the teens' desire for more controversial things knowing parents or other adults would not approve or call it trash?

A: I am in a public library so we purchase the books that our patrons (meaning teens) would want to read. Therefore, since our collection is for 11–18 year olds we purchase a variety of books with protagonists that age facing situations that teens would face in stories that would be interesting to teens. In short, we buy books TEENS want to read. We also purchase a limited collection of nonfiction books with teen appeal.

In our library, Children's Services purchases nonfiction materials and books for children from birth to eighteen and our Adult Services collection has some nonfiction of teen interest, but not a lot, so the YA collection tries to fill in the gaps. We have a small space in our collection for a limited number of nonfiction, so we only purchase materials that have high teen ap-

peal. Consequently, this collection is made up of mostly maturity issues, poetry, art, and current event materials.

Because our collection spans such a wide age group, we encourage parents to come into the YA area and help their teens choose books if they are concerned about what their teens may be reading. Children and teens are notorious for wanting to read up, meaning that they want stories about teens that are older than they are, which sometimes leads to more mature situations. This can sometimes lead to parents fearing that a book is inappropriate for their teen. My staff and I try to always explain to parents that not every book in the collection is appropriate for every teen looking for books. Parents and caregivers are always invited to read it before they hand it over to their teen or read it along with them.

When we provide readers advisory to

teens, we always make it a point to direct all of our answers to the teen, even if the parents are standing there and providing the answers. This helps us establish a relationship with our teens to help them find the perfect book for them, not their parents. In addition, our staff continually creates annotated bibliographies that include suggested age ranges to highlight our collection and steer teens and parents in the right direction.

We, of course, have a reconsideration policy in place. If a patron or parent does have a problem with a book, we invite them to talk to us about. If they want us to reconsider a purchase they must follow the steps outlined in our policy. That includes reading the book themselves from cover to cover and providing a written request with specific reasons why they think the book is inappropriate.

One parent's trash is another teen's treasure. I believe in having a well-balanced collection. There is something on our stacks for every teen reader no matter their age, interests, maturity level, religious or cultural background, whatever. Our collection development policy clearly defines our collection as one for education and enjoyment; therefore, we don't distinguish or exclude one or the other. In our adult collection we don't tell adults what they can and cannot read and so we don't do it in the YA section either. We leave that decision up to a parent and their teen. And we are here with a helpful ear if a parent has an issue and would like to visit with us about it so we can explain to them why we think it important for us to have that title in our collection for other readers.—*Kimberly A. Patton, Young Adult Specialist, Lawrence (Kans.) Public Library* **YALSA**

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Stress-Free Programming for Teens

Stop the Stress and Do More by Doing Less

By Samantha Larsen Hastings

Have you begged, bribed, and bartered with teens to convince them to come to library programs with little results? Have you advertised, at the library, at schools, at community centers with no increase of attendance? Have you spent hours planning, preparing, and presenting programs with pathetic numbers to show for your hard work? It's time to stop!

In the popular Disney movie *Freaky Friday*, the teenager Anna, while inhabiting her mother's body, explains to adults everywhere, "Quality time with your kids: You know what? Quit bugging 'em. Leave 'em alone. They like it!"¹ Stop trying to convince your teens to participate in your activities—instead give them stress-free independent programs.

Independent Programs

Definition: Programs without a specific time or place. Programs where teens don't have to

talk to a librarian or anyone else. Programs that require little staff preparation, minimal maintenance, and quick clean up.

Like many other librarians who plan and promote teen programming, I found myself frustrated with how hard I was trying only to get small results. Despite my low programming numbers, the circulation in the Young Adult Fiction collection increased more than 15 percent in 2007. I turned to independent programming to reach out to teens that were using library materials and services but not talking to librarians.

"Thank you so much! Yes, I have received the news and am so excited! Who knew that I would win?"
—Bronwyn (13).

Independent Programming Ideas

Here are a few independent programming ideas to inspire you:

Book Predictions

Are teens waiting for the next book in their favorite series? Are they speculating on what will happen to whom and when? Have teens write down their predictions either in print or online. For print, have the teens write their prediction on one side of the paper and their contact information on the other. Place the predictions in a decorated three-ring binder (contact information not showing) so that other teens can read the predictions. For online predictions, have teens e-mail or post them to a library blog or MySpace account. Drawings, small prizes, and treat incentives make this program popular. The latest prediction program at my library was for the final book of the bestselling *Twilight* series. Teens wrote predictions and chose between a *Twilight* tattoo or a sucker. All predictions were entered in a drawing to receive a new copy of *Breaking Dawn* the day the book it was released.

Take-Then-Make Crafts

Make-and-Take Crafts are popular at many libraries. Instead of having teens

make the craft in the library, try handing out the craft materials and instructions in a plastic baggy so they can take them and make them wherever and whenever they want. For Teen Read Week 2007, I handed

SAMANTHA LARSEN HASTINGS is a Public Services Librarian for Salt Lake County (Utah) Library Services. She is Chair of the Utah Library Association's Young Adult Round Table 2008–09.

out LOL zipper-pull kits with an 8-inch black cord, a zipper pull, two square “L” beads and one square “O” bead. Additional colored and round beads and smiley face beads were available for teens to personalize their zipper-pulls.

Quizzes/Handouts

The easiest type of independent programming is creating handouts. Pop culture quizzes, text message quizzes, crosswords, and surveys can be posted online or printed. When a teen completes a quiz he or she turns it in at a desk to get a choice of a small prize or treat.

“Yay!! Thanks so much for choosing my song!”—
Samantha (15).

Writing Contests

From short stories to six-word biographies, many teens are accomplished and motivated writers who want attention, recognition, and a place to publish. Specify the length, format, and theme for the entries in the contest. You can create writing contests around holidays, themes, and publish the entries in library newsletters, on library websites, blogs, MySpace, or teen zines.

Extreme Makeover: Book Cover Edition

Judge the book by its cover! Teens create new book covers for their favorite books. Teens can draw, paint, or digitally create a new book cover (no copyrighted material). Display the book covers with the original books.

Book Reviews

The most popular independent program at my library is writing book reviews. I place a “Win a Free Book” sign in the teen area with book review forms and a slotted box. In the first week the box was so full that I had to empty it. I now empty the box every couple of weeks and draw names for free books. The books are from donations or leftovers from the summer reading club.

Reading the teen reviews lets me know what teens like, what they don’t like, and what they are looking for in a book. Here are just a few teen reviews:

- Ryan P. (14). *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer: “I love the whole book.”
- McKenzie M. (12). *Fairest* by Gail Carson Levine: “It was fun, different, and creative.”
- Jessica J. (17). *Mimus* by Lilli Thal: “*Mimus* is one of my favorite books. It’s interesting and almost creepy. Very cool.”

Conclusion

Don’t give up on teen programming; just stop trying to get busy teens to come to a certain place at a specific time. Try stress-free independent programming at your library, you may accomplish more by doing less. **YALS**

Reference

1. Mark Waters, *Freaky Friday*, (Anaheim, Calif.: Walt Disney Video, 2003).

Text Message Quiz

1. aaf _____
2. b4u _____
3. cm _____
4. dkdk _____
5. plz _____
6. rofl _____
7. NgoC8 _____
8. *vin _____
9. 2L8 _____
10. u+me _____

Text Quiz Answers: (1) aaf = ask a friend (2) b4u = before you (3) cm = call me (4) dkdk = don’t know, don’t care (5) plz = please (6) rofl = rolling on the floor laughing (7) NgoC8 = negotiate (8) *vin = starving (9) 2L8 = too late (10) u+me = you and me

Book Review Form

1. Name/Age _____
2. Email/Phone _____
3. Title of Book _____
4. Author _____
5. How many stars? (circle one)
1 2 3 4 5
6. What did you like or not like about this book?

(You can write more comments on the back)

Freak Out or Melt Down

Teen Responses to Trauma and Depression

By Jami L. Jones

In the book *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, a popular senior at an end-of-summer party rapes Melinda Sordino, an entering freshman.¹ Stunned and dazed—and slightly drunk, Melinda calls 911 for help. Although the police respond and break up the party, Melinda spends her first year in high school shunned as the girl “who called the cops.”² No one connects the party, telephone calls, and rape to Melinda’s plummeting grades, bloody lip chewing, and refusal to speak. If only Melinda’s parents, friends, and teachers had known about the impact and symptoms of trauma and depression, perhaps her first year in high school would not have been such a social and academic disaster.

Although *Speak* is a fictional account of one teen’s traumatic experience that results in anxiety and depression, the book is instructive for adults seeking to understand why teens sometimes act the ways they do. Through Melinda’s experience, the reader comes to understand the impact of trauma and depression.

