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—School Library Journal
The View from ALA

4  “I Can Stand a Little Pain” or Why You Should Get Going in ALA
   By Steve Matthews

YALSA Perspectives

6  Follow the Leaders, Part II
   One Emerging Leader’s Experience at ALA Annual 2010, Diary Style
   By Robyn E. Vittek

8  Get Involved in YALSA Virtual Committees and Interest Groups
   By Linda W. Braun

10 Advocacy Adventures
   By Sarah Flowers

13 The People in Your Neighborhood
   Using Local Collaboration to Advocate for Teen Patrons
   By Robyn E. Vittek

Best Practices

15 YA Q&A
   Collaboration
   By Stephanie Squicciarini, Maureen Hartman, and Erica Luyigan

Hot Spot: Collaboration

17 Four Steps to Effective Collaboration
   By Penny Johnson

20 High Impact Partnership
   Serving Youth Offenders
   By Angela Craig

23 Building Strong Community Partnerships
   Sno-Isle Libraries and the Teen Project
   By Dawn Rutherford

26 Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award
   Our Partnership for Massachusetts Teens
   By Mary Ann Rogers, Sue-Ellen Szymanski, Laurie Cavanaugh, and Mary Dunphy

28 Fine Art Programs, Teens, and Libraries
   Changing Lives One Program at a Time
   By Natasha D. Benway

31 Selling Risk to Administration and Colleagues
   By Linda W. Braun, Hillias J. Martin, and Connie Urquhart

Technology Perspectives

35 Libraries Catch Up With the Twentieth Century
   By Mark Flowers

Young Adult Literature

38 Historical Fiction Mash-Ups
   Broadening Appeal by Mixing Genres
   By Melissa Rabey

Plus:

2 From the Editor
   Sarah Flowers

3 From the President
   Kim Patton

42 Professional Resources

43 Index to Advertisers

44 The YALSA Update

About This Cover

This special issue of YALS offers tips and tools for successful collaboration, including successful partnerships with other library departments, multiple libraries, outside organizations, and more. YALSA members can find more helpful collaboration tips in Risky Business by Linda Braun, Jack Martin, and Connie Urquhart or in Young Adults Deserve the Best by Sarah Flowers, both available at www.alastore.ala.org. Photo credit: iStockphoto.com.
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Young Adult Library Services is the official journal of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association. YALSA primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education for librarians serving young adults, ages twelve through eighteen. It will include articles of current interest to the profession, act as a showcase for best practices, provide news from related fields, publish recent research related to YA librarianship, and will spotlight significant events of the organization and offer in-depth reviews of professional literature. YALS will also serve as the official record of the organization.

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As YALSA’s new president, my theme this year is Think Big! I want to encourage big picture thinking to help YALSA make a big impact on members’ communities. I hope to do this by instituting a global focus and by providing the tools that members need so they can take their teen library services to the next level. We’ll spend the year exploring ways to encourage YALSA members and the teens we serve to think big and find new and exciting ways to help make YALSA bigger, better, and stronger than ever. In the process, we will contribute to the strengthening of libraries and librarians serving teens.

Throughout the year, YALSA will host several activities centered on the Big Picture theme.

- **A Member Recruitment Drive** is planned to increase YALSA’s size, influence, and diversity.
- **The Thinking Big about Advocacy Contest** will encourage members to develop their skills in advocacy, both for their own local teens and also for YA librarianhip in general. Applications are due February 11, 2011.
- **Documenting members’ own experiences in a Big Book of Best Practices in Youth Participation** will help new and developing YA librarians in their day-to-day work, and also financially benefit YALSA.
- **Think Big Summits** will be held both in person at Midwinter Meeting and virtually throughout the year, facilitating more member input into the work of the division.
- The President’s Program will feature one or more **Big Thinkers** who will help YALSA to solidify its position as a forward-thinking organization and inspire members to share and implement big ideas at their own libraries.
- Our Research Committee will compile a **Big Online Resource Center for Research**, which will contain resources, tools and information that will help you in your work.
- **A Big Enormous Toolkit** for YALSA awards and lists will be a valuable resource for librarians and members to help spread awareness of our book and media awards.

Besides all these initiatives, I have been thinking about how YALSA can encourage big picture collaboration. Collaboration happens at all levels of librarianship and begins with cooperating with staff members (supervisors, colleagues) to advocate for programs and implement them, but it does not end there. We all have many opportunities to collaborate with other people and organizations in our communities and thinking big can help us find those people so that together we can find solutions to the problems we face.

Libraries today are facing big issues. It is imperative that we look at the big picture when we are trying to deal with these issues, not only by examining our own issues but also getting involved in those that are affecting our communities. How can the library get help and support from the community? How can the library help a struggling community right itself?

YALSA can help. YALSA collaborates with its members to create numerous tools that range from the YALSA blog and wiki to online discussion lists and even a recession relief toolkit to help our members connect with supportive information to get through tough times. YALSA members are among your best resources to brainstorm ideas for working with your community to solve problems and improve life for your teens and for the whole community.

Big picture problem-solving and collaboration naturally fit together and can not only build community spirit, but lead to lasting community relationships that make caring communities a priority for our teens.

Kim Patton

YALS
Having served on ALA Council, off and on, through the last twenty years, and since last year, as a member of the ALA Executive Board, I am often amused, a little taken aback and, truth be told, mildly troubled when a fellow member of AASL or YALSA says to me, because of my participation in ALA Council, something like “Boy, you must have a high tolerance for boredom,” or “I guess Big ALA is necessary, but I’m really focused on what I can accomplish in YALSA, that is what has real transfer for me in doing my job. Is there any way we could reduce ALA dues?” Other than an immediate sense of personal inadequacy and a slight tinge of guilt for finding my time spent on Council stimulating and, yes, productive, I reaffirm my commitment. But I also realize that these honest and straightforward exclamations aren’t uttered to puncture my sense of purpose, but actually provide essential reality therapy from members who, like me, have limited resources and an urgency to build library programs and services that are top-notch and who value action and effectiveness over what sometimes seems like an interminable process and obstructionist infrastructure.

At this point, I need to reveal my intent (code word for: AGENDA). (Confession is sometimes sweet.) I am fully convinced that ALA would be stronger and better if more members of YALSA and the other youth divisions would choose to participate in ALA committees, ALA Council, and the Executive Board. That seems to me to be a no-brainer, but let me explain why it’s so important. YALSA is an amazing energy cell of creativity and resourcefulness. With our leadership and staff, we have constantly reevaluated how better to pull members into the mix and how to help librarians whose lives center on serving teens do that with great books, media, games, and super connectivity. YALSA has built a vibrant community that has been one of the strongest advocates for diversity in librarianship and has pushed the envelop with more and more ways for members to participate, learn, and trade ideas virtually. There is always passion and fun and purpose in what we do, and we need to share that with the rest of the association.

Therefore, because I am baring my Councilor’s soul, I will reveal the seven additional one liners I hear from youth division members for why they are staying in the YALSA/ALSC/AASL pool and avoiding the ALA ocean of uncertainty. Of course, because I want YALSA folk to step up and be more active in ALA, I need to provide short antidotes for why these observations and objections should not be barriers but instead incentives to jump into the ALA fray.

The Seven Reasons Why You Don’t “DO” ALA (and Why You Should)

ALA is Too Big and Impersonal
Response: Any organization, group, endeavor seems unknown, alien, or even hostile at first. Make it your own. Help it thrive. You will be rewarded with great new friends and colleagues and a new understanding of the big picture.

ALA is Bureaucratic and Hopelessly Slow Rather Than Seismic and Full of Punch
Response: Complexity and a myriad of interests can make process more time
Participating in Council or ALA Committees Requires More Travel Than I Can Afford or Have Leave to Do
Response: While Council does require two physical meetings a year, many ALA committees do not. If you are present at the table (real or virtual), you can help shape the policy to encourage better participation. I have found many cheap ways to make travel work through the years when my school paid only my registration, and I have gotten to know some great people and wonderful cities in the process. It is, in part, giving back.

It’s Always the Same People Batting Around the Same Ideas in the Same Old Ways
Response: At least a third of the members elected to Council are totally new every year, which means that they have never served before. The best fix for too much old blood is to provide the option to voters for some new blood. And then, we need to vote somewhere close to the numbers we actually have in our divisions. In addition, fill out that committee volunteer form for ALA.

I Have a Life. Why Would I Spend Precious Time Deliberating Endlessly the Many Fine Points of Policy or Arguing About Organizational Structure. That Seems Mind-Numbing
Response: Policy and organization should be the catalysts for effectiveness not inscrutable barriers for participation. Helping to shape the vision and empower members to accomplish what they need to get done is the central task of a governing body and something YALSA members know about first hand and in 3-D.

I Am a Doer Not a Pontificator. I Need to See Results
Response: Council desperately needs to be about results. When it falls short in that endeavor, we all lose. ALA, through its Council, has achieved great results in establishing our values and goals as a profession, in reaffirming our devotion to open access and the right to read and view, in advancing cooperation, and in promoting libraries and librarianship.

How Would My Being There Make a Difference? I Am Just One Person
Response: Our whole profession rests on the assumption of the transformational power of ideas. Creativity and innovation are the future of our work and our society. If you do not step up and contribute, then the possibility of one voice influencing and inspiring many becomes an impossibility. Be there. Make it happen.

Finale: The Three Step ALA Involvement Action Plan
Further Infiltrate and Bolster ALA Connect
YALSA has been a leader in the use of ALA Connect. Each YALSA member should expand her or his ALA Connect universe in one deliberate way. Establish an informal group around an endeavor or idea, monitor a committee or taskforce, or respond to their work, demonstrate what works on ALA Connect and what needs to improve as we build a tool that will only be as powerful as our determination to make it succeed. Demo your ideas, encourage others.

Volunteer for an ALA Committee or Two
ALA Presidents-elect are always looking for willing and able members to serve. They are very interested in newer members participating. Needless to say, some committees have a legion of volunteers, others not so many. Make your desire to serve known. Your interest and initiative will be appreciated and acknowledge. Go to www.ala.org/template.cfm?template=/cfapps/committee/volunteerform/volunteerform.cfm to find the form (available each year from August to November).

Nominate Yourself to Run for ALA Council by the Nominating Committee or by Petition
The ALA Nominating Committee actively seeks nominees for Council that reflect the diversity in the association. By nominating yourself, you are demonstrating your commitment to the organization and the profession. The deadline each year to submit your name to the Nominating Committee is August 15. However (don’t panic!), nomination by petition is possible up through the Midwinter Meeting (www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/alaelection/index.cfm).
Friday, June 25 7:30 a.m.: Well, I am here! My train was late, so I missed meeting the rest of my group for dinner last night, but I am the first one on the spot this morning.

9:30 a.m.: Nice to see so many familiar faces this time around. Everyone in the room seems so much more relaxed and friendly with one another, compared to our Midwinter Meeting. Right now we are meeting with our teams to talk about the project experience—what worked, what did not, what could be changed—and sharing our thoughts with the group at large. Here is what we thought:

What Worked? Our group worked together and got along really well.

What could we have done differently as a group? We could have worked harder at sticking to our timeline/schedule—we are all very busy people and it was hard to make our project a big priority sometimes, especially as we felt very unsure about it.

What lessons have you learned, working with a virtual team? Always make sure your work laptop is set up to run a video feed with Skype—we talked over one another a lot because we did not have visual cues! We had a lot of success sending messages through Facebook and using Google Docs to work on our project together. ALA Connect was not a tool we used frequently, as we were more familiar and comfortable with the other tools. Be prepared to work weekends—with project members spread from Massachusetts to California, it was hard to find a time during the week that everyone was available to chat!

What would you suggest to the Emerging Leaders (EL) program for changes for next year? We think that the divisions submitting projects for the EL’s to work on need to make sure that the projects are specific and clear as to the outcome and how the project will be used. We talked to a lot of other groups today, and ours was not the only group who felt a bit at sea as to what the division had planned for our final product, and whether or not we were meeting objectives that were never very clearly defined.

We think it would be very helpful for ALA to invite a professional leadership consultant to speak with us during the morning sessions on more general leadership qualities and skill building.

The ALA members who run the EL program also discussed several leadership books that we thought sounded interesting, and we thought that a segment where a book is assigned at Midwinter and discussed at Annual would be a great learning opportunity, and also a way to better get to know more ELs outside our own group.

11:00 a.m.: Just watched a very interesting video from TED.com, Simon Sinek discussed the idea that all great and inspiring leaders think, act and communicate in the same way, using a “Golden Circle” concept. He discussed the “law of diffusion of innovation,” in which people do not buy what you do; they buy why you do it. I think that this is so true for libraries and librarians. Information like this, and the discussion it provokes, is much more in line with what I thought we would learn in a program called “Emerging Leaders.”

5:00 p.m.: After another amazing lunch, we finished up working on our project. The other groups seem to have taken the “poster session” concept much more literally than we did, but despite our uncertainty about the goals behind our
...is YALS Young Adult Library Services difficult. Definitely a 7.

YALS just another perk I guess! highly respected professional publication, with so many opportunities to write for a that becoming an EL would provide me of YALSA (see page___)! I did not realize which was to define the word “involvement” as YALSA members see it, we really felt that communication to actively involved members is the biggest obstacle YALSA has. There are so many amazing services, grant opportunities, and initiatives available, but getting the word out to YALSA members who are not already in the know seems to be really difficult!

Afterwards, I sat in on “Lights, Camera, Booktalk!” Book trailers have come a long way in a very short time—Simone Elkeles and the others have done such amazing work that it makes me want to rush right out and read their books—which I guess is the point, right? Such a fun program!

10:00 p.m.: Met with the Rosen Publishing Committee for dinner, so wonderful to be invited back. They seemed really interested in my EL experience, and I, in turn, learned so much from talking to such a diverse group of experienced librarians. Miriam and the rest of the Rosen staff go out of their way to make me feel like an important member of the group.

Sunday, June 27, 9:00 p.m.: Since my ALA trip coincided with my mother’s mini-vacation, we took the day off from the conference to see a bit of D.C., I have not been here since I was eleven years old. We walked down to the National Mall, where a giant rib cook-off was taking place, and explored the Smithsonian’s Natural History and American History buildings, walked through the butterfly garden and outdoor sculpture gardens, and finished by checking out part of the National Gallery. We are so lucky to have institutions like this free and open to the public . . . hmmm. That sounds familiar . . .

Monday, June 28, 9:00 p.m.: Today was another busy day! Spent the morning touring the exhibit hall. My mother had checked out a cooking demonstration on Saturday, but this was my first time through. I picked up a lot of free books to take home, and bought some, too! There were a few great deals I could not pass up.

After lunch, I went to the YALSA Annual Membership Meeting, and . . . is that John Green sitting a couple of rows up? Oh my goodness! After the official YALSA business, we had our Advocacy Task Force program. I was there to run the stopwatch for the panel, which led an interesting discussion about how to contact local and state representatives to make them aware of what the library is doing in your community. It is an intricate dance, but once you know the steps, it does not seem as though it would be too difficult. Definitely a lot of work though!

Tuesday, June 29, 6:00 p.m.: If I had only come to Annual for one morning, looking back, I would have picked this morning. It was so exciting to put on my red shirt, board the bus, and converge near the Capitol with hundreds other librarians for Advocacy Day and represent our libraries, our states, and our profession! After a couple of rousing speakers (including Lauren Myracle), a lot of cheering, and about a thousand pictures some of us headed back to the convention center while others met with state representatives to stress the importance of library funding. I felt so proud to be able to rally and help draw attention to one of our national treasures, at one of our national treasures! It was the perfect end to my EL experience.

Many thanks to Emerging Leader Group T, Sarah Debraski and the rest of the YALSA board, the Ohio Library Council, Rosen Publishing, and ALA for helping provide me with an incredible Emerging Leader experience. YALS
The YALSA board voted, in January, to change the policy on virtual committee participation. Why the change? The YALSA board is always looking for ways to get members more involved in the association. When ALA changed its policy on virtual membership for committees, the board saw this as the perfect chance to expand how members can be active YALSA participants.

What does it mean to members? Before ALA changed its policy, only one-third of committee members could be virtual. Now, committees can be entirely virtual, and that means attendance at Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference is no longer mandatory for committee participation.

Now members who are not able to attend Midwinter or Annual can participate fully in most of YALSA’s process committees. (Those are the committees that focus on the nuts and bolts business of YALSA, as compared with selection committees that focus on choosing materials for YALSA’s awards and lists.) However, those process committees are not all policies and procedures. Teen Read Week™ and Teen Tech Week™ are process committees. So too are the Web Advisory, Division Membership and Promotion, and Research Committees. There are twenty YALSA process committees, and a majority of them are now entirely virtual. The full list of process committees is available on the YALSA website at http://www.al.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsab/yalsacommittee.cfm#committees.

What does it mean to be a virtual committee? The work of the committee is carried out using a variety of online tools, and face-to-face meetings are not required. It’s up to the committee chair and committee members what tools are used. Several committees use ALA Connect for threaded discussions and e-chats. Others have made good use of YALSA wiki space. Some committees use software like Skype to have real-time voice conversations, and others rely primarily on a committee electronic discussion list (which YALSA will set up for member groups) as their method for communicating with each other.

What if a group wants to meet face-to-face? That’s perfectly acceptable. The YALSA board expects that some groups will have members attending Midwinter and Annual, and that those members will want to get together. In that instance, a committee chair needs to contact YALSA’s program officer for events and conferences and let her know about the group’s meeting needs.

Can this really work? The YALSA board thinks so, and many members do too. What’s required is that the chair and members of the virtual committee make a commitment to getting their work done without face-to-face meetings. That means that the chair and members have to understand how technology can support committee work. The chair of the committee is responsible for keeping things going, so he or she needs to adapt his or her skills to motivate and engage members virtually. Of course, members also have to adapt and be ready or learn how to use the technology and understand how to get work done in the technology environment. The YALSA
Board is confident that our members have what it takes to work virtually.

Is there training? YALSA produced a webinar so members can learn more about successfully leading and participating in virtual committees. In the webinar, several seasoned committee chairs discuss how they have used web-based tools to work with members. You can find the webinar at http://tinyurl.com/2ep7y9c.

Are there other ways to participate besides virtual process committees? Yes. YALSA sponsors a variety of interest groups that are completely member-driven and are more flexible than committees. These groups focus on a particular topic of interest. For example, managing teen services is a brand-new interest group, and there’s also an interest group on serving older teens and young adults.

Interest groups are entirely virtual, and, unlike committees, which have a prescribed function statement and list of tasks to complete, members of an interest group develop their own list of projects and tasks. Another difference between interest groups and committees is that committees have a specific number of members who are appointed by YALSA’s President-Elect, whereas interest groups have no limits on the size of membership and members join on their own initiative and group approval.

Over the past year, YALSA transitioned some of its topic-oriented committees to interest group status as a way to allow more members access to discussions of hot topics. You can find a list of interest groups on the YALSA website (visit www.ala.org/yalsa/getinvolved and click “Participate.”)


Process committees are appointed every spring, but volunteer forms may be submitted at any time. The President-Elect works with a committee appointments task force on making appointments to committees. Invitations are sent out to potential process committee members in the late spring, and the work begins July 1 of every year.

It’s possible to join an interest group at any time during the year. All that’s needed is to get in touch with the convenor (or co-convenors) of the group. A full list of interest groups and convenors is available on the YALSA website at http://ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsab/discussion.cfm.

What’s next? YALSA is a member-driven organization, so it’s important to have broad participation in order assure that the association provides the best programs and services possible. Maybe you’ve been “lurking” on the sidelines. Now is the perfect time to take another look at what’s available and jump in.

Six Tips for Successful Virtual Participation

1. Focus on projects. It’s important to have a clear understanding of what the group wants or needs to accomplish. A discussion board is a good way to have brainstorming sessions and develop focus.

2. Have tasks to accomplish. Once projects are determined, it’s important to assign each member of the group a set of tasks for which he/she is responsible. An online collaborative document is a good place to post task lists with the names of those assigned to each task. As each task is completed, new tasks are added or changes are made. All members of the group can update the document.

3. Keep a schedule. Each person working on a project virtually should keep a calendar of due dates. Using a web-based calendar is a good way to make sure that everyone involved in the project knows the schedule.

4. Use the technology to its fullest advantage. Web-based technologies make it possible to replicate virtually most of what happens in a face-to-face environment. Need to have a real-time conversation? Try an e-chat or Skype call. Need to brainstorm some ideas? Use a discussion board. Need to write a document as a group? Use a tool like Google Docs. The capabilities are there; it just requires finding the right one. If you’re in doubt, check with fellow chairs and members who can act as consultants to help guide you to the right web tool and avoid reinventing the wheel.

5. Be an active participant. Taking part in online discussions, asking questions of the group, and throwing out ideas are just as important, and perhaps even more important, in a virtual environment as they are in face-to-face settings. Make sure to be a part of that activity in order to keep the group interested and motivated. Read about the responsibilities of YALSA chairs at http://tinyurl.com/2dz8nqc.
The Friends of YALSA is a fund-raising organization that supports a variety of initiatives and projects. In its first five years, the Friends of YALSA raised more than $25,000 to support YALSA initiatives and services that impact the profession and teens. Each year, YALSA's Financial Advancement Committee and the board of directors decide what to focus on for that year. 2010's area of focus was advocacy, and five YALSA members were given $1,000 each to attend the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., and take part in the Advocacy Day rally that took place on Tuesday, June 29.

The 2010 Advocacy Day stipend recipients were Heather Gruenthal, teacher-librarian at Orangeview Junior High and Western High School in the Anaheim Union High School District in California; Angie Manfredi, head of youth services for the Los Alamos County Library system in Los Alamos, New Mexico; Suzanne Larson, library media specialist at Bartlett Junior/Senior High School in Webster, Massachusetts; Susan Ridgeway, district library media specialist for the Wooster City Schools in Ohio; and Andrea Sowers, young adult librarian, Joliet Public Library in Illinois.

All five attended the ALA conference, and many of them took the opportunity to attend conference sessions that were directly related to advocacy. Beth Gallaway and YALSA’s Advocacy Task Force presented a session on Monday afternoon to give all YALSA members an opportunity to learn more about working with their legislators. Suzanne Larson noted, “I made sure to attend the conference sessions that offered advice and guidance about the event, wanting to make the most of my time on Capitol Hill. In addition, the staff members at the ALA Pavilion were extremely helpful in answering my questions, assuring me that all would go well and even giving me bright red LAD (Library Advocacy Day) t-shirts for me, my husband and two young children. After all, rallying on Capitol Hill was too good a family social studies lesson to miss!”

Advocacy Day itself began with a rally on Capitol Hill. The five grant recipients each met up with their state contingent. Gruenthal said, “My first sight? A sea of red shirts about a half-block away. It was then I fully understood that this wasn’t just about my library or the ones in my state; it was about libraries across the nation. In a place where one voice may get lost among the noise, 1600 voices held the promise of being heard loud and clear.” Gruenthal said, “I passed out buttons designed by Brian Selznick, 2008 Caldecott author/illustrator of The Invention of Hugo Cabret, to everyone from California. It was terrific to meet by state, because I got to network with other librarians from my area. This turned out to be key in my Capitol Hill experience.” Manfredi said, “At the rally, standing with hundreds of librarians in the shadow of the Capitol, I felt like I really was representing the thousands of librarians—and teenagers!—who could not be there to speak up for what libraries mean in their lives.”

At the rally, says Larson, “Funny and inspirational remarks were given by best-selling young adult author Lauren Myracle, followed by well-known Congressional champions of libraries, U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) and U.S. Representative Vernon Ehlers (R-Michigan). I am a Rhode Island resident, and Senator Reed is officially my new hero!” Sower said that the speakers were “a nice reminder that we do have supporters out there and we are not alone in this struggle.” She went on, “The excitement and enthusiasm [of the rally] was highly contagious. I can’t begin to describe how being among such a large crowd helps pump you up and gets you ready to continue what needs to be done.”

After the rally, people went to meet with individual representatives and senators. Gruenthal said, “We were all given ‘palm cards’ outlining the initiatives ALA is asking for support on: fund the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) at $300 million; fund Improving Literacy Through School Libraries at $100 million; and include in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act a library and librarian at every school.” Gruenthal had an appointment with Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-California). She said,

I was super worried about my meeting with Representative Rohrabacher because, from my research, I knew he...
was voting against all the initiatives that were being put forth by ALA. A huge stroke of luck was that I met Stephanie Beverage, the director of my local library in Huntington Beach, who had an appointment with Rep. Rohrabacher’s legislative assistant immediately following my appointment. I was a constituent and had an appointment directly with the Congressman so we decided to team up, which was a great idea, since she had the knowledge and I had the access. Stephanie was a great mentor. She came fully prepared with a packet of information regarding use of the Huntington Beach Library and the programs that directly benefited from the LTSA grant funding we were asking to support. Representative Rohrabacher gave us a generous amount of his time and educated us regarding his position on the issues at hand.