Trauma and Teens

Trauma is defined as a normal reaction to an extreme event.³ There are two things to note about trauma: First, each person reacts differently to difficult situations. Second, it is not the event that causes trauma, but rather how a person perceives and thinks about the experience.⁴

JAMI L. JONES is Assistant Professor in the Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. Dr. Jones is the creator of the Florida Association of Media in Education’s Amanda Award that recognizes media specialists who develop programs that promote teen resiliency and self-esteem. She is the author of *Bouncing Back: Dealing with the Stuff Life Throws at You* (Franklin Watts, 2007) and *Helping Teens Cope: Resources for School Library Media Specialists and Other Youth Workers* (Linworth, 2003). Dr. Jones received a BA in Sociology from Mills College in Oakland, California, an MLS from the University of Maryland, and a PhD in Information Science from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She can be contacted at jonesj@ecu.edu or through her website (www.askdrjami.org).

Two types of situations cause trauma: event and process. An event trauma is a sudden, unexpected stressful occurrence that is limited in duration and location. A hurricane or a fire, for instance, is an event trauma. Unexpected death resulting from a fatal car crash—and this occurs many times each year throughout American high schools—falls into this category too. Process trauma is continued exposure to a long-lasting stressor, such as war or physical abuse.⁵ The impact of a traumatic event depends on the type of disaster or trauma, its suddenness, and its extent, as well as the individual’s social surroundings, past experiences, and culture. Human-caused traumas such as terrorism or other violence are more damaging to mental health than naturally occurring traumas such as weather-related events or accidents.

Symptoms of Trauma

Whatever the situation—event or process—that leads to trauma, the symptoms are expressed physically, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally.⁶ Physical responses to trauma can include numbness, fatigue, and weakness; increased heart rate

and blood pressure; dry mouth; nausea; sweating or chills, clammy skin, tremors, or dizziness; chest pains, muscle tension and headaches; and teeth grinding.⁷ Emotional responses include feelings of helplessness and anxiety, anger and resentment, survivor's guilt, shock, initial inappropriate emotional responses at the time of the event, irritability, isolation or confusion, hyper vigilance (intensely watching for more distressing events), fear of separation from loved ones, and suicidal thoughts.⁸ Cognitive symptoms are decreased attention span, impaired thinking and decision making, problems with memory and concentration, flashbacks, nightmares, and difficulty identifying familiar objects or people.⁹ Behavioral symptoms include withdrawal from family and friends, change in appetite, increased drinking or smoking, intensified "startle" reflex, emotional outbursts, and inability to rest.¹⁰

Traumatic situations are especially perilous to adolescents for two reasons. First, trauma interferes with the important social and emotional development that occurs during these years. Teens who struggle with trauma may experience social isolation, declining school performance, behavioral problems, and other issues that affect both current quality of life and future functioning; they may become reclusive and antisocial.¹¹ Second, adolescence is a time of increased brain development. There is evidence that stress associated with traumatic events can change major structural components of the central nervous system and the neuroendocrine system.¹² Severe traumatic stress affects chemicals in the brain, which can change brain structures, leaving a lasting effect.¹³

Adolescents are more likely than any other age group to experience trauma. One study found that by the age of eleven, 11 percent of youth have experienced a traumatic event. By the age of eighteen, 43 percent of youth have experienced such an event.¹⁴ During this developmental stage of

life, as adolescents are striving to define and understand themselves, they are naturally stretching their boundaries.¹⁵ Sometimes their adventurous risk-taking ways make them more susceptible to experiencing traumatic events such as bullying and embarrassment in school, violence in the home and community, experimentation with drugs, and injury and death from auto crashes—the number one killer of teens.¹⁶ For every teen who is killed, many others are affected.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Some adolescents who experience trauma may develop a more serious condition known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A diagnosis of PTSD requires that a person experience a traumatic event as well as suffer from the following symptoms, which cause significant distress or impairment, for more than thirty days:

- Re-experiencing of the event
- Avoidance of related events or scenarios
- Increased physiological arousal¹⁷

Exposure to violence and the sudden or unexpected death of a loved one are the two biggest predictors of PTSD, but the latter is most associated with this condition.¹⁸ Human-caused traumas such as terrorism or other violence are more damaging to mental health than naturally occurring traumas such as weather-related events or accidents. Boys and girls experience and respond to trauma differently. Although males are more likely to be exposed to traumatic stressors, females are more likely to experience PTSD.¹⁹

Many health care providers and adults overlook PTSD in adolescents, which may be because some behaviors that commonly

occur in adolescence (such as rebelliousness and withdrawal) can look very similar to symptoms of PTSD.²⁰ In addition, sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a teen is suffering from PTSD or depression. PTSD is different from depression in that it is marked by fear and agitation rather than moodiness and withdrawal.²¹ Even though there are subtle differences between depression and PTSD, a teen could suffer both.

Depression and Teens

Depression in teens is often difficult to diagnose because adolescent behavior is marked by both up and down moods, alternating between "life is wonderful" and "I can't stand it anymore." In adolescents, a depressed mood is common because of the normal maturation process and the stress associated with it, the influence of sex hormones, and conflicts with parents over independence. Depression may also be a reaction to a disturbing event, such as the death of a friend or relative, a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or failure at school. Adolescents, who have low self-esteem, are highly self-critical, and who feel little sense of control over negative events are particularly at risk to become depressed when they experience stressful events.

Symptoms of Depression

Like trauma, depression is expressed physically, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally.²² Physical symptoms include chronic tiredness, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and increased aches and pains. Emotional symptoms include sadness, anger, irritability, crying, feeling unloved and sorry for oneself, and loss of humor. Cognitive symptoms include difficulty concentrating and making decisions, a preoccupation with death, and a tendency to blame

oneself when things go wrong. Behavioral symptoms include withdrawal from contact with friends and family members and a loss of interest in school achievement.²³

Many teens experience some depressive symptoms occasionally. Similar to trauma, the rate of depression grows steadily throughout childhood. In the United States, approximately 2.5 percent of children experience depression, but the number rises to 8.3 percent for adolescents. A National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)—sponsored study of nine to seventeen year olds estimates that the prevalence of any depression is more than 6 percent in a six month period, with 4.9 percent having major depression. In addition, research indicates that the onset of depression is occurring earlier in life today than in past decades. According to the NIHM website, a recently published longitudinal study found that “early-onset depression often persists, recurs, and continues into adulthood, and indicates that depression in youth may also predict more severe illness in adult life.”²⁴ Depression in young people often coincides with other mental disorders, most commonly anxiety, disruptive behavior, or substance abuse disorders, and with physical illnesses such as diabetes.²⁵ According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, one in eight teens suffers from clinical depression, but girls are more likely to experience depression than boys. The reason is not fully known, but researchers point to stress as the likely cause. This stress is caused by the many changes teens experience as they transition from the protected elementary school to a middle school environment that brings more difficult academic work and the need to work with a variety of teachers rather than one.

Other stressors are physical and hormonal changes. Girls who mature early are especially vulnerable to depression. Early

maturing girls may develop friendships with older teens who then introduce them to situations they are not ready to handle. In addition, Hispanic and African American teens are more likely to have felt sad or hopeless than Caucasian teens.²⁶

Social scientists believe that there is a predisposition to depression. “Statistically, children of depressed parents are three times more likely to become depressed themselves than children whose parents do not have depression.”²⁷ A study of seventy-nine high school seniors found that teens who were depressed were more likely to have a depressed or stressed parent.²⁷ When the genetic risk interacts with life stress, depression may be the result. “Some [researchers] feel that children inherit a predisposition to depression and anxiety, but the environmental triggers are necessary to elicit the first episode of Major Depression.”²⁸

Teen depression cannot always be prevented, but there are some things that can help reduce the chances of an episode of depressions in a teen who is at risk. Although some of the causes of depression in teenagers seem to be genetic—and these cannot be changed—other triggers of teen depression can be avoided. Some of the risk factors for teen depression include

- a family or personal history of depression;
- a long-term illness or disability, whether physical or mental;
- experiencing a trauma or loss, including abuse, divorce of parents, death of a loved one, or a break-up, difficulties at home, at school, or with friends.²⁹

Teen depression is a serious condition. Therapy is an important part of treating teen depression. Individual or group therapy can help teens with depression to recognize and change the negative thought patterns that may cause or trigger depression; it can help them find better ways to

solve problems and learn better social and interpersonal skills. Medications prescribed by a doctor are commonly used to treat depression among teens.

How You Can Help Teens Cope

In a world that is becoming increasingly more dangerous and stressful, there are ways librarians can help teens cope with trauma and depression:

- Strengthen teens before difficult times occur by building their resilience.³⁰ Teach teens to solve problems and deal with stressful situations so when difficulties arise they will know how to react in positive ways. In addition, facilitate their participation in hobbies and positive activities through collection development and creation of programs.
- Create a library that is safe and comfortable by developing spaces that are teen friendly. Develop rules and procedures that are fair and applied consistently so you do not add to a teen's problems.
- Hire librarians who like and understand teens and respond to them in supportive and nurturing ways.
- Develop programs that teach teens about the importance of taking care of themselves by living a healthy lifestyle that includes eating properly and getting enough exercise and sleep.