Gruenthal then went on to Senator Barbara Boxer’s (D-California) office. She said,

My second meeting was much more comfortable, since my confidence was boosted from watching my mentor’s interaction with Rep. Rohrabacher. I felt better prepared to go it alone with my packet of materials provided by YALSA. I met with Patrick Scandling, the Legislative Research Assistant of Barbara Boxer, who listened attentively, took notes, and asked a few questions.

Manfredi said,

After the rally, the other librarians from New Mexico and I visited the offices of our other representatives: Senator Jeff Bingaman and Representatives Martin Heinrich, Harry Teague, and Ben Ray Lujan. We spoke with their representatives about ALA’s key issues, and I had a chance to tell them about YALSA’s mission and give them one of the “Teens Need Librarians” brochures created by YALSA. We actually had the chance to speak with Representative Lujan himself, who was especially gratifying for me, as he represents my home district. He seemed especially interested in what libraries are doing in the communities he represents, and I resolved to work on inviting him to visit my library during the 2011 District Days.

Larson’s experience was also positive.

Because I work at a Massachusetts high school, I opted to join the Massachusetts delegation as they met with Representative Richard Neal (D-Massachusetts), the lawmaker who serves my school’s district. After wandering through the labyrinth of Capitol hallways, and asking no less than six people for directions, I found his office in time for the meeting. It was a wonderful experience; we met Rep. Neal briefly, then settled in for a longer chat with his legislative aide. She was eager to listen and especially seemed to like the stories of my students’ successes in the library and the new ways that a school library’s resources are fitting into the curriculum. She encouraged me to invite Rep. Neal to visit my school, and I plan to do that in the fall during one of his “district days” when the lawmaker is in Massachusetts.

Ridgeway was able to share her passion for school libraries with two different legislative aides.

The Ohio delegation first met with an aide from Senator Sherrod Brown’s (D-Ohio) office and then with an aide from Representative Betty Sutton’s (D-Ohio) office. All types of libraries were represented including public, academic, special, and schools. Each of us had a story to share. In my case, I have lost two aides due to budget cuts. While I have always been the only certified librarian in a school district of 2,500 students, I am now the person sitting at the middle and high school libraries, splitting my time between the two. I am essentially doing the same job as my aides, cataloging, processing, and shelving books. Occasionally, I teach students how to get on the online catalog or help them with research, but usually, I do what my aides do with a high school education, even though I have two master’s degrees. The congressional aides listened with polite, rapt attention, but I could tell by their faces they had no idea on what was going on in the libraries of Ohio public schools.

The AASL standards call for students to be able to think critically, draw conclusions, make informed decisions and create new knowledge. They must be able to participate ethically and productively as members in a democratic society, share that knowledge and be able to pursue personal and esthetic growth. I tried to stress this dilemma with my representative’s aides.

Sower said,

To say I was a bundle of nerves was an understatement; what I said would matter. Thankfully, I had been armed with some YALSA advocacy training and my ALA talking points; both made the process much smoother. It was also nice to have others who had been long time advocates with me as well. I learned quite a bit just by listening to what they had to say. Thank you both to Gil and Lexi, the aides from Rep. Deborah Halvorson (D-Illinois) and Senator Richard Durbin (D-Illinois), who took the time to meet with us about our concerns.

All of the YALSA grant recipients went away from Advocacy Day with
improved advocacy skills and a greater appreciation for the need to make their voices heard. Gruenthal said, “I don’t know if I made a difference in the decision making of these politicians, but I ended up educating myself about these issues so I can better speak to them. I learned a ton about advocacy and am now more prepared to speak out for libraries and the teens we serve.” Manfredi said, “In all, the most gratifying part of my experience at the 2010 Library Advocacy Day was feeling that not only was I speaking up on behalf of libraries and YALSA, but for the teenagers who rely on our library services. I remain grateful to the Friends of YALSA for the opportunity to participate in this event. I plan to use YALSA’s resources and the training I received during YALSA’s advocacy program to be able to train other librarians in New Mexico to become advocates, because I know now, first-hand, what a rewarding and empowering experience it is.” Larson noted that, as she left the legislators’ offices, she felt “as though I had really spoken up and spoken out for something I believe in, and I felt on top of the world. Along with that feeling was the sense that ‘wow—that was easier that I thought it would be!’ I now want to encourage my teaching colleagues and my students to speak out in support of libraries, and I plan to do all I can to help them find their voices, too!”

Ridgeway also came away feeling encouraged. She said, “I felt great to petition my representatives at the highest level of government, especially about something I feel so passionate about. I was so impressed with the members of the Ohio delegation. In a matter of an hour, I felt like I had forged new friendships and shared an experience that all of us would remember for years to come.”

Like the others, Sower is looking to the future and thinking about what kind of a difference she can make. She said, “Of course, now that Library Advocacy Day is over, my work is far from done. Now that I’m home, I plan on getting my co-workers involved in the process as well. I have plans to make training documents and resources that will be available to staff and patrons and accessible online. I also hope to do training sessions with staff that cover letter writing and other actions can be done to get the word to our representatives.”

Larson noted, “When I applied for a YALSA YA Advocacy Travel Stipend, I wrote in my application that ‘I hope to gain a better understanding of the political process of advocating for vital library services on a broad level.’ And now that I am back home and reflecting on my experience, all I can say is, ’Boy, did I ever!’”

For more information on how you can become an advocate for your library, see Robyn Vittek’s article on page ___ of this issue. YALS

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**YALSA’s Third Thursday Webinars**

YALSA’s monthly webinar series takes place every third Thursday!

**Upcoming webinars:**
- Oct. 21: Do More with Less: Passive Programs
- Nov. 18: Going Mobile: Teens, Libraries & Cell Phones
- Dec. 16: Gear up for Summer Reading


Learn more at www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars
I often think that teen librarians are a lot like devoted parents (or pet owners). Talk to a teen librarian, from anywhere in the country, and they’ll pretty quickly let you know that their teens are the best volunteers, the friendliest patrons, the most involved Teen Advisory Board (TAB) members and program attendees of any teens, anywhere. Of course you agree, while secretly (or maybe not so secretly) knowing that your teens are, in fact, the best anywhere.

The fact is, we “preach to the choir” a lot in the teen librarian world. We know how wonderful our teens are, what a vibrant part of the community, and how eager they are to learn, get involved, and make the world a better place. The problem is, not everyone knows that! The senior patrons stopping by after school are often frightened of the huge crowd of noisy teens standing in the doorway. Teens walking down the street get close scrutiny by the local police cruisers, and “no loitering” signs grace nearly every local business.

So what’s a teen advocate to do? The best way to get the community to embrace your teens is to help your teens reach out and get to know the rest of the members of the community. It is not always easy, but it is vitally important. Not only does it make life easier for the teens and provide them with learning opportunities, but by investing in the community as they grow up, to college or learn a trade, and have the choice as to whether to stay or to go.

**YALSA District Days**

YALSA’s District Days initiative is a great way to start at the top. District Days takes advantage of the fact that local representatives often return to their districts when Congress is out of session for summer recess and reminds you to invite these local reps to visit your library to see just what you and the teens are doing. Beth Gallaway, Chair of the Advocacy Task Force, wrote an entry for the YALSA blog (5/21/2010) that gave the following tips to inviting a government official or legislator to your library event:

- Use CAPWIZ (http://capwiz.com/ala/home/) to find out who represents your district.
- Research the representatives and plan (or plan to invite them to) an event that aligns with their interests or platform. Is your senator an ardent environmentalist? Invite her to the groundbreaking of your TAB’s organic garden project. Is he big on voluntarism? Ask him to present the certificates at your Teen Volunteer Appreciation Party.
- Send a formal written invitation on library stationery. Be concise, but include important details—not just the time, date, and place, but what will be expected of him or her, what benefit he or she will derive from participating (photo op, meeting future voters, and so on), and any promotion or marketing you plan.
- Always follow up with a thank-you note!

This isn’t just for the big-wigs. It works well with the town mayor or city council members, School Board members, local police officers... you get the idea.

When you get the people in charge on your side and able to see local teens for the friendly, enthusiastic individuals they are, it has a trickle-down effect on the people with whom they are in contact.

**Collaborating with Local Infrastructure, Government, and Community Organizations**

Maricopa County in Arizona has a fabulous program in place for their teens...
called “Maricopa County Teen Leadership Experience” (http://libcat.mcldaz.org/mcle/index.html). MCLE, as it is known, is an elaborate partnership between Maricopa County government offices and the Maricopa County Library District to give teens rich learning experiences, volunteer opportunities, and exposure to parks, libraries, and county agencies that provide them with services every day.

The teens attend an orientation and then are expected to complete two or more activities—they are given many different choices—in each of three sections: government, community and environment.

In the government section, they might help prepare for a local election; serve on a jury for Maricopa County’s teen court; or spend some time behind-the-scenes at a county agency.

For the community element, they could learn how to care for pets at the local Animal Control shelter, explore the local parks system, join a book discussion at the library or read stories to a Head Start classroom.

In the environmental component, they are given such opportunities as to study rocks and minerals, flora and fauna with the parks service; learn how the air quality control van monitors pollution in the county; or learn more about where Maricopa County’s electricity comes from.

Teens also must provide at least ten hours of community service at one of the participating agencies, and the final segment involves participation in Maricopa County Library District’s Summer Reading Program, which is tracked online.

You can see how well such a program would help teens to integrate and become involved in the community, explore career opportunities previously unknown to them, make contact with influential adults, and provide the adults involved in the program with the opportunity to meet the teens in their community as individuals, get to know them, and pass on their knowledge and experience.

Adrienne Strock, Teen Services Manager for Maricopa County Library District adds, “It provides the opportunity to spark new interests that teens didn’t know they had. From a library standpoint, I see MCLE as an opportunity to draw first time library users with the hope of developing lifelong users.”

Collaborating with Local Businesses

For ten years, the Akron Aeros minor league baseball team (Akron, Ohio) has been hosting Aeros Education days in the spring. The Aeros have solicited local educational organizations and community agencies, such as the local library, to provide an activity for children and teens at four to five morning games early in the season, before school lets out. Area schools bring their students to the ball games as a field trip, honor roll celebration, or team or club outing opportunity. As many as two thousand students can attend a game, visiting the tables each community agency sets up along the concourse to try the activities and collect freebies and information.

This is a great example of a program already in place that not only works to advocate for kids and teens but helps community agencies to get the word out about programs of which students and teachers may have been previously unaware. It’s not always necessary for us to initiate the advocacy opportunity; it’s important to remember that we’re probably not the only agency in town wanting to give teens positive experiences and reinforcement. Sometimes you just need to put out feelers to see what is already out there and how you can become involved!

Library-to-Library Collaborations

Jennifer Longee, the Librarian for Durham Academy Middle School (Durham, North Carolina), blogged about some exciting programs she created (www.programminglibrarian.org/library/planning/partnerships-and-collaboration/collaboration-your-school-library.html). She said that she felt that school librarians are not expected to do much programming, but she saw some ways that she could help support the curriculum and what the teachers were doing, draw some attention to the library, and give the students a fun learning experience by developing programs herself.

One such program was a partnership with not one but two local library entities. She collaborated with the Duke Medical Library and Durham Public Library on a program based on the “Harry Potter’s World: Magic, Medicine and Science of Harry Potter” traveling exhibit. The Duke Medical Library provided speakers on Renaissance-era medicine and science, as well as artifacts for a physical exhibit. The Durham Public Library housed the exhibit and hosted the speakers, and Longee provided the audience by bringing the school to ‘experience the magic’. She stated that the kids learned a lot, and for many of them, it was the first time to ever visit the local public library.

Obviously there are many ways to give your teens exposure to their community, and to give adults in the community the opportunity to get to know the local teenagers. Each can benefit by learning more about the other, and by helping to connect teens with the community, we not only prove to the world what we’ve been saying all along—that our teens are the best!—we also get some much-needed positive publicity for our library organizations.
Collaborating can be hard work—and very rewarding. YALS asked three experienced YALSA members and collaborators to share some of their tips and tricks.

**YALS: What is your experience with collaborating with other agencies?**

**Maureen Hartman**
In my previous job as Partnerships Coordinator with the Minneapolis Public Library, it was my responsibility to coordinate strategic partnerships for the library on behalf of youth. These collaborations ranged from small and focused—promoting National Mentoring Month in the library and on the website—to larger and more complex, including working with the local schools and parks on a citywide summer reading program. Some of the most exciting collaborations have been for and with youth, including making the library the home of the Minneapolis Youth Congress and working with the Minnesota Historical Society and the University of Minnesota on History Day Hullabaloo, a library event connecting students to library resources to complete their History Day projects.