When adolescents do experience a traumatic event, librarians and other youth workers should take the following actions as soon as possible:

- Direct them away from the site of violence or destruction, the severely injured, and any continuing danger.

- Provide support to teens who are showing signs of panic and intense grief, such as trembling, agitation, refusing to speak, loud crying, or rage. Stay with them until they are stabilized.
- Reestablish library services, hours, and other routines as soon as possible.
- Communicate to teens compassionately both verbally and nonverbally.
- Help the adolescent feel more in control by providing information about the traumatic event in language that is easily understood.³¹

Librarians provide an important supportive role in the community. Likewise, the library is an organization that can impact many teens because it is open and available to all community members regardless of income, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. As librarians learn more about the difficulties that befall teens, it is possible to create a supportive library environment and staff it with caring and concerned individuals who meet the needs of our younger citizens. Only two characters in *Speak* are supportive of Melinda during her yearlong crisis. One is the school librarian who soothes Melinda by telling her to “calm down, calm

down. It's OK. Don't get upset. You are Melinda Sordino, right? I'll mark you present. Let me show you how it works.”³² YALS

Professional Resources to Learn More about Trauma and Depression

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. www.nctsnct.net/org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr_top_adol (accessed June 30, 2008).

National Institutes of Mental Health. “Children and Violence.” www.nimh.nih

YA Novels about Trauma and Depression

Reaction to Traumatic Events

Brooks, Kevin. *Road of the Dead*. Scholastic, 2006; ISBN: 9780439786232; 352p; \$16.99.

When their older sister is raped and murdered on the moors of Northern England, psychically gifted Cole and revenge-bent Ruben go in search of the killer so their grieving mother can bury her daughter.

Giles, Gail. *Right Behind You*. Little Brown, 2007; ISBN: 9780316166362; 304p; \$16.99.

Nine-year-old Kip, grieving his mother's death from cancer, loses control and sets fire to another child who is taunting him. As a teenager Kip is released from the psychiatric hospital and tries to resume life under a new name, but he is unable to forgive himself.

Hautman, Pete. *Invisible*. Simon & Schuster, 2005; ISBN: 9780689868009; 149p; \$16.99.

After a traumatic fire that takes the life

of his best friend, Doug has not let go and still talks to him on a daily basis, while he hides away in the basement making train tracks out of matches.

Rapp, Adam. *Under the Wolf, Under the Dog*. Candlewick, 2004; ISBN: 9780763618186; 210p; \$16.99.

Via his journal while in a treatment center, Steve looks back at a year of traumatic events, including self-destructive behavior, that result in his commitment.

Depression

Clinton, Catherine. *The Eyes of Van Gogh*. Candlewick, 2007; ISBN: 9780763622459; 216p; \$16.99.

A move to a new town does not help artistically gifted Jude, even though she has a boyfriend and new friends, as she sees herself in Van Gogh's tortured eyes and attempts suicide.

Hopkins, Ellen. *Impulse*. Simon & Schus-

ter, 2007; 9781416903567; 672p; \$16.99.

Via free verse, three teens in a psychiatric facility who have attempted suicide write about what happened in their lives to result in their self destructive behavior.

Vizzini, Ned. *It's Kind of a Funny Story*. Miramax, 2006; ISBN: 9780786851966; 448p; \$16.95.

When Craig cannot handle the pressure of attending an academically demanding pre-professional high school he becomes depressed, seeks help and receives it, but stops taking his medication and ends up checking himself into a psychiatric ward.

Booklist developed by Ruth Cox Clark, Associate Professor, Department of Library and Instructional Technology, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C. Dr. Clark, a YALSA board member, is the author of Tantalizing Tidbits for Teens: Quick Booktalks for the Busy High School Library Media Specialist.

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Young Adults Library Services Association. "Dealing with Tragedy and Terror." www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/profdev/dealingtragedy.cfm (accessed June 30, 2008).

Reading List for Teens Who Experience Disaster. www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=News&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=103536 (accessed June 30, 2008).

NYU Child Study Center. www.aboutourkids.org/families/disorders_treatments/az_disorder_guide (accessed June 30, 2008).

TeensHealth. <http://kidshealth.org/teen> (accessed June 30, 2008). **YALS**

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When talking about the library she runs in the Alameda County (Calif.) Juvenile Justice Center, Amy Cheney gets right to the point:

It's not just about the library. It's not even just about the books. It's about the youth who are incarcerated here. It's about showing them that they can change their lives. It's about introducing them to people who have had similar experiences, who have been in gangs, or in prison, or hooked on drugs, and who have decided to change their lives and accomplished it, and then written about their experiences. "This is how I got out, and how you can get out too." These are people the kids here can identify with, who can show them that there are options. They *can* choose to succeed.

Cheney has worked at the center since 1999, when a small grant allowed Alameda County Library to begin the Write to Read program, bringing in local and nationally known authors to speak to and meet the teens she serves. Today, the people she brings in are amazing, but she grew her credibility slowly and carefully. Some of the writers who have participated in the program are Terry Macmillan, Dolores Huerta, Terence Howard, Michael Eric Dyson, Erin Gruwell and the Freedom Writers, Victor Martinez, Zlata Filipovic, Zac Ungler, Victor Rivers, Cupcake Brown, Ishmael Beah, and more. Many of them come back more than once, some on an annual basis, because they see the value of what they say

to the kids and the response they get.

"What these people have to say has the possibility of making a huge impact on the kids here. Dolores Huerta cofounded the United Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez, and when she came to talk about what they did and why, she had the kids in the Max Unit reading Ghandi after her visit. Ghandi!" Cheney shakes her head in wonder.

The Center's Population

Cheney knows what she's talking about when she describes the teens she works with.

The most important thing is to

It's All About the Kids

Presenting Options and Opening Doors

By Joni Richards Bodart

get the kids excited about reading and writing, and to use that to help them connect with the world at large. They're disenfranchised. They may not have been introduced to standard concepts basic to our society. You tell them that men and women are equal, and they say, 'Huh?' It's a new concept, because of the way they've been raised, or had to raise themselves. They've been marginalized. Many of the youth incarcerated here don't understand the concept of their opinions having merit, or their lives having value. Sometimes when people get locked up, it's the first time they've had a chance to stop and take a look at what's going on in their lives. When they are here, they have clothes to wear, a place to live, food—that's not always true 'on the outs.' There, they are spending so much time taking care of necessities and staying alive, they don't have a chance to take a look at the big picture. When their basic needs are met, then they

JONI RICHARDS BODART is an Assistant Professor in the School of Library and Information Science, San Jose State University, and is internationally known for her books on booktalking and controversial literature for teens. In 1978–79, she was YA Coordinator for the Stanislaus County Free Library in Modesto, California, and visited the county juvenile hall every other week, and found it a life-changing experience.

can begin to look at themselves and their lives—how they got here, and how they can get to a better place.

The vast majority of the youth Cheney works with have been severely abused mentally, sexually, and physically. They have been neglected, forced to grow up on their own, without adult advice and support, or with advice that's designed to help them survive in their world, rather than get away from it or overcome it. They've been in and out of prison, and so have most of their families and friends. Their chronological ages and their experiences are completely out of synch. They have had adult experiences, but they're completely unequipped to deal with them emotionally because their emotional age is that of a child. Their worlds are often small, constricted, and difficult to escape or change. Books can open a window out of those worlds, and meeting authors who have escaped can confirm that there *are* ways out.

Collection Development

Helping the youth she serves change their lives is Cheney's first goal, and everything else she does supports it. She wants them to have a chance to reflect on their lives, and on the opportunities available to them to make changes in those lives. Books are selected on the basis of their impact on the reader, books that reflect their world and themselves, but also need to show a way out of that world.

Too Beautiful for Words, by Monique Morris, examines the world of prostitutes, pimps, and drugs, and a child born into that world who has to decide whether or not he will follow his father's footsteps. Through a relationship with a Black Panther, he begins to question his own actions, and think more clearly about his life and what he wants it to be. The reader is inspired to think about the cost of making

mistakes, examine the reasons behind people's actions, question the characters' decisions, and consider the beliefs, right and wrong, that led to those decisions. Sophia, one of Cheney's volunteers, who has her own success story and is listening to the conversation while she shelves books, puts it succinctly as she describes the kind of books Cheney buys for her library: "[They] make you question your actions, instead of affirming them."

When teens come into the library wanting a book on gangs and killing, Cheney hands them Ishmael Beah's book, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. Set in Africa, it details Beah's life as it is transformed overnight when his whole village is killed. He is recruited into the army, encouraged to kill in retaliation for his family's deaths, and eventually becomes as addicted to killing as he is to cocaine. Years later, he's brought to a rehabilitation center, and slowly begins to rebuild his life. Youth are able to identify with Beah's life (even though it is set in another world and another country), recognize the emotions he expresses, and see how he was able to redeem himself. Beah's book is a 2008 Alex Award Winner.

In contrast, *C-Murder's Death around the Corner* is adult urban lit that reflects the real life these kids know only too well—but that's all. It doesn't take the next step, and let readers know that they don't have to stay stuck in that life, that there's a way out. "C-Murder's message is not the message I want to be sending," Cheney said. "I don't have those kinds of books in my library—I can't justify them, not to me, not to the staff, not to the administration. They don't serve the needs of the youth here." Cheney knows the importance and the value of the trust that teachers, staff, youth, and administration have in her and in the library collection, and is unwilling to jeopardize it.

A Place to Stand, by Jimmy Santiago Baca, is another example of a man who was able to redeem himself through his writ-

ing, but it also recounts his adolescence in a series of juvenile halls, his years as a drug dealer, and a dark and detailed account of life in a maximum security prison, including lengthy solitary confinements. Most boys have seen the film *Blood in, Blood Out*, and are ready to read the book it was based on. In his book, Baca shows both his public mask and the inner persona behind the bravado, and reveals the emotions of someone who has been abandoned. His readers see the why behind his actions. They find the gangs and violence they wanted to read about, but they also get a powerful statement on the redemptive power of books and reading. Something to identify with, something to inspire.

Circulation and the Honor System

Cheney is careful to make sure that coming to the library and having books available is a positive experience. Teens have access to books 24/7, in the library, in the tall bookshelf in each of the units, and in their own rooms. Everything is run on the honor system—only four books in their rooms, although they can check out what they need and keep them on the bookshelf in their unit, and no graffiti or damaging books. When books are checked out, they are examined for graffiti, and when found, it's erased or crossed out.

If I punish the kids, they will be a lot more likely to quit coming in or reading at all. Graffiti is a part of their world, and they don't define it as wrong. I want this to be a pleasant place, and reading a fun thing to do. So I spend time talking about the importance of the honor system, being responsible for themselves, and treating the books with respect. I respect them by providing clean books about things they want to

read about. They show respect for the library and the books by helping them stay clean and undamaged. “On the outs” it would be disrespectful to erase one of your own gang’s tags—it would never happen. But inside, it’s a different culture. Books are valued and respected. I’ve never had anyone refuse to erase graffiti, no matter who did it. Education, not punishment.

The library is arranged more like a bookstore than a public library. Books are grouped by subject, but not according to the Dewey Decimal System. Cheney uses a system of twenty-one genres/subject areas to divide up her collection. The largest groups are books by or about African Americans or Latinos, and include both fiction and nonfiction. She has both adult and young adult materials, and many teens gravitate toward the adult titles because they see themselves more clearly in them. And many want truth not fiction, so “True Stories” is another large category. Lots of the books are shelved cover-out, to encourage visitors to pick them up. Since volunteers like Sophia do the reshelving, the arrangement must be overt, logical, and easy to follow. It’s not about keeping everything in precisely the correct place—it’s about making sure everyone can find what they’re looking for.

“Books and Reading are Cool Here.”

Cheney sees her role as a caretaker, something many of these youth have never had. “I have a moral and ethical obligation to provide the very best for these teens. I’m committed to helping them get a new perspective on life, showing them options and alternatives, helping them understand the context of their lives, and create their own set of ethics, their own sense of integrity, in

the face of difficult decisions. I want to help bring them into the larger world that exists outside the little box that’s been their life.”

Sophia breaks in again. “It’s more than just having books. What Amy does here, when she brings in authors and introduces books, is truly magic. She shows us how much difference just one book can make in our lives.” And Sophia knows what she’s talking about. As a teen, she was involved “in all things negative,” and heading down to road to long-term incarceration. But now she is a young mother and a full-time university student majoring in sociology and planning to go to law school. She went from being a statistic to being a success, and is devoted to helping teens, especially young incarcerated mothers, get the help they need to succeed as well.

Today, books, reading, and writing are integral parts of the lives of teens incarcerated here. In what might seem to be a most unlikely place, there is a culture of excitement about books, a motivation to read, and an understanding of reading’s importance and life-changing power. Even the janitor has stopped Cheney in the hall to talk about books and reading, and his excitement about an upcoming author, Farrah Gray. Involving everyone at the center is the true key to the program’s success. Everyone is invested, supporting it, and aware of the positive results. The library is one of the central parts of the center, helping staff and administration make positive changes in the lives of the teens who must stay there.

How to Start a Library in Your Facility

When considering starting a library program in a juvenile facility, there are several factors that need to be addressed. First of all, it’s essential to value the institution you are affiliating with, and the people who staff it. You are coming into facility as a stranger, and if you haven’t worked in

a prison setting, you are also coming in as a novice, no matter how much you know about books and kids on the outside. This is different, *very* different, and it’s important to learn the rules and the culture before starting to make changes.

Following the rules, learning the culture, valuing the staff and youths’ knowledge and wisdom, and letting them teach you, will win their trust and approval, both of which are essential for your program’s success. It also allows you to become part of the family, and gradually gain their respect, earning more influence and status for both you and your program.

Administrative trust and support are key. An organization reflects the philosophy of its leaders, and when they are on board with the library, it will be much more quickly seen as an integral part of the organization. Administrators can also promote the library and literacy to a wide variety of groups, creating opportunities for donations, inspiring people to volunteer, and publicizing its successes and achievements.

The more rapport you have with the staff, teachers, the more chances you’ll have to advocate for the kids, and the more likely that teens will be given chances to go to the bookshelves in their units, as well as to the library itself. It’s necessary to make sure that the staff and teachers buy into the library, the books, and the value of literacy. One way to do this is to involve them—find out what they would like to see in the library, what materials would enhance their teaching and their work with the youth, what authors might have a larger impact on the teens in their classes and units.

It’s important that everyone knows who you are, so get out of the library, and visit the units, talk to the staff, teachers, administration, and to the teens themselves. Tell them about the library, and about books. When they can’t come to the library for some reason, you can take the library to them. Let them see your excitement about books, books about a world they can recog-

nize. Then, when they are allowed to visit the library, there will be a familiar face, and perhaps, even some familiar books. It's also important to help teachers and staff see that visiting the library is important, so their students can see all the books they can choose from, and the different genres and topics they can read about. Even seeing the outside world through the library windows can be a positive experience. It's a safe place, neutral ground, not a place for turf disputes.

All organizations have factions, and you need to be able to work with them. Cheney explains that she makes her mission and role very clear. "I am here to support the youth in enhancing their lives. That is the purpose of the library—to show them that they have options in life. Deal equitably with everyone, and give them respect. It will be returned. That being said, it's also important to stand up for yourself and your program. You are offering a valuable and life-changing service, and defending it can help others understand its value."

How to Start a "Write to Read" Program in Your Facility

When starting to put into place a literacy program bringing authors into juvenile detention centers, such as Write to Read, start with noncontroversial speakers that are likely to be familiar to the staff and administration. "I didn't start with Tookie Williams on a cell phone from Death Row," Cheney laughs. "I was lucky, Terry Mc-Millan lives in the Bay Area, so I just called and asked if she'd be willing to come and talk to the kids, and she was. It's gone on from there."

Working with a bookstore and a speaker's bureau will be valuable in locating authors and providing copies of the books for the kids to read before and after the authors' presentations. Connecting with

publishers keeps you current on important authors and their titles, and may result in donated books. The ability to work with bureaucracy is essential. You have to know who to contact about supplying the funds for travel, room and board, and books. Some authors are willing to cover their own costs, because they know the importance of what they are doing, and the impact they will have on their audiences, but not all are willing or able to do this.

Prepare everything ahead of time, the space, the author, the youth. The space may not be ideal, so work with what you have—be creative. The authors need to know how many different groups they will be speaking to, and how they will be likely to react. It's also helpful to let authors know that some of their audience has read their book or books, and will have questions for them. The youth need to know what's expected of them and what to expect from the author. Making sure everyone is prepared will help ensure that the event is a positive experience for everyone.

Cheney's Write to Read Project has won national and local awards, including the 2006 Coming Up Taller Award, granted by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, recognizing that it is an exemplary national model of serving the literacy needs of incarcerated youth. Cheney was also recognized as one of *Library Journal's* Movers and Shakers for 2006.

Two years later, as she looks into the future, she wishes for funding to bring in the Project CRISIS male accountability program to work with the boys. It's made up of a group of San Quentin ex-offenders, released from life sentences after more than twenty-three years of incarceration because they have graduated from the Inspire Prison Project, an extremely effective in-prison rehabilitation program. These men teach anger management, integrity, the value of telling the truth, taking responsibility for yourself and your actions, and valuing yourself. According to the California Youth

Authority, graduates of the program show a 56 percent reduction in major and minor offenses, while 70 percent of those who don't participate do reoffend. "If only we could get to these boys before they got involved in the adult prison system, imagine how many lives could be changed," Cheney says.