**Erica Cuyugan**
Partnership and collaboration are a great way to implement large-scale programs and ideas. I love partnering with librarians, teachers, community organizations, and other city staff members on programs. For the past five years, I have successfully collaborated with youth advocates from our city’s Cultural and Human Services departments on the Annual Santa Monica Teen Film Festival program. This program has grown in size and scope since the first year, when we received about forty submissions and screened eleven films in one afternoon. This year (our fifth year), we screened thirty-three films out of a record 180 submissions for the festival over two days—one evening and one afternoon screening. Films now come from all over the country and Canada.

**Stephanie Squicciarini**
The public library I work in is a school district library, meaning our budget is voted on directly by residents of the school district. So we have a natural and close relationship with the schools and collaborate on many different projects. I also worked with a local juvenile detention facility after being awarded a Great Stories Club Grant. This collaboration included MLS students from a nearby college completing internship hours with the facility. But the longest lasting and most diverse collaborative endeavor has been the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival (TBF) that I founded seven years ago. Over the years, TBF has been made possible through the work of school and public librarians in three different counties. For the past two years, it has included a partnership developed with a college and its education program. These cooperative and collaborative layers work throughout the year to create an event connecting teens and authors.

**YA Q&A**

Collaboration

By Stephanie Squicciarini, Maureen Hartman, and Erica Cuyugan

**STEPHANIE SQUICCIARINI** is a Teen Services Librarian at the Fairport (N.Y.) Public Library, the founder and director of the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival (http://www.tbflive.org), and a YALSA Board Member. **MAUREEN HARTMAN** is a Senior Librarian at the Brookdale Library of the Hennepin County (Minn.) Library. **ERICA CUYUGAN** is a young adult librarian at the Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library.
YALS: What are some of the “dos” and “don’ts” of collaboration that you have learned over the years?

Maureen Hartman

Do make sure the library is getting something from the collaboration. Libraries and librarians are often so willing to help that we forget that both parties have to get something out of any good collaborations or partnerships—otherwise they won’t sustain in the long term.

Focus on one thing at a time. Sometimes when we meet a new potential collaborator, we get really excited, have a million ideas, and launch them right away. Pick the one that makes the most sense and the one your library can support the most easily. On the basis of its successes and failures, you’ll learn a lot about what you can expect for future collaborations with that organization.

Don’t go it alone. Remember the library’s strategic priorities. Without the support for your collaboration—either from your direct supervisor or from the system at large—you’ll have a hard time sustaining it. Even the best, most natural idea, if it’s not the direction your library can support, will end up pretty frustrating.

Don’t limit yourself to the tried-and-true. Many organizations can only think of the basics in terms of library collaboration—distributing flyers, staffing a table, helping in promotion. These endeavors, while making your partner happy, don’t always meet the larger goals of library service and rarely are worth the time you spend on them.

Collaboration and partnerships are so powerful and rewarding—they can bring an entirely new dimension to your youth, your library, and your job!

Erica Cuyugan

The first thing I would suggest when collaborating is to do as much brainstorming as possible in the beginning. Be open and flexible. Find out what each other’s goals and vision are for the collaboration. Once all the ideas are out on the table, then talk about what you can realistically work on now and what you can save for the future. Make sure you consider each person’s workload and already existing job duties. Also, if you are working with a group, make sure each member comes away from meetings with some tasks and deadlines for completing these tasks. Once some goals have been established, it is important to plan out future meetings, so that people can check their schedules early. After planning and implementation, a good practice is to evaluate the program or idea soon after. Have an honest discussion and ask each other questions such as, “What worked and what didn’t?”, “How can we improve for next time?”, and “How was the workload for each member of the collaboration?” If you have audience comments and suggestions, share these at your evaluation discussion.

In terms of “don’ts,” I have a few general tips. Don’t be discouraged if it takes time to schedule an initial meeting. If you have the time, continue to drop this person or group e-mails or phone calls, and be persistent and persuasive. Once you’ve got a collaboration going, don’t expect to accomplish everything in the first round. Most successful partnerships take time to grow together and to learn from each other. Accomplishing smaller goals first will help nurture the collaboration and give people confidence to move on to bigger ideas and goals. When something isn’t working, don’t be afraid to “tweak” or change things around. Finally, don’t be afraid to discontinue a collaboration or partnership if, for whatever reason, things are not working out. This ties in with the importance of evaluation and dialogue after a program or idea has been implemented.

Stephanie Squicciarini

I have learned to allow time for the relationship to develop and not assume that everyone has the same timeline or desired outcome. Be clear with each other on all levels of expectations. Try to get to know and understand the layers within the other organizations to learn how their internal processes work. One of the most critical pieces is working to each other’s strengths. As you get to know each person with whom you are collaborating, you learn what skills they possess and can bring to the project(s) and how those skills can enhance and develop the skills of others. As a result, the working relationship will be more productive and less stressful.

Another critical piece is to set realistic guidelines and deadlines. For example, school and public librarians each have different peaks in their work demands. Pacing the efforts to more clearly match those flows will allow for a better synchronized project. Also be sure that there is full buy-in and support for an idea. It might not be the right time for an idea, so don’t get discouraged. Timing is important. It could take time to nurture an idea and develop it so that it works and is mutually beneficial for all who will be collaborating. If it is an idea or project that you are passionate about, it will be worth the wait!

YALS
Collaboration is a word that belongs in the same “warm fuzzy feelings” list as love, peace, and healthy eating. The decision to collaborate on a project instantly creates visions of heightened creativity, enlightened cooperation, and stunning results. The phrase “Let’s collaborate on this” does not magically lead to a successful outcome, however. The Chicago Cubs prove that just because a group of highly talented people gets together in a team does not mean it can perform well.

Most effective groups, teams, or committees go through four separate stages before achieving effective collaboration. In 1965, psychologist Bruce Tuckman coined an unforgettable mnemonic for this process: forming, storming, norming, and performing. Groups must progress through the first three stages of development to successfully achieve stage four. Whether you are a group leader or simply a participant, your awareness of these four essential stages of tasks and expectations will help propel your collaborative efforts from an “oh well, maybe next season” experience to a successful venture with fabulous results.

FORMING is the first stage of group development. This is an orientation stage that can be compared to a first date. On a first date, relationships are polite and reserved. You are trying to get to know each other, trying to decide if this is a relationship you want to continue. Caution, confusion, and courtesy are dominant.

Members of your newly formed committee must also get to know each other. Together you must decide on the purpose and structure of the group and your roles within that structure. Some questions you might ask during this time include, “Who are these other people? What is expected of me? Who is going to lead? What is supposed to happen?” Even if you have worked together with other group members for years, forming a new team requires this orientation period to establish goals and procedures.

This forming stage is not the time to expect free and open discussions or to create a consensus. In the beginning, fostering trust, encouraging relationship building, and clarifying purposes and expectations take precedence over making decisions or taking action.

If you are a committee chair, you play a very important role during this period. Group members will more likely interact directly with you rather than with other members. You need to direct the team clearly by establishing clear objectives, explaining task requirements, and generating a commitment to common goals. You should also encourage equal participation among team members.

This first stage is usually rather short. Often it can be accomplished in the first committee meeting. Whether you are a leader or just a member, you can help the group progress by focusing on activities that will build a positive working relationship.

The STORMING stage does not seem to fit with the goal of a cooperative team. The conflict, criticism, and confrontation that define this stage is the opposite of the diplomacy and peacemaking you would expect from a successful collaborative effort. Surprisingly, however, almost all observers of group development have noted that for a group to become an effective team, it must go through

Pennsylvania College for Creative Arts, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, 400 First Avenue, Bloomsburg, PA 17815-1033. Phone: 570-389-4819. Fax: 570-389-4942. E-mail: info@penncreatives.edu. Website: www.pccas.org
Four Steps to Effective Collaboration

a period of internal strife. Most often this is centered on a struggle for leadership or influence within the group. Unless your committee faces this conflict, it will most likely become “stuck” or go “off-track.”

During this confrontational stage your authority as chair may be challenged as others jockey for position as their roles are clarified. Working methods start to be defined. If you are a committee member you may feel overwhelmed by how much there is to do, or uncomfortable with the approach being used. You or others may even react by questioning how worthwhile the goal of the team is and resist taking on tasks. Some questions you may ask include “How will we handle dissent? How can we make decisions amid disagreement? How will we communicate negative information? Do I want to maintain my membership in this team?”

Challenging group goals can be a healthy process if the conflict results in greater cohesiveness and acceptance. If the conflict becomes extremely intense and dysfunctional, however, the group may dissolve, or continue as an ineffective team that never advances to higher levels of maturity.

As a committee chair you need to be aware this storming stage is an important part of team growth. Rather than squelching confrontation or criticism, you need to provide a forum for open expression. Focusing on process improvement, recognizing team achievement, and fostering win-win relationships are your group’s predominant tasks for progressing through this stage.

As a team member you should strive to turn challenges into constructive suggestions for improvement. Everyone should be allowed to legitimately express their personal uniqueness and idiosyncrasies, so long as they are not destructive to the overall team. Diversity is productive.

If the members of your committee are more interested in keeping peace than in solving problems, your group will never achieve effective collaboration. Harmony sometimes must be sacrificed as the team attacks problems and accomplishes objectives.

Surviving the difficulties of this conflict phase usually results in feelings of relief, increased trust in each other, and a sense that “we’re all in this together” as the group gradually moves into the NORMING stage. A hierarchy is established, individual differences are recognized, and task assignments are made based on skills and abilities. Now your team members know each other better, you may be socializing together, and you are able to ask each other for help and provide constructive criticism. Your committee is developing a strong commitment to the team goal, and is starting to see good progress towards it.

Questions you may ask during this differentiation stage include “What are the norms and values of the team? How can I best get along with everyone else? How can I show my support to others? How can I fit in?”

There is often a prolonged overlap between storming and norming behavior: As new tasks come up, your group may lapse back into typical storming stage behavior, but this eventually dies out.

As the committee chair you can step back during the norming stage and let your team take responsibility for progress towards the goal. This is a good time to arrange a social or team-building event. You should concentrate on providing supportive feedback and encouraging team member empowerment. Your team, rather than you or any other single person, should take responsibility for solving problems, confronting and correcting mistakes, and ensuring success.

One dysfunctional characteristic your committee may develop during this stage is conformity in thought or action. Also known as “groupthink,” conforming is a phase that reduces the creativity and innovation of your team because individual members have become uninspired to think independently or to consider ideas or solutions that run counter to those supported by the majority of the team. While there is a sense of cohesiveness that can be reassuring to you and other members, the creative juices have stopped flowing and your group is stagnant.

Knocking your committee out of its groupthink rut is a challenge and calls for specific action. Suggestions for addressing groupthink include designating at least one team member as a critical evaluator or devil’s advocate, forming multiple subgroups to develop independent ideas, inviting outside experts to critique the team’s decisions, and holding second-opinion meetings where decisions are revisited and honestly evaluated.

While successfully negotiating the norming stage offers team members a sense of accomplishment and progress, your team has not yet reached the optimal phase. Short-term effectiveness may look rather impressive, but for long-term results your group must transition into the PERFORMING stage.

The fourth stage of group development is when effective collaboration truly occurs. By successfully passing through the first three stages you and your committee members have formed a cohesive relationship and are committed to the group’s success. Individual differences are accepted without being labeled good or bad. Decisions are made through rational group discussion. Conflict is dealt with openly and resolved. Members listen to each other and share information.

Your group’s trust level is so well established that it can organize and reorganize itself any way it wishes. You can operate in the absence of leading members. The work tasks can be knitted together because you are all are confident in each other. Team members in this stage exhibit a sense of mutual responsibility and
concern for one another as you carry out your work. Your relationships are not limited merely to accomplishing a task together but also extend to ensuring that each team member is learning, developing, and improving. Coaching and assisting one another is common.

If you are the leader of such a dynamic group, delegate as far as you sensibly can. Once the team has achieved high performance, you should aim to have as “light a touch” as you can. You will now be able to start focusing on other goals and areas of work. Being part of the team at this stage feels easy compared with earlier on.

Of course, reaching this stage of development does not equal Team Nirvana. Continuous improvement needs to replace accomplishment as a key objective. The challenges of this phase include seeking innovation and speed, sponsoring and facilitating committee members’ new ideas, and fostering extraordinary performances.

Whether you are a committee chair or participant, you should remain aware of this forming, storming, norming, and performing process. Conduct regular reviews of where your group is, and adjust your behavior and leadership approach to suit the stage your team has reached. In this way you really can reach the heightened creativity, enlightened cooperation, and stunning results of your collaborative dreams. YALS
In a classroom, five teenage boys gather around an iMac computer and collaborate on a special video project. They are in the process of creating a commercial for their library and when finished, the commercial will be shown to their classmates with the goal of encouraging them to use their library. Huddled together over the iMac screen, they take turns using the mouse and editing the commercial. The project could easily be happening in a high school classroom, yet the five teens in my class are youthful offenders currently housed at Jail North, one of two jail facilities in Mecklenburg County of Charlotte, North Carolina. Green is the designated color for male youth offenders, and each boy is dressed in a green jumpsuit with ‘Mecklenburg County Youth Offender’ written in white on the back. This class is the third of four sessions for the commercial and the teens have been diligently working on their project. For the past hour, I have been helping the young men edit footage they shot of the Jail North library using Flip cameras from the previous week.

“I think that one scene is too long,” says a sixteen-year-old, highlighting a video section with the mouse. His classmates agree and they cut the scene by a few seconds, making the transition to the next scene smoother.

“That does look better,” concedes a fellow sixteen-year-old.

“I told you it would, I’m like James Cameron,” says the first teen, making the group laugh. This is the first time any of the teens have used Flip cameras or an iMac, but the group caught on quickly and soon were uploading and editing their video footage like pros. Before we know it the hour is up and the class is over. However, instead of the class being dismissed by a bell I use a phone in the classroom and call for an officer to escort the teens back to their living quarters or “pods.”

The commercial the youth offenders are working on is part of a library programming partnership between the Mecklenburg County Sherriff’s Office (MCSO) and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library (CML). As a librarian with CML, I am one of several CML staff members that facilitate library programs in partnership with the jail. The Mecklenburg County Sherriff’s Office defines a youthful offender as ‘inmates that are sixteen to seventeen years old.’ While they may be youthful offenders, the young men in my class are not so different from my other teenage patrons in the public library. In fact, if they were dressed in street clothes an observer would think they were regular high school kids. They joke around with each other and with me as we wait for the officer to escort them to their pod. Before they leave I remind them they have only one more class to finish their commercial.

“We’ll make it count, Ms. Craig,” a seventeen-year-old inmate says as he walks out the door, and I know that they will.

The Beginning of a Partnership

I began facilitating library programs to the youth offenders of Mecklenburg County in 2007, but a solid partnership between CML and the sheriff’s office had been in place for several years. The library collaboration would never have happened without the initiative of Margo Fesperman, manager of library services for Jail North and Jail Central. For several years Fesperman had built a strong library within the jails and added part time and full time help to both libraries. Jail administrators wanted to offer youth offenders additional programs along with their mandatory school curriculum, but there were not enough jail staff members to facilitate them. The jail library motto is to “Fight Crime Through Literacy,” and as a former staff member of CML, Fesperman knew

ANGELA CRAIG is a Library Location Supervisor with the Charlotte Mecklenburg (N.C.) Library. She loves working with at-risk teens and is currently writing a book for Neal-Schuman Publishers tentatively titled Library Service for At-Risk Teens: Bridging the Gap.
Facilitating Library Programs to a ‘Captive’ Audience

At the beginning of my involvement with the jail I was a staff member with CML’s outreach department. Initially I was a hesitant about the partnership as I had never worked with inmates before. However, I wanted to give it a try. Like other staff members I went on a tour of the facility, which convinced me of the need for library services. I agreed to be part of the rotation, and since then I have enjoyed every minute of my association with the jail.

The greatest partnership currently exists between the Jail North facility and CML, as that facility contains the larger number of youthful offenders and has the most consistent population. Jail North houses the male youth offender population, which is significantly larger than the female population of Jail Central. The Jail North facility is also conducive to programming as it has designated classrooms, a computer lab, and a library. While Jail Central has a library it has limited space and was not designed with programs in mind. CML does the bulk of its programming with the male youthful offenders, but offers programs to the female youth offenders when the population can support it.

From a programming standpoint the library activities that I facilitate with the youth offenders are not any different than what I facilitate in a public library setting. Everything that I have done, from technology based programs to book based programs, I have facilitated with teens both inside and outside the jail. Leonard supports anything the staff wants to facilitate with the youth offenders, as long as the program addresses the needs of the teens.

“All of our programming for the youthful offenders is always based on a need, not just on what the staff wants to do,” said Leonard. “Assessment and evaluation of a population like this is important to your program success because you have such a short time with them and you have to make it count.”

I found out early on that technology skills seemed to be an area that the teens were lacking, and also where the jail had programming gaps. One of my first classes was a work force development session where the teens were supposed to create a resume and cover letter. However, the class quickly turned in to a computer basics class as none of the teens knew how to type or work a word processing program.

Fesperman was not surprised when I relayed this story to her.

“The youth offenders might say that they know how to use an iPod, but you give them one and they don’t know how to go to the next song,” Fesperman said. “Their typing skills are typically minimal, which tells me they haven’t done a lot of keyboarding in the classroom. If they are going to function in today’s world, get a job and be part of the twenty-first century they have got to have some computer based skills.”

Armed with this knowledge the CML staff found a diverse assortment of programs that were technology based, literacy based, or both. Podcasting proved to be extremely useful. By utilizing free software downloads the program cost was minimal but allowed for a wide range of programming. For example, with the poetry class the final project required the teens to create a digital recording of their poem and save it as an MP3 file. Staff facilitated programs such as computer games, video games, and online scrabble tournaments to help youth offenders become more tech savvy. In addition, gaming was a great team building activity for the teens as it required them to work together and share equipment.

Fesperman proved to be invaluable to the CML partnership as she worked with jail officers to clear the equipment that was
needed for the technology programs. Though originally hesitant about allowing so much equipment in with the youth offenders, the officers relented when they saw the benefits the teens were reaping from the library programs.

As staff facilitated the programs, we also evaluated them. Because class time was limited to an hour, the evaluations were kept to a simple format. Often the instructor would pass out evaluations at the end of class or even do a post assessment with teens by asking them what they learned during the session. However, timing was always a factor and at times it was a challenge to get recurring data. The population of the two facilities also presented challenges as there is a high turnover rate, particularly within the female population of Jail Central. Many of the teens were incarcerated for short periods of time and were able to attend one or two classes before they were released. Often I would have a class of ten teens but the number would dwindle to two or three as the youths were released from jail. Despite these challenges the partnership progressed and several best practices emerged:

- Library staff used programs for teens that were already developed with CML and modified them to fit the needs of the youth offenders.
- Staff created quick, one-session classes to facilitate with the teens that were close to being released. “Interviewing Skills” was a popular class with the female youth offenders as it could be run for one class and gave inmates a skill they could use once they were released.
- Staff connected the programs with existing jail programs, such as Podcasting for a book report, creative writing with English, or gaming with technology skills. This helped justify the program and gave staff a framework for their class.
- Library and jail staff utilized the digital products the teens created to showcase what the teens learned and demonstrate the benefits of the CML partnership.
- See what the need of the facility is and plan around it.
- Follow the guidelines of the jail. The protocols are there for the safety of the staff and should not be ignored.
- If a jail facility already has programs, offer something different, such as book deposits or resource training for jail staff.
- If you are just starting out and have some flexibility with the facility, provide one program in literacy and one program in technology, then evaluate. Check in with jail administration and make sure that the program is in line with their needs, and adjust as needed.
- When selecting staff to work with youth offenders, make sure that they are open-minded and enjoy working with teens. The staff members have to be strong programmers and able to adapt their methods to fit incarcerated teens. Jail is not the average library situation and often the inmates are non-traditional library users, so you want their experience with the public library to be positive and encouraging.

“Those youth, regardless for what they’re in for, are in fact sixteen and seventeen years old and are teenagers with a lot on their shoulders besides growing up,” says Fesperman. “I hope that you can see that they do want to learn and be creative and do have the ability to be equal to anybody else their age in the community.”

Creating Future Partnerships

Forming a partnership with a facility such as a jail or detention center can take time but is worth the effort. When pursuing a partnership, here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- Library and jail staff utilized the digital programs the teens created to showcase what the teens learned and demonstrate the benefits of the CML partnership.
- Follow the guidelines of the jail. The protocols are there for the safety of the staff and should not be ignored.
- If a jail facility already has programs, offer something different, such as book deposits or resource training for jail staff.
- If you are just starting out and have some flexibility with the facility, provide one program in literacy and one program in technology, then evaluate. Check in with jail administration and make sure that the program is in line with their needs, and adjust as needed.
- When selecting staff to work with youth offenders, make sure that they are open-minded and enjoy working with teens. The staff members have to be strong programmers and able to adapt their methods to fit incarcerated teens. Jail is not the average library situation and often the inmates are non-traditional library users, so you want their experience with the public library to be positive and encouraging.

Reference

No-Isle Libraries is a library district serving more than a half a million patrons in Island and Snohomish Counties of Washington state. The widespread communities we serve are varied and include busy commuter suburbs of Seattle, rural areas, diverse immigrant populations, island artists’ villages, small farm towns, tribal lands, and Navy bases. However, in 2006 when our director Jonalyn Woolf-Ivory went out into these locations to do a series of community meetings with the public, one consistent message came across loud and clear from each of them. All were concerned about their teenagers. Universally the community members perceived that there was a lack of community resources and constructive activities for youth. In many places it was felt that outside of school there was simply nothing for teens to do. It was out of this resounding concern voiced for youth that the Teen Project was conceived.

Together with the Sno-Isle Libraries Foundation, a plan was developed to help Sno-Isle library staff learn how to better connect with teens and community partners to plan improved services and programs for teens: The Teen Project. And beyond what is hoped to be accomplished with teens, the ultimate objective is community development, establishing libraries as both partners in problem solving and as centers of community life.

The Urban Libraries Council accepted the Teen Project for the Executive Leadership Institute. This year-long fellowship provided leadership support which helped us define the project’s scope.

Another great inspiration for framing this project was the Engaged Libraries study of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), which encouraged libraries to make connections with neighborhood leaders to help make the library a community center. Another was the Search Institute’s forty Developmental Assets, which teaches community leaders to work together to help youth build positive attributes to thrive. These fit in line well with the mission of Sno-Isle Libraries that is “to be a community doorway to reading, resources, and lifelong learning, and a center for people, ideas, and culture.”

Considering these inspirations and our mission statement, it was decided that the goals of the Teen Project would be to:

1. Establish the library as a center of the community and an important part of community life.
2. Create a framework and process to help libraries establish teen connections, based on local needs, desires and resources.
3. Engage teens in the library and create deeply rooted connections to teens and to the community.
4. Seek teen advocates and partners with youth serving groups as appropriate.

To best achieve these goals, the Teen Project would focus on four libraries each year. The Teen Contacts (not all Sno-Isle Libraries are large enough to have teen librarians on staff) from these community libraries come together every other week for an entire year. They are trained on...
topics relating to community building and teens and share their experiences as the year progresses. There are no quick fixes expected; it is understood from the beginning that this should be a slow and steady process. To support the program, the Sno-Isle Foundation supplies money for trainings, coaching, supplies for focus groups, and eventually seed money for programming. Sno-Isle Libraries provides support staff, off-desk time to devote to the project, and ample mentorship opportunities.

First, the four Teen Contacts are trained in how to conduct community asset mapping. At this stage they are encouraged to begin by brainstorming with community library staff to identify local organizations and individuals working with teens. Next, appointments are made with as many of these connections as possible to learn about what is they do, and what other connections they can suggest. This process is repeated until all leads have been followed and a thorough community map has been created.

Next, Teen Project participants are provided with public speaking training, focusing especially on crafting an elevator speech. The elevator speech is a quick talk that can be presented to organizations and individuals who inquire about the Teen Project. This brief summary must be crafted by local staff members to be effective, for by its nature, the Teen Project is deliberately vague in overall description. It is to be flexible to the needs of specific libraries and the communities they serve.

What the Teen Project results will look like will depend very much upon unique factors and feedback of a location. What is important in communicating the concept is that the Teen Project representative can speak with confidence about the goals of the project and of the willingness of the library to work with other groups.

Teen Project participants are then trained to run focus groups. Using the newly forged connections with community leaders, preestablished groups of teens are sought out to use in focus groups. Successful focus groups can be conducted with almost any group of eight to twelve teens. Advisory boards for cities and parks work especially well, as can church youth groups. YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and teen library pages also make good focus groups. Student organizations such as Honor Society groups can be a pleasure to work with, while gathering random groups of teens from the library after school can be a bit more challenging. One librarian found that the most enthusiastic groups were those who got to leave their classes to attend a focus group in the school library. All teen focus groups appreciate free pizza.