"What's most important in this job? Finding a way to get it done. Thinking outside the box. Don't accept 'you can't'—find a way. Say 'Yes, I can. It's something that needs to be done, and I'm going to do it.' A center administrator recently thanked Amy for her persistence in advocating for youth. He said, 'this is a great thing you're doing, and if you hadn't come knocking on my door every day, wanting to do it, it would never have happened.' You also need to go beyond the knowledge you have as a librarian, and learn as much as you can about the culture of incarceration—restorative justice classes, working with abused youth, and the psychology of adolescents. Take African American or Latino literature courses at your local college. And don't forget to learn about picture books and middle school readers that might work for this population."

The Library

At first glance, to an outsider more familiar with public libraries, rather than prison libraries, this one doesn't seem to be in a well-appointed space. But Cheney explains that it's the best room in the facility, and the only room with windows that actually see more outside than just sky, so when youth come in, they are able to see a real landscape including trees, buildings, and an expanse of (usually) blue sky. It's a mark of how valued the library is, and of the accolades it has gotten.

The room is a small classroom-sized

KIDS continued on page 45

Many teens and children with physical, mental, and behavioral challenges are in mainstreamed in U.S. schools. Some schools have special classes for them, while others integrate them with other students. These students need library services just as much, if not more than their challenge-free peers. Recently, I had the opportunity to understand the impact a public library can have for challenged students in a public school. Wendy Morano, teen services librarian at the Hilltop branch of the Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library, pays monthly visits to a class of physically challenged students at the Westmoor Middle School. I spoke to her, as well as Avis Kinkead, the teacher who works closely with the students. Here is what they had to say about the value of outreach services to these students.

YALS: Avis, could you tell me a little about what your work involves, including where you work and your title?

Avis Kinkead: Well, I work for the Columbus City School at Westmoor Middle School. I am an orthopedic handicapped special education teacher. That means I am certified to teach all subjects to students at grades from K–12 with orthopedic disabilities at the academic needs levels indicated on their Individual Education Plans (IEP's). I am personally certified for more areas than that but that is what I have taught at Westmoor for more than seventeen years. I enjoy teaching reading, language arts and social studies. I follow the goals and objectives laid out in each student's IEP in each subject area.

Library Outreach to Teens with Physical Challenges

By Victoria Vogel

Now, that means that if a student is in the eighth grade and, due to their disabilities, unable to read, I teach reading by following the pacing charts for each subject area and approaching the subject from where they need to work. It is a challenge. As the writer Sharon Draper put it, it's like pouring frozen honey, slow but so worthwhile.

YALS: What is the nature of the challenges your students are dealing with? What are the ages and grade levels?

AK: My students are as varied as they are many. I have had many students who have cerebral palsy. A number of them have or have had a twin. Often a student has had an accident that has left him/her with a traumatic brain injury (TBI). These are often misunderstood by the outside world because the student looks so normal (whatever that is?). Some of the students have genetic orphan disorders. Those are

the disorders that are rare and more research is called for but because of their few numbers the money for the research is not so forthcoming. Most of my students use wheelchairs. Almost all are in need of services such as occupational therapy (OTs), physical therapy (PTs), speech therapy (SLPs) and nursing (RNs). I have all of these services available in my classroom. These services are provided to the students because of those IEPs. By teaching in the middle school I am teaching students from 11 years to 16 years of age. They are provided educational opportunities, thanks to Congress and the IDEAS bill, from birth through their 21st year.

YALS: Wendy, what brought about your visits to Avis' class?

Wendy Morano: Avis came into the library and sought me out. She had heard that we do class visits and wanted to set something up for her students. One of the main reasons Avis wanted me to come to the library is because transportation is challenging for a lot of these students and their parents. They might not be able to go to the library. Instead we bring the library to them. I am so grateful to her. The monthly class visits

VICTORIA VOGEL is the Teen Librarian at Rocky River Public Library in Rocky River, Ohio. She chaired YALSA's Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs committee in 2007–08 and currently serves as the secretary for the Ohio Library Council's Young Adult Action Council. She lives in Avon Lake, Ohio, with her husband Gerry and four cats.

with her students are definitely one of my favorite things.

YALS: What do you talk about during your visits?

WM: The visits are basically a storytime for older kids. To prepare, I spoke to our subject specialist librarians Wendy and Sherry. They do similar visits with elementary school students. They stressed being very visual and using lots of humor. I read a few stories, tell jokes, occasionally songs or puppet shows. I usually include some sort of trivia contest. They love competitions, and it's fun to do boys vs. girls or younger vs. older, stuff like that.

YALS: Avis, could you talk a little about Wendy's visits to your class?

AK: We are fortunate to have been able to have Wendy in our rooms for about 8–10 years now. She comes at about 9:30 one morning a month. My students look forward to her coming. We turn the class over to her. She presents a pile of books on either a specific subject or a myriad of subjects. Wendy will play corny games with the students or tell truly terrible jokes that the kids absolutely love. She is always very aware of their needs and never talks down to them, she is constantly aware of being age appropriate with them. It is very easy to fall into talking down to them and it must be remembered that they are middle school kids and don't appreciate that and do not prosper from it. Wendy will choose a book or two to read to the students. They sit quietly and enjoy her reading. Then they discuss the books. I think that of all the wonderful things about Wendy, the best is that she understands and respects my students. That is what I appreciate the most. She comes to our ballgames (We are the city league champions in wheelchair basketball for the last two years), our picnics and



Westmoor Middle School Wheelchair Basketball Team
Photo by Wendy Morano

other class related things. Wendy continues to be involved not just with our classroom but with our full school community, she joined our school health committee this year and represented our community with her input.

YALS: What types of library materials does she bring them?

AK: Wendy's poor carts have become worn out carrying things in and out of our classrooms. She brings great cartloads of books in each month and when she does she removes the one she brought they month before. She brings in puppets and toys that emphasize the book subjects of the month. She brings silly games or questions that the kids absolutely love to participate in. She brings along the worst jokes that the kids love to groan over. She tells of the programs and things available at the library each month. It is because of Wendy that many of the kids and their parents and siblings are involved in their libraries.

W: I booktalk the books that I bring with me. I rely heavily on picture books and coffee table books with great pictures. Their favorite visit, hands down, was the grossology visit. We made fake snot and blood, grew some mold, told gross jokes, and read disgusting stories. I remember *My Little Sister Ate One Hare* by Bill Grossman being very popular. The little sister eats all kinds of non food items and then throws them up at the end. The basketball visit was also very popular. *Hoop Kings* by Charles R. Smith was also a winner. There is a life-sized picture of Shaquille O'Neal's foot. They love basketball, probably because they play wheelchair basketball. They're league champs in Columbus. Humorous titles are probably the most successful, also stories with different voices or accents. *The Dirty Cowboy* by Amy Timberlake is a good one because it's hilarious and works really well with a good southern drawl. *Do Not Open This Book* by Michaela Muntean is another good one. It's funny and students can get involved in the story.

YALS: What effect have these visits had on your students?

AK: When Wendy leaves she usually leaves a huge stack of books. As the students finish their assignments during the school day they know they can quietly go to the pile and grab a book to look at. They love to copy the text to practice their handwriting. They love to draw example of the illustrations of the books. They learn about the variety of subjects and then love to catch me on the information they have learned . . . and I make sure they always do catch me. That encourages them to read more to catch me again. They love to discuss the books Wendy reads to them. The funnier the book, the louder and longer the discussions go. It is exciting to be there at those moments.

YALS: Do either of you have any advice for librarians who would like to reach out to their local school system to provide services to mentally or physically challenged students?

AK: Librarians need to get to the school buildings on those days in late August when they are having the first staff meetings before kids arrive. If they can't get there, get announcements out there offer-

ing their services and remember that type of thing should not stop in elementary school. We as adults enjoy book clubs . . . well, kids do too . . . and not just the gifted kids. If we had clubs that addressed the interest of the kids, music (yes, rap too) or comics or fashion, you could hook those at risk kids into books.

WM: I know in Columbus City Schools there are only a few schools that have classes like Avis's. They are bussed in from all over the city. I just got lucky because the one middle school happens to be in my service area, although the majority of the students are not. I guess I'd start with a local MRDD (Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, in Columbus it's a county agency), or contact special education teachers in your district. Avis and I have talked about having programs at the library but can never really get past the transportation issues. Would a parent on the east side want to drive all the way to the west side for a program? I guess we should just try it and see.

YALS: Do you have some tips on visiting physically or mentally challenged teens, such as things you should or shouldn't say or do?