Once Teen Project staff complete a series of focus groups, they are encouraged to examine the findings for community trends. The findings repeated what was learned in the community asset mapping are particularly of interest. Great random suggestions from teens are shared with the Teen Coordinator and implemented quickly when possible. And most importantly, teens interested in volunteering with the libraries are contacted to help establish a local Teen Advisory Board. One of the central beliefs of the Teen Project is that truly successful programming cannot be achieved without complete participation and support of teens.

What makes a successful program varies tremendously from library to library. The first year’s libraries took very different approaches. In Marysville, the most popular programs have been elaborate after-hours events involving extensive decorating, teens acting in murder mysteries, or energetic games based on reality shows. At the Stanwood Library, teens found their librarian receptive to new ideas and were able to start a weekly Dungeons & Dragons club. The Monroe Library chose to take a riskier path, where teens helped plan a rave that took place in the library meeting room one Friday night. The Mountlake Terrace Library developed a series of monthly events taking place Wednesdays after school, including game days, movie matinees, and craft programs.
All libraries had strong increases in programming numbers within one year after completion of the Teen Project.

But while growing teen programming can seem impressive and it does benefit youth, it is only a small part of the Teen Project. Director Jonalyn Woolf-Ivory once said at a Teen Project orientation meeting that “the success of the Teen Project should not be measured in program numbers, but by the personal growth of the individuals involved.” Sno-Isle ensures this by creating a strong structure of coaching and membership around Teen Project participants. In addition to support from the Sno-Isle Foundation leadership early on in the project, each year our Adult/Teen Services Manager Terry Beck, and the teen coordinator (me) work closely with a community consultant. Martha Dankers does not have a library background, aside from being a customer, which is a strength in this situation. Her background is as a nurse who was Director of Community Relations at a local hospital, which included developing partnership programs in the community. She has experience communicating with leaders and negotiating local politics. Her role is to provide a fresh perspective, help identify opportunities, coach individuals, and provide training and feedback. All three of us attend the bi-weekly meetings, where we review Teen Project progress, provide insight on experiences gained, reinforce positive actions, and encourage staff to challenge themselves to go outside their comfort areas to achieve personal growth and greater community connections.

In addition to working with the manager, coordinator and consultant who run the Teen Project, staff are also given the opportunity to learn more about what takes place behind the scenes at the system’s service center. Staff from collection development, marketing, and facilities development come to Teen Project meetings to share how their departments affect service to teens, and how Teen Project staff can make best use of them.

Being able to provide this level of support to staff is a true blessing. Greater familiarity with service center staff, including the teen coordinator, helps our Teen Contacts feel more comfortable tapping into the human resources available to support them. Our consultant can visit the Teen Project communities to strategize with staff. We are available to consult and assist staff with programs and focus groups. They learn that assistance is theirs for the asking.

Now that participants have discovered who else in their communities is serving teens, interviewed the teens through focus groups, discovered internal support available, and begun basic programming with the help of teens, the groundwork is set for the next phase. Teen Project libraries continue communicating with community partners and to seek our opportunities for collaboration. They take what they have learned, and share it for the benefit of all parties involved. This can take many forms: teens pushing book-carts in parades; promoting libraries and reading during the halftime show of the local minor league baseball team; gaining the support of the local police guild for a program where teens help young reluctant readers. There are so many possibilities.

By understanding what resources are currently in their communities and listening to what local teens need, our community libraries are better able to develop programs and services for teens. Engaging both teens and community partners in the ongoing evolution and continuous reinvention of what libraries offer keeps things fresh, relevant, and creates meaningful connections. By building and sustaining this culture of mutual support, we have been able to create innovative partnerships and programs that truly respond to the needs of teens and the communities they live in.

Resources

Sno-Isle Libraries’ Teen Project Manual is available upon request.

The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building.


www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18.

YALS
Until recently, there was no way for teens in Massachusetts to recognize their favorite young adults books on the state level. That has all changed now. The Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award Committee has announced that any teen can nominate and vote for his or her favorite young adult titles published in this calendar year. The Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award Committee is a joint project between the Massachusetts Library Association and the Massachusetts School Library Association. This is our story of how we collaborated to make this award happen.

Mary Ann Rogers

(Chair)

As a school librarian, I knew students liked to read. It is great to entice them with new books. However, I also knew that as teens, they wanted a voice, their voice, to say what a great book was. When I asked students which books they liked, they were happy to share their opinions. I noticed that while other states had a teen book award, Massachusetts did not. I wanted to change that.

I was the person who got the ball rolling. I had been on the Rhode Island Teen Book Award Committee when I was doing my teaching practicum in Rhode Island. I wanted to start a teen book award in Massachusetts. More than two years ago, I went to a youth services committee meeting at the Central Massachusetts Regional Library headquarters and asked if I could form a committee to create a Massachusetts teen book award. Right from the beginning, I wanted it to be a collaboration between both public and school librarians who worked with teens.

The youth services committee gave me the green light and I then went to the Massachusetts School Library Association executive board to ask them to be one of the sponsoring organizations of the award. The MSLA executive board approved my request. By this time, Sue-Ellen Szymanski, a public librarian from the Milford Town Library had decided to join me as a co-chair. Sue-Ellen went to the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) to ask them to co-sponsor us. They also said yes, so we formed a committee.

Neither Sue-Ellen nor I had even run a committee before but we were determined to try. We posted a notice on our electronic discussion lists to see who would be interested. I was very pleased to see public librarians, school librarians, and a youth consultant come to the first meeting. We spent a lot of time brainstorming about what we thought this award should be and agreed to meet monthly. Over the course of the next year and a half, we wrote our by-laws, submitted our articles of organization with the state and created a timeline of how we wanted to go about the nomination and voting process.
We also held a logo contest for any teen that wanted to design a logo that we could use for publicity. We got a lot of terrific entries and we chose our winner this spring. Peter Muscasto, who was a junior at Waltham High School, created a terrific logo. Very early on the committee decided to make this a teen choice book award. We talked about the importance of teens nominating and voting for their favorite titles.

Maureen Ambrosino, a youth consultant, set up a nomination and voting mechanism online. She guided much of the planning of this award and as of June 1, 2010, any teen in Massachusetts can nominate their favorite 2010 titles. The nomination process will continue until December 31, 2010. The top five middle school level titles and the top five high school level titles will be put on two separate ballots. Each teen can vote for their favorite title (both middle and high school) and the two titles with the most votes will win the award. The Web site is www.readsinma.org/tcb.

We’ll be giving out the very first Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award on April 14, 2011, on YALSA’s Support Teen Literature Day. We think that is a perfect example of the Rhode Island Teen Book Award by my co-chair and colleague, Mary Ann Rogers, at a YSS meeting a couple of years ago, our executive board was energized to develop an award that empowers middle and high school students to share their excitement about current books for teens by honoring their chosen author with an award created by them. The sheer number of youth titles on so many bestseller lists encourages all librarians that reading is still crucial to kids!

Collaboration with MSLA is a natural for this award because school librarians have significant contact with our target audience to promote and encourage their participation. Our motivation has been to inspire all teens to get involved in the process. Already, students have expressed their interest by designing the logo for the MTCBA. The goal of launching the Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award this year has been met and we await the nominations and later, voting, to bring several years of planning to an exciting conclusion.

Laurie Cavanaugh
(Secretary)

Initially, I was intrigued by the idea of reading all the new YA books and being a judge, recommending the best new books to teens through the awards process. I was quickly converted to the idea of putting teens in the driver’s seat by having them nominate, judge, and vote on the award-winning titles. This changed the model from the original example of the Rhode Island Teen Book Award, where adults select the finalists for teen to vote on, so I felt like our committee was breaking new ground.

As a public librarian, I promote YALSA’s Teens’ Top Ten list during Teen Read Week™ each year, but the Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award brings it down to a local level. I thought this would make it seem more immediate to teens and local librarians.

Mary Dunphy
(Treasurer)

How often have your teen patrons complained about the award-winning book chosen by adults? Did you ever wish you were more in sync with your colleagues who also work with teens, be it in the school library or the public library?

Back in 2008, an idea was born, the fruit of much brainstorming. We as librarians have the unique opportunity to collaborate with each other and teens. By enabling teens to be an integral part of the process of nominating and selecting a title for the MTCBA, our hope is to encourage teens to not only be avid readers but also to make recommendations for others.

I am the treasurer of MTCBA. I joined the committee in May 2009. It was the unique award process of MTCBA, focusing on teens as the primary source of nominations and selections that inspired me to become involved. In my experience, many teens expressed disappointment in the award winning books chosen. Last winter for instance, I recommended a recent award-winning title to a student who is an avid reader. I was surprised by the student’s comment when she returned the book: “Why did that win an award? I had such a hard time getting into it! It seems that all these books that are award-winning are not ones that I would pick up to read!” Seeing the student frustrated with the process, I recognized the void in the award selection process; the voice of the teens was not represented.

As a school librarian, I have often have solicited input from teens who read books and make suggestions for reading lists and recommendations in the school library. A school librarian at Hingham’s High School and Middle School, I have enjoyed meeting and working with public and school librarians in establishing this award. I already was collaborating with the reference and youth services librarians in the Hingham and Hull Public Libraries, but it has been a rewarding experience to work closely with other school and public librarians in Massachusetts, working towards a common goal.
I'll never forget the day Megan's father turned to me and said, “Thank you so much! Your library's teen art contest has changed my daughter's life.” Megan had entered our art contest and was now accepting the Best in Show Award at the 2009 Texas Media Awards during the Texas Library Association's annual conference. Previously, Megan had not felt confident in her artistic ability, and it was only through her family's encouragement that she had agreed to enter the library's teen art contest.

Megan was astonished when she won both her age category and best in show at our library's teen art contest. Megan's father informed me that winning the art contest was the catalyst that propelled Megan to begin to pursue photography as a serious career. The next year, Megan participated in art contest after art contest, winning first place and scholarships in nearly every contest she entered. She compiled her portfolio and was granted a scholarship to a prestigious art school on the east coast. Gone was the shy, insecure, self-taught photographer. Megan was now ready to take on the world.

Why Should I Emphasize the Fine Arts with the Teens at My Library?

Megan's story is not included here as a way to show my accomplishments, but rather to highlight how one event can change the life of a teen.

Budget cuts are being felt everywhere—within school systems, family budgets, and libraries. Teens are facing limited opportunities in school to experience art, theater, dance, and music classes because of budget cuts. Families who were once able to afford the costs of attending extracurricular activities in the fine arts may no longer have the money to do so. There are also teens who have had little or no exposure to the fine arts, regardless of the state of the economy. It is also important to remember that the library is a place where teens should be encouraged to explore and learn more about themselves and the world around them. The availability of fine arts programs in the library allows teens to express themselves creatively, learn about different artistic fields and people, and interact collaboratively with their peers in various ways.

Budget cuts and teen self-expression are only a couple of reasons for highlighting the fine arts at your library. Programs that highlight the fine arts such as art contests, writing contests, and dance workshops attract a large number of teen participants and their parents. These programs are a great way to increase community awareness for your library and build community relations. Approximately eighty participants attended our library's art contest each time it was held in the last three years. During all fine art programs, we distribute information about other teen programs, the teen collection, and other youth and adult programs offered at the library.

What Will This Cost Us? Money and Time

Since all libraries are mindful of their budgets, especially in view of budget cuts, many readers may be wondering: Exactly how much do these types of programs cost? The answer is simple—the programs will cost as little or as much as you want them to cost. The importance of introducing fine art programs to teens at the library lies not in the end result,
but rather with the creative process each teen goes through to reach the end result. For example, a teen who enters a library’s art contest will learn about peer review through the judging process; a teen who enters a writing contest will practice how to use grammar and other literary devices correctly; and a teen who participates in a dance workshop will learn more about his or her body and the effects of movement. For the fine art programs described here, all you need is a room. Anything else is extraneous.

Although a fine arts program can be as inexpensive as it needs to be, the time and effort devoted to programming shows. It takes time and energy to find sponsors, to identify outside teachers willing to teach free classes and to secure food donations. But every minute spent is worth the effort. When teens see that a lot of energy and hard work has been put into a program, they feel valued and they feel that the work they are doing is important.

**An Art Contest or A Writing Contest, or Maybe Both!**

Art contests and writing competitions have similar preparation plans and layouts, therefore I discuss both together here. For examples of entry forms, fliers, posters, and rules, please visit the Texas State Library and Archive Commission’s 2009 Texas Teens Read! Programming Manual Online available at http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/projects/ctr/2009/manual. Please feel free to adapt the examples on that Web site to suit your needs.