AK: Understand that you have to see the kid, then see the handicap. That kid enjoys racing or fashion or comics or picture or drawing books, just like every other teen that comes into the library. They love to giggle and laugh and gossip just like every other teen that comes into the library. They just do all of these things from a wheelchair or from a slower pace or from a very excited perspective but they enjoy, basically the same things. Have groups that present books and activities that the special needs kids can enjoy that respect their intelligence. Even



Daniel, student in Mrs. Kinhead's class

Photo by Wendy Morano

the lowest functioning kid can appreciate a bad joke or listen to a good story or enjoy books presented to him or her that might be enjoyed. Get a group together to read the comics of my old friends Calvin and Hobbes or some other comics. I used to do that on Friday. The kids learned to read the way the punctuation indicated and roared with laughter as they did it. As to the needs of the challenged student, remember many, especially boys, have visual disabilities (they have problems tracking things or focusing on things) if you are going to talk to them for a period of time go to their level. In other words, if they are in a wheelchair, sit down to talk to them. Don't raise your voice, most aren't deaf and if they are, learn a few signs to emphasize your discussion. (It won't take many signs, a few can do the trick . . . bathroom, yes, no, and so on.) Don't be afraid to ask them questions. If it looks like you are going to see them often ask them about their disability or how you can help them. And, for crying out loud, don't be afraid to smile and laugh with them. It will relax them.

WM: I am always super-paranoid referring to the students with the wrong term. Is it physically challenged, special needs, what? I try just to treat everyone like any other student I work with. They have many of the same likes and dislikes;



The team in action, close to victory
Photo by Wendy Morano

they're into the same pop culture stuff. I think of James, who is in a wheelchair. He wears huge baggy jeans that hang down past his butt, his undies all hanging out. He likes his bling too. He looks just like most of the kids hanging out in the library. I would suggest meeting with the teacher and caregiver first.

YALS: Wendy, do you have any anecdotes you care to share about a successful experience, or one you would have handled differently?

WM: Like I said, I look forward to these visits each month. I would love to be able to do more things like this. I'd have to say the wheelchair basketball game was a highlight this year. Watching Avis' students race up and down the court was amazing. They really creamed the other students. Neil, who likens himself to Shaq, could sink the ball from anywhere on the court.

Another highlight was when James (he's a character) asked if God and Mother Nature were married. He comes up with the strangest and funniest questions.

YALS: Thank you both for your comments! Is there anything else you would like to add?

AK: It is important to make as much available to the kids as we can. Everything we do helps them learn, either the good or the bad, but they learn. Let's all get on the same book page and get them learning to learning. At the library they can enjoy learning without the pressure they experience at the schools, without all the testing. OK, I will get off my soapbox. Good luck! **YALS**

REFORMA continued from page 22

How to Be a Chicana Role Model, Michele M. Serros, Penguin, 2000.

A humorous novel about a young Chicana writer struggling to find a way to embrace two very different cultures, without losing touch with her own true identity. (grades 9–12)

Accidental Love, Gary Soto, Harcourt, 2006.

After unexpectedly falling in love with a "nerdy" boy, fourteen-year-old Marisa works to change her life by transferring to another school, altering some of her behavior, and losing weight. (grades 6–10)

The Afterlife, Gary Soto, Harcourt, 2003.

A senior at East Fresno High School lives on as a ghost after his brutal murder. (grades 7 and up)

Buried Onions, Gary Soto, Harcourt, 1997.

Eddie leaves college to return to his violence-infested home in Fresno. (grades 7 and up)

Help Wanted: Stories, Gary Soto, Harcourt Children's Books, 2007.

Ten short stories portray some of the struggles and hopes of young Mexican Americans. (grades 6–9)

Behind the Eyes, Francisco X. Stork, Dutton Juvenile, 2006.

Sixteen-year-old Hector is the hope of his family, but when he seeks revenge after his brother's gang-related death and is sent

to a San Antonio reform school, it takes an odd assortment of characters to help him see that hope is still alive. (grades 7–10)

Grab Hands and Run, Frances Temple, Harper Trophy, 1995.

After his father disappears, twelve-year-old Felipe, his mother, and his younger sister set out on a difficult and dangerous journey, trying to make their way from their home in El Salvador to Canada. (grades 6–8)

Cubanita, Gabby Triana, Rayo, 2006.

Seventeen-year-old Isabel, eager to leave Miami to attend the University of Michigan and escape her overprotective Cuban mother, learns some truths about her family's past and makes important decisions about the type of person she wants to be. (grades 10 and up)

Prizefighter en Mi Casa, E. E. Charlton-Trujillo, Yearling, 2007.

Following a car accident that left her with epilepsy, twelve-year-old Chula—with a little help from a visiting fearsome Mexican boxer—tries to deal with the repercussions her new condition has on her family, neighborhood, and school. (grades 5–8)

Tommy Stands Alone, Gloria Velazquez, Arte Público Press, 1995.

At Roosevelt High, a predominantly Hispanic and African American school in Laguna, California, Tommy's so-called

friends taunt him with degrading words until they learn to accept his sexual orientation. (grades 7–10)

Hard Love, Ellen Wittlinger, Simon & Schuster, 2004.

Tackles the delicate issue of unrequited love between a straight and gay teen. Features a feisty Cubana teen as a strong secondary character. (grades 7 and up) **YALS**

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Serchay, David S. *Graphic Novels for Children and Tweens*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2008; ISBN: 9781555706265; 271p; \$55.00.

This entry in Neal-Schuman's *The Librarian's Guide To* series showcases graphic novels for younger readers. Owner of more than 25,000 volumes, youth services librarian and graphic novel collection committee member at the Broward County (Fla.) Library System, Serchay exhaustively recounts the history of comics and graphic novels. He provides information librarians will find useful if they must justify adding, retaining, or increasing graphic novel collections in their public or school libraries. A recommended list of his twenty-five favorite fiction and nonfiction titles and series functions well as a core title list. Librarians needing a broader collection will appreciate his annotated suggested booklist, which includes general information on the series or title, age appropriateness ratings, and indications of whether titles work well in lesson plans.

Serchay's writing style is slightly uneven, with the occasional typo or awkward phrasing. Readers who dip in and out of the text, perhaps skimming some of the more densely detailed historical sections, may miss out on some of Serchay's tips and excellent advice, such as purchasing Absolute Editions where older editions may be unavailable. Information on major graphic novel publishers and their imprints is particularly useful for librarians trying to navigate the complicated world of decades-old characters whose stories have seen several iterations. Ideas for purchasing, cataloging, shelving, marketing, and using collections in programs are equally useful for public and school librarians. Librarians looking to give their children's and tween graphic novel collections as much attention as those for older readers will not be disappointed.—Janet Marnatti, *Collection Management Director, Bucks County Free Library Doylestown, Pa.*

Volkman, John D. *Collaborative Library Research Projects: Inquiry that Stimulates the Senses*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008; ISBN: 9781591586234; 196p; \$39.00.

John D. Volkman, a high school library media specialist, has had many opportunities over the years to collaborate with teachers in crafting informative, creative, and engaging research units for students. He shares fifteen of these projects in his book—including units on the Holocaust, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Shakespeare, Evil

Characters in History, Constellations and Zodiac, Nations of the World, and many more. Each project varies in length and complexity and is described in detail, with requirements for what the librarian and teacher need to do in order to prepare, as well as handouts and instructions for students, and lists of resources that can be used at the various "stations." While Volkman's projects can be used out of the box or adapted to specific classes and collections, their successful implementation will depend on good communication between teachers and librarians, and many require a considerable time investment for both. Most of the projects teach students how to find information within sources, how to take notes, and how to cite and make a bibliography of their sources (usually books and Internet, though some article databases are included). Some units also include audio and video components, poems, photographs, cartoons, oral presentations, short research papers, informative posters, and more. Assignments are geared toward students in grades 7–12. This resource will be most valuable to library media specialists working with middle and high school students and their teachers, though public and academic (college) librarians who do bibliographic instruction might be able to incorporate or adapt some of Volkman's assignments into their own introductory research courses and units.—Karin Thogersen, *Young Adult Librarian, Huntley (Ill.) Area Public Library*.

Zmuda, Allison and Violet H. Harada. *Librarians as Learning Specialists: Meeting the Learning Imperative for the 21st Century*. Libraries Unlimited. ISBN: 978-1591586791; 148p; \$40.00.