The first thing needed when developing an art or writing contest is to consider what age groups will participate. Will this contest be open to contestants who are 12 to 18 years old, or just to those who are 14 to 18 years old? If a wide range of ages are entering the contest, then it is best to offer prizes for individual age groups. This ensures that older students will not automatically win first prize in every category.

Next, consider the types of art work that will be accepted in the art show or what genres will be included in the writing contest. For example, at our library’s teen art contest, we accept almost all artwork as long as it can be hung and the artwork is no larger than 11 by 17 inches. We have just recently allowed three-dimensional artwork on a first-come, first-served basis. Three-dimensional artwork is limited to the dimension of the library’s display case. For the writing contest, teens compete in short story, poetry, and personal narrative. We also included a script writing category one year. Of course, contests could include any or all of these categories, as well as fantasy, science fiction, anime, and other genre.

Finally, consider how the art contest or writing contest will be judged. Will there be first, second, and third-place prizes? Will there be an honorable mention prize? Will awards be given for each age group? It is also important to think about who will judge the contests. Our contest judges have included English and art college professors, high school teachers, local artists, writers, members of writers’ guilds, and combinations of these.

Once a basic plan for the art or writing contest is made, it is time to think about what type of prizes will be offered and how to advertise the contest. For those in smaller, rural libraries or libraries where budgets have been slashed, do not despair! Remember that all you need for these programs is a room, and you can even limit that to an area of your library if you do not have a separate room. Teens are often happy just to have their accomplishments recognized. For example, you can display simple certificates created by hand or with Microsoft Publisher along with the artwork. If you display winning artwork at the library for a month, many teens would find this a satisfying reward. If you are ambitious and want to find sponsors for your prizes, I encourage you to do so. You never know what someone will donate for a good cause. For example, I have solicited and received gift cards from local art stores and book stores for our library’s art and writing contests.

When advertising an art or writing contest, remember one thing: network, network, network! Leave no stone unturned for the advertising campaign in your community. Advertise in your local newspapers (many newspapers will publish local nonprofit events for free). Also, post information on your library Web site, or on an online local calendar. Distribute fliers at your library and other areas where local teens congregate. This may include coffee shops, as well as local middle and high schools. I strongly emphasize the importance of networking with local middle and high school teachers. Several teachers made our library’s art contest or writing contest a class assignment. Remember, use your art contest or writing contest as a way to help promote your library and its programs. The more people who know about and participate in your art or writing contest, the more people may be interested in visiting your library. Advertising is all about building community awareness and relations for your library.

**A Movements Class or Dance Workshop: No Dance Experience Necessary!**

I would like to quell the fears of any librarians who are reading this article. Please do not be distressed—you do not need to be a professional dancer to have a movements class at your library. All you need is space, a room, or even a space outside on a nice day. Just remember that the emphasis of a dance or movements class, for all librarians and teens, should be that dance is just movement, and you move every day.

Dance can be found in such simple movements as closing the car door, rising out of bed in the morning, and even in brushing
your hair. For librarians who would like to have a movements class at their library, I have prepared a full movements class plan that includes a basic warm up and three movement exercises. This class plan can be found at the Texas State Library and Archive Commission’s 2010 Texas Teens Read! Programming Manual Online at http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/projects/ttr/2010/manual.

Dance workshops can be challenging but exciting programs. For those who wonder if a dance workshop would appeal to your community, you may be surprised. Since I had not found any information about libraries holding a dance workshop, our library was not sure how many to expect at our dance workshop. Both times we held a dance workshop, our library had approximately sixty attendees. When planning a dance workshop, remember that the information above about networking to promote the program and asking for sponsors remains the same. For example, donations for a dance workshop might include water and food donations as well as studio space. There are some aspects to planning a dance workshop that differ from planning an art or writing contest. The most critical aspects are timing and space.

Timming for a dance workshop can actually mean two different things. First, there is timing of the dance workshop itself; that is, how long will the dance workshop last? Will it last a whole day or half a day? Our library’s dance workshop lasted from 9 A.M. until 6 P.M. It was a long day that included four classes, two breaks, and lunch. To offer such a long workshop, I had to find four teachers who were willing to teach different dance techniques classes. Consider having a half-day workshop if this time element suits your program and resources better.

Second, timing also means when the dance workshop itself will be held. The dance workshop should be held when it is most likely to attract the largest number of attendees. This often means holding the workshop on a weekend. It is also important to notice when popular events such as football games and dance team competitions are being held, because the dance workshop will most likely appeal to those who have some dance experience and you want to avoid time conflicts. You will attract some participants who have no dance experience, but most of the teens who attend will likely have some dance background. About 60 percent of the teens who attended our library’s dance workshop had some dance experience, and about 40 percent had little or no dance experience.

When holding a dance workshop, consider the type of space where it will be held. Unlike a movements class which may last only an hour or so, a dance workshop usually lasts several hours, so the space where it is held is important. First, you will need enough room so that the teens can move around without bumping into one another. Next, consider the flooring in the space. The best floor for dance is a hard surface that has some “spring,” so that dancers can avoid injuries to their knees and backs that might be caused by activities such as jumping. This type of flooring is found only in dance studios. The next best dance floor is a hard wood or linoleum floor. These types of floors will allow teens to move and turn easily. Carpeted floors should be avoided since they can cause too much friction and lead to twisted ankles.

After considering the time, space, and flooring for the workshop, you will need to consider what types of dance will be offered and who will teach those classes. It is best to offer a mixture of dance techniques, such as ballet, modern, jazz, tap, improvisation, theatrical dance, etc. Sometimes the dance teachers who donate their time determine the types of classes that will be offered. At both of the dance workshops that our library offered, all of the dance teachers donated their time to teach the participating teens. Some potential dance teachers include dance college professors, local dance graduate students, high school dance teachers, local studio dance teachers, and members of local dance companies. Again, the time and effort needed to locate dance teachers may be frustrating, but teens love it when they are offered a mixture of different technique classes.

The final component that you must considered when planning a dance workshop is volunteers. With an art or writing contest, you may need only one or two volunteers, but volunteers are an absolute must with a dance workshop because of its time span. Volunteers can help with set up and clean up, and they can distribute water or food, sign teens in and out, and handle crowd control. Some places to look for volunteers include the local National Charity League, your library’s teen advisory board, and high school volunteer groups. Always remember that it is better to have too much help than not enough.

Take a moment and remember the last time you helped a teen find a book that you thought they would enjoy reading. Remember the spark that lit their eyes when they said, “This is perfect.” You made a connection, and through that connection, the teen you helped will grow and learn more about themselves and the world. When you facilitate fine arts programs with teens, it works the same way. You present a program and then watch for a spark to appear in one of the participating teen’s eyes, and you think, “This is perfect, I just changed someone’s life today.” YALS

Resources


Risk taking in libraries doesn’t happen overnight or with just one person, and too often a risky idea or project comes to a standstill because the risk taker didn’t ask others for help. Garnering support from library administrators and colleagues for a risky idea can be a scary challenge, but it’s an important step to take to ensure a project’s success.

There are several different theories, issues, and methodologies to consider when pitching a risky project to administrators and colleagues. Here we provide a series of tried-and-true tips and ideas for librarians to consider before jumping off. Each risky project will require its own risky plan. Therefore, the risk taker may not need to use all of these steps. Or the librarian may need to rearrange the steps to fit the needs of a particular project. Money, politics, interpersonal relations, and overall strategic initiatives may be at play and should be carefully and sensitively considered when making a pitch to administrators or colleagues for a risky endeavor.

Stay Positive
Conveying positivity and dedication for teens and the library is the single most important skill everyone needs to master to ensure support from administrators and colleagues for any project. It may sound silly, but it’s much harder for an administrator to say no to a happy, empowered, sincere, enthusiastic face than a grumpy one. It should inform every aspect of your pitch from early information-gathering to the final presentation.

However, in many cases, this is easier said than done. Both large and small-scale projects can be tremendously complex, rife with roadblocks, and can induce gigantic levels of stress for the involved parties. If it becomes hard to remain positive about a project, here are some tips that librarians can consider to get back on track:

- Take a deep breath.
- Step back and look at the big picture.
- Take a break.
- Remind yourself why the project is a good idea.
- Consider who will benefit from the project: teens, the library, library staff?
- Talk with a colleague.
- Ask for help!

Although these tips may not be surefire solutions, they can help the stressed-out staff reflect on why their risky project is important to teens, themselves, and the library. Then take another deep breath and move onward!

Ten Steps for Selling Risk
As stated, the road to risk is paved with politics, roadblocks, and more. But if the risk is well planned, there can be rewards in the end for everyone. Here are ten important steps to take when preparing to pitch a risky idea.

Align the Risk with the Mission of the Library
Does your library have a mission or strategic plan? Is there a way that the risk
Selling Risk to Administration and Colleagues

can be embedded into part of a current library project, or does it complement past or upcoming initiatives? Making this simple match can help increase the priority of any idea, risky or not.

Some quick research will show that most libraries’ mission statements include language about providing free and equal access, facilitating lifelong learning, and providing service to their communities. If finessed correctly, most risks could be justified within the boundaries of any library’s mission.

The real challenge, however, is identifying how a risk might be aligned within an organization’s long-range plans. These may be more specific, quantifiable goals such as increasing online service or offering more aid to job seekers. Or they may be more general, overarching themes such as training staff to work better with youth, increasing the library’s teen services presence on the Web, or creating a more solidly realized teen services department. These goals may not specifically mention teens, but there is probably a way for the teen-related risk to fit.

If this inroad can be identified early in the risk planning process, it will make activating the risk much easier. Also, when crafting the pitch for your plan, use the language created by the administrators (who are probably also the audience) in the mission, strategic plan, long-range plan, and so on. This is a great way to morph the language of the pitch to match the communication style of your library.

Foster Relationships
Create bonds by communicating with colleagues and administrators to lay a foundation for future opportunities. When it’s time to request permission for the risk, chances are those administrators who feel connected to the requester will look more favorably on the request itself.

It’s generally more difficult to say no when they trust, respect, and like the person. Sincerity counts, though, so don’t overdo it. Just find ways to say hello and discover what you might have in common. An open, smiling face helps too.

There will always be people who enjoy negativity; we call these the naysayers. Naysayers find everything wrong with an idea and aren’t open to change. Pinpoint these people early and establish relationships with them. Having a positive connection with a naysayer will help to reduce that person’s criticisms. It also works to seek out someone the naysayer admires or trusts ahead of time — and see if this person would be willing to endorse the risk before presenting it to the naysayer.

Rally the Troops
Colleagues can be powerful allies. Movie companies hold free previews to create buzz before a film’s release; fast food restaurants use test markets to try new menu items; publishers send out advance copies before a book’s street date. Building excitement about a possible project before presenting it to management lends credibility to the idea. In addition, running ideas by coworkers while they’re still in the idea form allows for potential problems to surface. Having someone else pinpoint trouble areas before the decision maker has a chance to do so can be invaluable; it provides an opportunity to address the problems, fix them, or be ready to discuss them at the presentation.

It’s also smart to speak with those who may be affected by the risk. However, be aware that the more people who are included, the more likely it is to slow down progress. Sara Ryan, the teen services specialist with Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon, said in an interview: “When I think about risks that haven’t worked out, the reason for the failure isn’t typically in the nature of the risk itself, which is usually not around trying something new or changing the way a program works, but rather about the way in which I tried to implement the risk. For instance, if you try to move forward with an idea without consulting people who could be affected if the idea was put into practice, you’re not being strategic about that risk. On the other hand, sometimes the process of trying to make sure all the stakeholders have buy-in (if you’ll excuse the business-speak) makes it feel like the pace of change is glacial, which is especially frustrating to teens.”

Find a Mentor
Mentors can help navigate the way up the organizational hierarchy to administration. They can share their experiences in getting ideas passed and act as a sponsor when the risk is presented.

Find someone in an administrative position who will support the risk. She doesn’t have to be a teen services specialist, but she should be supportive of risk taking and of teen services. Ask this person to sponsor the idea or to act as a mentor throughout the course of the project. This will act as a kind of insurance to pad the risk when presenting it to the administration.

Know the Audience
Whether you’re presenting to one person or a group, find out what motivates them. Are they most concerned with the budget, the image of the library, or the teens themselves? Will the pitch presentation be for a task force with a specific charge, or for the library’s board of trustees or senior management group?

Whoever it targets, the pitch presentation should be tailored to that audience in terms of quantity of information, language, visuals, and style. For example, if the presentation is for the library’s senior management group—people who make the decisions but don’t actually execute them—the presentation may need fewer small details but might need to cover more big-picture impact. However, if the presentation is for the young adult department or
another smaller group, there will no doubt be questions about the details of the project.