This especially engaging book on learning specialists delivers on its promise to teach the reader how to collaborate and meet the changing educational needs that this new century presents. What differentiates this book is that their audience includes all learning specialists (including information technology, reading, and curriculum specialists; department chairs; and school librarians) and school administrators. The organization of the book aids in reaching that varied audience because each chapter comprises four parts: a summary of key ideas from current research, identification of predictable problems, description of persistent challenges, and a concluding section focusing just on school librarians. They start by examining the mission statement and how it should relate to the curricular goals of the school. If the mission statement doesn't affect assessment and

instructional practices, a school won't see improvement. Developing a learning specialist community is necessary, and they describe the challenges that such a community would face. The section on instructional design gives a detailed view of how to look at the nature of the learning, how to challenge students, and how to collaborate in order to create effective instructional design. The final chapter focuses on assessment: what it is, why it is significant, how it should be used,

and how to collaborate on assessments. The book concludes with a section for school librarians that looks to the future. Packed with cutting-edge research (rarely was a source cited older than 2000), pertinent examples, and a winning writing style, this book is sure to be a hit with *all* of its intended audience. Highly recommended.—C. D. McLean, *Library Department Chair and Upper Division Librarian at Berkeley Preparatory School, Tampa, Fla.* **YALS**

KIDS continued from page 38

room, with bookshelf-lined walls, tables piled with books, and those wide windows that frame the outside world beyond a concertina of barbed wire. The youth that use it are just like many of the ones on the other side of that barbed wire, but their mistakes have been criminalized, and are dealt with by the justice system, rather than the families or caregivers who deal with youth on the outside, where running away, or not doing chores or homework, or breaking the rules most teens have to live with, aren't crimes. Once these youth are wards of the state, all of that changes. But at the center, they have a chance to stop and reconsider their paths. They get a chance to change their lives, to connect with the world in ways they've never been able to, to express themselves and their needs and wants, to ask for help and get it, and use that help to make changes in their

minds, hearts, and lives. And some of them don't stop there—like Sophia, they return to give back, to help pull others out of the mire of their lives, and show them how to grow, show them how to succeed.

It's not just about the library and it's not just about the books. For Cheney, and the staff and administration she works with, it's all about the youth. "I learn daily from these guys. How to serve a multicultural community, or a population not otherwise served. How to bring the library to life for them, how to make sure that they think that the library and books are cool, and that they all get what they want and need to read. They're delightful and hilarious. They help keep me entertained and connected. I can't imagine not being here."

YALS

Guidelines for Authors

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

tice relating to teen services and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

For submission and author guidelines, please visit www.ala.org/yalsa and click on "Publications."

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the YALSA update

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Find the latest YALSA news every Thursday at the YALSA Blog, <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog>.

YALSA Names Emerging Leaders, Spectrum Scholar

As part of its commitment to furthering young adult librarianship, YALSA chose its first Spectrum Scholar as well as two Emerging Leaders for 2009.

YALSA's Spectrum Scholar, Jamie Young, is pursuing a master's in library and information science at Drexel University in Philadelphia. She hopes to work with young adults at a public library after she graduates in 2011.

YALSA's Emerging Leaders are Carla Land and Katherine Voss. Land is the Children's Services Department Head at the Summerlin Library of the Las Vegas-Clark County (Nev.) Public Library. Katherine is Department Chair and Teacher Librarian at the Mary Institute and St. Louis (Mo.) Country Day School.

Established in 1997, the Spectrum Scholarship Program is ALA's national diversity and recruitment effort designed to address the specific issue of underrepresentation of critically needed ethnic librarians within the profession while serving as a model for ways to bring attention to larger diversity issues in the future.

The Emerging Leaders program enables newer librarians from across the country to participate in workgroups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA's structure, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity. Each participant is expected to provide two years of service to ALA or one of its units. More than one hundred librarians will get on the fast track to leadership in

ALA and the profession in the 2009 program. Emerging Leaders each receive up to \$1,000 to participate in ALA's Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference.

Register for Midwinter Meeting

Join YALSA January 23–29 in Denver!

YALSA has big plans for Denver—and we want them to include you! The ALA Midwinter Meeting will take place January 23–29, 2009, in Denver. Register by December 5 at www.ala.org/midwinter to save up to \$25 over onsite registration fees. Here's a few highlights from YALSA's Midwinter Meeting schedule (complete details available on the YALSA wiki at <http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa>):

Friday, January 23

Come to our Midwinter Institute, Reaching Today's Diverse Teens. There are more than 30 million teens in America today and they are the most ethnically diverse generation ever. Are you ready for them? Join us from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and learn how to identify all of the teens in their service area, as well as learn exciting, interactive, and innovative ways to reach this diverse group. Serving recent teen immigrants will also be explored, as will how to maximize your impact by collaborating with youth serving organizations in your community. Lunch provided. Ticketed event. \$210 for YALSA members, students and retirees; \$250 for ALA members; \$300 for non-

members.

Meet your fellow YALSA members at our annual happy hour, 5–7 p.m., location TBD (check the wiki). Enjoy drink specials while you network with your colleagues and win prizes from YALSA.

After happy hour, the fun continues at the YALSA MixerTech Playground. Join us for a fun evening of mingling with colleagues and sampling new technologies for teen library services. Gain hands-on experience with great tech tools such as virtual worlds, microblogs, video cameras, games, and more. Receive personal attention from a tech concierge and leave with ideas on how everything applies to your own library setting, no matter how small your budget. Refreshments and fun tech prizes available. Ticketed event, \$40.

Saturday, January 24

Want to learn how to be more involved with YALSA? Come to our Leadership Development and All Committee meetings!

Leadership Development is for YALSA committee, taskforce, and jury chairs and those interested in chairing. A continental breakfast will be served at 8 a.m., with the meeting from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

All Committee is a working meeting for YALSA's committees, taskforces, and juries (more than sixty total!), but it's also a chance for those not on a committee to learn more by sitting in. It's a great introduction to the business of YALSA. Come at 10 a.m. for a continental breakfast, with meetings beginning at 10:30 and finishing at noon.

Sunday, January 25

YALSA elections open soon, so before you vote, come to the YALSA Candidates' Forum from 10:30 a.m. to noon. This is your opportunity to meet the candidates and ask questions before voting this spring.

Want to know what teens *really* think of books released this past year? Come hear local teens reflect on the nominees for the 2009 Best Books for Young Adults list at the BBYA teen session, 1:30–3:30 p.m.

YALSA has several discussion and interest groups for members to participate in. Discussion groups are informal groups where members talk about common interests; interest groups are more formal and organized to discuss specific topics and may sponsor formal conference programs, institutes, and seminars, or prepare publications. Want to learn more about them? Then come to the YALSA Discussion and Interest Group Summit, 4–5:30 p.m.

Monday, January 26

The most exciting part of any ALA Midwinter Meeting is definitely the ALA Youth Media Awards Press Conference! Come bright and early Monday morning to the ceremony (8–9:15 a.m.) and find out who won this year's top prizes in young adult literature:

- The Alex Awards, honoring the best adult books with teen appeal, will be announced at 7:45 a.m. before the press conference begins.
- The Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature, as well as honor books.
- The Margaret A. Edwards Award, which honors an author for a specific work for lifetime contribution to writing for teens.
- The Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audio Production for Youth, plus the honor recordings (co-administered with the Association for Library Service to Children [ALSC])
- The first William C. Morris YA Debut Award, for the best first book written for young adults by a previously unpublished author.

Can't make it? Watch the event live via a webcast from the ALA homepage or sub-

scribe to the text message alerts. Details on both will be available on the YALSA wiki in December.

Cap off your weekend in Denver with the Joint Youth Division Member Reception from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Join your colleagues from ALSC, the American Association of School Librarians, and YALSA for light refreshments plus beer and wine, courtesy reception sponsor Hyperion Books for Children.

To register and learn more about YALSA's plans for the 2009 Midwinter Meeting, visit the YALSA wiki (<http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa>) and click on "Conferences and Events."

Apply for More than \$34,000 in Grants and Awards from YALSA

Deadline: Dec. 1

More than \$34,000 worth of grants and awards are available to YALSA members. The deadline to apply for the following grants and awards is December 1, 2008. To learn more, visit www.ala.org/yalsa, and click on "Awards and Grants."

- **Baker and Taylor/YALSA Conference Grants.** Funded by the Baker and Taylor Company, two grants of \$1,000 each are awarded to librarians who work directly with young adults in a public or school library to enable them to attend ALA Annual Conference for the first time.
- **BWI/YALSA Collection Development Grant.** This grant awards \$1,000 for collection development to YALSA members who represent a public library and who work directly with young adults ages 12 to 18. It is funded by Book Wholesalers, Inc.
- **MAE Award for Best Literature Program for Teens.** Designed to honor a YALSA member who developed an outstanding reading or literature program for young adults, the award provides \$500 to the winning librarian and \$500 to their library. The award is made possible through an annual grant from the

Margaret A. Edwards Trust.

- **Frances Henne/YALSA/VOYA Research Grant.** This grant of \$1,000 provides seed money for small-scale projects that will encourage research that responds to the YALSA Research Agenda; funding is provided by Scarecrow Press.
- **Great Books Giveaway Competition.** Each year the YALSA office receives approximately 1,200 newly published children's, young adult, and adult books, videos, CD's, and audio cassettes for review. YALSA and the cooperating publishers offer one year's worth of review materials as a contribution to a library in need. The estimated value of this collection is \$30,000.

Press Play @ your library® for Teen Tech Week™

The third annual Teen Tech Week will be celebrated at thousands of public and school libraries across the country March 8–14, 2008. The general theme of Teen Tech Week is Get Connected @ your library. This year's subtheme is Press Play @ your library. Want to share your plans and get development ideas? Visit the Teen Tech Week wiki at http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Tech_Week.

The Teen Tech Week website will launch November 1 at www.ala.org/teen_techweek. After November 1, visit the Teen Tech Week website to register, find activity ideas and planning resources, and check out products for this year's celebration.

Teen Tech Week is a national initiative aimed at teens, their parents, educators, and other concerned adults. The purpose of the initiative is to ensure that teens are competent and ethical users of technologies, especially those that are offered through libraries. Teen Tech Week encourages teens to use libraries' nonprint resources for education and recreation, and to recognize that librarians are qualified, trusted professionals in the field of information technology.

YALSA Board Actions from ALA Annual Conference

The YALSA Board of Directors met at ALA Annual Conference in several fruitful sessions. The board made several key decisions in the following areas:

- **Strategic Plan:** The board adopted a new strategic plan, with five goal areas: membership engagement and retention, research, advocacy, continuing education, and marketing. You can read the full plan at www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/aboutyalsab/StrategicPlan08_final.pdf.
- **Research:** The board approved an online research journal and directed YALSA's research committee to develop the mission and goals for the journal as well as the refereeing process.
- **Mentoring:** The board established a taskforce to develop guidelines for a pilot mentoring program that includes a reverse mentoring component and best practices from other mentoring projects, to be implemented in 2010.
- **Trainers:** The board approved a taskforce to develop a YALSA trainer program, which would allow YALSA to provide training and resources to library workers on teen services.
- **YALSA-TV:** The board approved a new taskforce to develop YALSA-TV, a Web-based video site. The taskforce will investigate what YALSA would need to create this, including technological requirements, maintenance, management, and

suggested funding sources.

- **Selected Lists:** The board voted to move all of the annotated lists out of the For Members Only part of YALSA's website and make them available to the general public. The archived lists, which date back to 1998, will be published on the free part of YALSA's website by the end of 2008.
- **Student Scholarship:** The board approved a scholarship for its student members and will now work to find funding for the scholarship and to earn approval from the ALA Awards Committee.
- **YALSA at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference:** The board approved the slate of programs for the 2009 conference in Chicago, July 9–15. The slate has been posted on YALSA's wiki.

New Round of Great Stories CLUB Grants Available

Book club grant targets underserved, troubled teen populations

ALA is now accepting applications for the latest round of Great Stories CLUB grants. Electronic applications will be accepted through November 14 at www.ala.org/greatstories. Funding was provided for this program by Oprah's Angel Network.

Launched in 2005, the Great Stories CLUB (Connecting Libraries, Underserved teens and Books) is a reading and discussion program designed to reach under-

served, troubled teen populations through books that are relevant to their lives. All types of libraries (public, school, academic, and special) located within or working in partnership with facilities serving troubled teens in the United States and its territories are eligible to apply for a Great Stories CLUB grant.

After the application process, 230 libraries will be selected to develop a book discussion program for teens based on the three theme-related titles and will be given copies of the books to share with each participant. Participating libraries will also receive access to an online toolkit to support the program, including sample discussion questions, recommended titles for further reading, downloadable bookmark art, and other resources. Small cash grants (\$100–\$200) will be awarded to up to twenty-five sites for the support of program-related expenses.

YALSA's Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee selected "Breaking Boundaries" as the 2009 Great Stories CLUB theme, along with the following titles:

- "Luna" by Julie Anne Peters (Little, Brown Young Readers, 2004)
- "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" by Sherman Alexie (Little, Brown Young Readers, 2007)
- "Black and White" by Paul Volponi (Viking Juvenile, 2005)

For more information on the Great Stories CLUB, including guidelines, book descriptions, application instructions, and a link to the online application, visit www.ala.org/greatstories.

get the scoop subscribe to YALSANews

Want to know what's going on with YALSA? Looking for tips on how to use YALSA's resources at your library? Look no further!

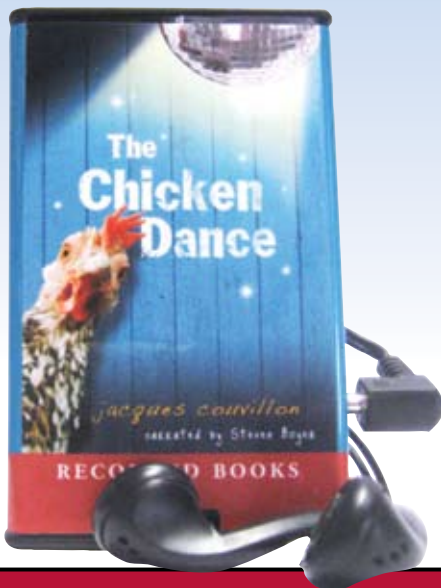
Beginning in October, you can sign up for YALSANews, and we'll email you up to four times a month with deadline reminders, information on how to get involved, tips & tricks and much more.

Sign up at www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/news.cfm.



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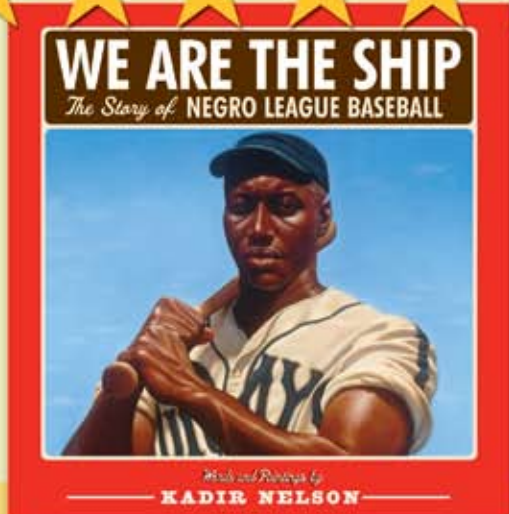
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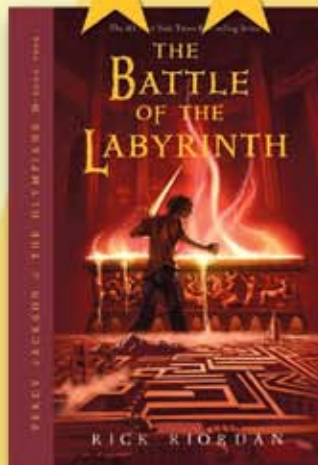
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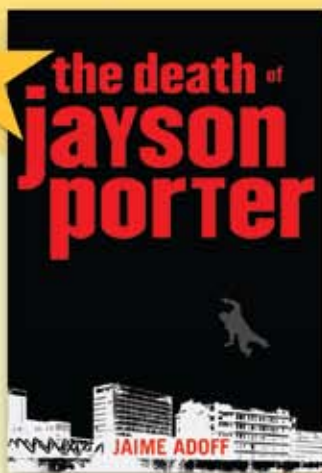
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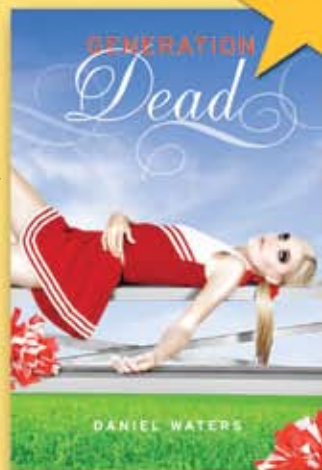
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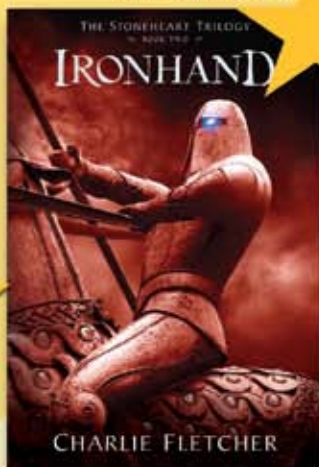


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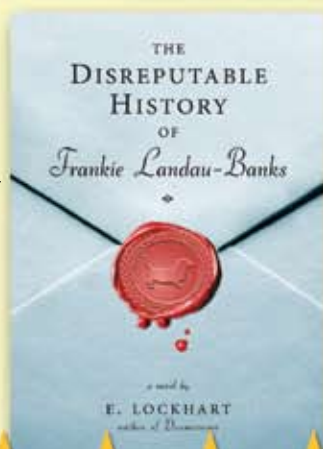


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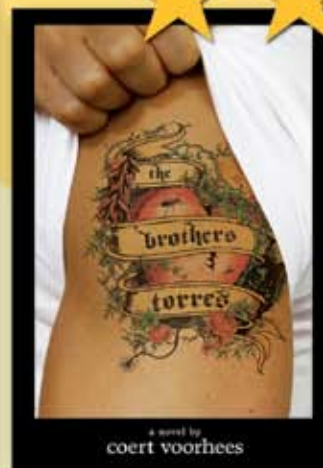
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