The key is to strike the balance between too much and too little information. Only the librarian will be able to gauge how exactly to proceed.

**Be Aware of Timing**

Money, politics, culture, and history all have an impact on the success of any risky project. Risk-taking librarians should be savvy of these factors when creating proposals and plans for new projects. For example, if the library has just undergone a series of major budget cuts, it’s probably not the best time to propose a large, expensive project. Instead, perhaps it’s best to propose a smaller, less expensive project and hold off on the larger one until better financial times.

Also, it’s important to be aware of what’s happening culturally and historically in the library. For example, if a library typically raises funds in the spring for fall projects, then a project for the upcoming school year should be pitched in time for the library to raise money for it. That said, if technology is a part of the risky endeavor, think carefully about the time frame required to implement the technology in a meaningful way. If you are pitching a tech-based idea that needs to move quickly to take advantage of the technology, then your pitch might need to happen at a nontraditional time, and you will have to be clear in that pitch that the planning and implementation need to be on a fast track.

Furthermore, if the library has already announced a major initiative or campaign that can be tied to the risky project, the risk-savvy librarian should look for inroads to connect exciting risky ideas to what the library is already doing. For example, if the library has launched a job readiness campaign for adults, why not brainstorm with teens about their own job prep needs. Should there be a resume-writing workshop for teens, or perhaps a program on financial planning? Do you need materials on job readiness for the teen collection?

The risk-savvy librarian should also be aware of the timing of the pitch itself. Is the person receiving the pitch open to having someone walk into her office? Does a meeting need to be set up with a senior management group or board of trustees? Will the pitch be made at a staff meeting? Finally, how long will the pitch-giver have to present? Risk-taking librarians should be fully aware of time constraints and plan their presentations accordingly.

Presentations should never, never, never go over time unless they’re in the final, crucial decision-making moments or unless there is heated interest and conversation seems to be going strong.

Even if it’s the latter, risk takers should remain aware of the time and announce to everyone that time is up, but they would be happy to continue if everyone else can stay.

At best, the presentation should be short, sweet, to the point, and full of memorable details. That way the audience will be itching to contact the risk taker after the presentation with any follow-up questions.

**Remember the Bottom Line**

Remember that money and numbers count. In the pitch presentation, risk-savvy librarians shouldn’t shy away from honestly estimating what the project will require in terms of dollars and staff time. That said, the librarian should be aware of the library’s capacities and tailor the project to fit those factors.

Also, the risk-savvy librarian shouldn’t forget to include how she will evaluate the risk once permission has been granted to take it. What statistics will be generated from the risk? Will it affect circulation? Program attendance figures? Class visit and tour statistics? Will there be a survey for teens to complete when they participate in the project? Will the project need an outside consultant to help with evaluation?

Thinking through these important details and communicating them to colleagues will help speed up the decision-making process for any project, risky or not. It will also help increase the credibility and reliability of the risk taker, which will build the foundation for the library to accept more risky projects!

**Tell a Story**

After the risk presentation, it’s important for board members and managers to have something tangible to share with others. Remember that they want to be recognized as risk takers themselves and as supporting this new venture, so give them a story they can tell afterwards.

Successful stories include:

- personal anecdotes
- information from patron feedback forms
- survey results
- comments on a blog
- case studies
- an explanation how the risk will aid in positive youth development (see the Forty Developmental Assets in Risky Business: Taking and Managing Risks in Library Services for Teens)

However, don’t overload your audience. Give them “takeaways”—little tidbits they can take away and repeat to others—but don’t overdo it. A few quality anecdotes can be more effective than several mediocre ones.

**Believe in It**

Passion and excitement are contagious. Enough said.

**Be Prepared**

Have a well-thought-out plan, which might include an elevator speech. An
Selling Risk to Administration and Colleagues

elevator speech condenses your plans and goals into a sales pitch that you can present in the time it takes for a short elevator ride with an administrator. Be sure to make your plan available in the format that is most appealing to your audience. (See the “Know the Audience” section.)

Anticipate how questions will be answered, and make sure those answers are positive. Also, risk takers should think about how they can keep the conversation moving as questions arise. Anticipate roadblock questions before the presentation so the conversations can avoid getting sidetracked.

Finally, if the risk taker isn’t the one giving the presentation, the risky librarian should make sure that the presenter fully understands the nature of the risk and any tertiary information that may help her explain it.

Being Prepared

One of the best ways to be prepared for pitching risky ideas is to imagine all the questions and comments the administration will have, and how to answer them. Here are some examples.

What Will It Cost?

Invariably, if a risk is to be approved by a supervisor, manager, or board, one of the first questions will be, “How much will this cost?” These people must work within the confines of a budget, so it’s possible they’ll have to cut back in another area to finance this risk. The best answer to “How much will it cost?” is, of course, nothing. Proposing an idea that will be free to implement is a great way to garner support.

But this isn’t always possible, so here are a few ways to answer the big money question and to be prepared with a plan of action for funding:

- **Try to find funding outside the library.** Many businesses have designated funds they are required to gift each year. Take advantage of this by asking early and keeping up relationships with local companies’ community relations coordinators.
- **Look to other government organizations.** They may not be able to offer monetary support, but partnering with other organizations provides access to more nonmonetary resources and opens up a new base of potential patrons.
- **Take advantage of volunteers and Friends of the Library groups.** Volunteers may be able to offset the money that would normally be spent on staff, whereas Friends groups are usually open to new ideas for library programs and projects.
- **Emphasize how much return there will be on investment.** How will the potential outcomes of this project outweigh any costs? Show how spending money on this risky project may actually save money later on.

Sometimes being “budget-challenged” can be advantageous. Budget deficits force libraries to be creative and pursue risky ideas they may have shelved earlier. Use this time to show alternatives to the status quo.

How Will It Be Perceived?

Public and school libraries alike must remain cognizant of their community. For public libraries this means the voting public, and for school libraries this means students and their families. Often this can result in trepidation to try anything too risky. Further, library administration must think about how the risk will impact the community, and how it will be perceived by the community. Perception and reality often diverge, and it’s important to think about both. In doing so, address plans for molding public perception and educating the community to the benefit of the project. Having steps already laid out for this will help to persuade the decision makers.

Looking at a new project as something that can be launched in beta is a way to minimize risks. Consider pitching the risky activity to administrators as a pilot or test project. With a beta project, it’s possible to discover exactly what teens and members of the community think about what’s being launched and to be smart about responding to actual concerns and informing everyone of the activity’s value.

But We’ve Always Done It This Way

Small or monumental, change is difficult for many people and often keeps good ideas from turning into great realities. People who fear change must be reminded of all the good that has come from previous change in the library, such as offering video game programs or adding graphic novels to the collection. These ideas were a risk as well, but they’ve probably dramatically increased teen usage.

Putting It All Together

So now what? The risky project is fully realized; the pitch presentation is planned, prepared, and tailored to a specific audience. Handouts and takeaways are finished. The presentation has been rehearsed in front of an audience. The pitch is ready to go! All that remains is setting up the time to give the pitch and figuring out who will be there and how much time there will be for the conversation.

Pitching your risky idea is probably the hardest step to take, but it’s an important one that risk-taking librarians need to familiarize themselves with. And even if the risk isn’t approved, learning and knowing these steps will help any librarian build credibility for future risky endeavors.
For a certain type of tech-savvy librarian, the new music database Freegal, a product of Library Ideas, LLC, has been the hot topic of discussion for at least the last couple of months. Exploring Freegal raised a whole lot of issues and questions in my mind about how libraries provide digital content to our customers and how we should be doing it.

**MP3s @ the Library**

For those of you who haven’t heard of it, or are fuzzy on the facts, here’s what you need to know: Freegal gives customers access to free, DRM-less mp3s from the Sony music entertainment catalog (the second-largest music company, according to Wikipedia). The purchasing library determines how many tracks the customer can download per week (from 3 to 20, but most libraries seem to be going with 3 to 5). The library can also make use of a throttle mechanism, which limits the library to a certain number of downloads per week, thus allowing the library to spread their downloads evenly over the year. Once the throttle limit is reached for the week, new download requests from customers go on a wishlist, which allows them to download these tracks the following Monday (or successive Mondays if more than the library’s per-week downloads have already been put on wishlists). Customers cannot put tracks onto their wishlist if they have already used their downloads, so there is no way for one customer to game the system and end up on the top of the wishlist every week. There is no software for the customer to install and no download manager, making the process incredibly simple—just click “download now,” and seconds later (on a good internet connection), you’ve got a free song that is yours forever.

Freegal provides library-specific branding on the site, marketing materials, and absolute budget-certainty because libraries purchase the exact number of downloads they are comfortable with buying. It also provides up-to-the-minute statistics on usage, meaning that if a library is getting swamped with download requests, they can choose to add more downloads at any time. Freegal’s staff also keeps tabs on each library’s download history and offers advice to libraries as to how best to distribute their downloads. And aside from a very cheap installation fee, Freegal charges libraries absolutely nothing except the per-download cost, which is apparently somewhere around $1.25 per download.

In other words, this is the step into the world of digital popular music that libraries should have taken a decade ago.

**Practical Issues**

Of course, that doesn’t mean that Freegal is perfect. In terms of practical usage, it suffers from a few key flaws, which may lead to frustration on the part of end users. Most obviously, it is limited to a single music company. Freegal says they are open to other companies becoming involved, but for now, having only one of the big four is certainly a limitation for end users, and should be considered when deciding how to distribute library funds (more on this later). Less obviously, there are some serious issues with the metadata that Sony has provided. Individual track listings don’t make it clear which version or remastering is available, making it all too easy to download an alternate take or a rerecording of the song you want. Similarly, it is difficult to navigate quickly between song, album, and artist. According to Jim Peterson from Library Ideas, these are issues that can and will be solved, and I’m inclined to believe him, but until then, libraries subscribing to Freegal should be prepared for at least a few complaints from customers.

Against those objections are the actual experiences of libraries that have implemented Freegal. Debbie Moss, assistant director at Orange County
Libraries Catch Up With the Twentieth Century

Library, told me that she could not "remember when a new service/product has generated so much positive feedback." Priscilla McAnally, director of the Paris, Texas, Public Library, echoed Moss's sentiments, saying that Freegal has become "one of our more popular collections in a short time... The comments we have received about [Freegal] have all been positive." Those statements certainly don't invalidate possible objections (discussed below), but they do point to the huge potential upside in customer reaction.

A somewhat less interesting, but no less important, practical issue is how and how much libraries are going to pay for Freegal, an issue that is highly affected by the potential popularity of such a service. Once a library's downloads are used up (either under the weekly throttle or for the year), additional customers will be left waiting for weeks or more until they can download again, leading to frustration. The library may, of course, buy additional downloads, but that solution only raises the question of where to stop. I am far from believing that libraries should not offer a service because it would be too popular, but libraries should be aware of the possible frustration to customers who may be waiting many weeks to get their downloads.

Where Will the Money Come From?

A related issue for libraries is where, precisely, the money will be coming from to pay for these downloads. Leaving aside external sources of revenue, the obvious places seem to be either the databases/tech services budget or the collections budget. Neither seems ideal. In some sense, Freegal is the perfect tool of a collections developer. Although I have heard the complaint that Freegal takes collections decisions out of the hands of selectors, this is proprietary thinking: the job of selectors is to provide as large a selection as possible for customers while balancing the needs of the community. By offering its entire catalog to each customer individually, Freegal does exactly that. Plus, there's no need to spend time or money on selecting, processing, shelving, and so on. But spending the music collection budget on Freegal means privileging the few users who download each week over the theoretically unlimited number who can listen to each CD the library purchases. Also, the library essentially has to commit to providing Freegal for the foreseeable future; otherwise the purchase hasn't really added anything to the collection for future users.

Database money seems more plausible—in both structure and theory (as described above), Freegal most resembles a traditional full-text database. But we all know that as databases raise their prices, libraries have less and less money for new ones. It hardly seems financially practical to use ever-diminishing database funds to pay for a service that has the potential to be increasingly popular and expensive. The solution for many libraries will probably be some mix of the two, perhaps with additional money from other sources, but it should be emphasized that subscribing to Freegal will impact other services we offer. On the other hand, we should remember that purchasing Freegal not only holds out the possibility of attracting new customers to the library, but also of siphoning off at least some traditional CD customers who may prefer the online availability.

Philosophical Issues

The practical issues, then, may not be perfectly resolved, but are at least resolvable, and my discussions with Jim Peterson lead me to believe that Freegal has every intention of working closely with libraries to do exactly that. Philosophically, the issues are more severe.

If you haunt the right circles, you can hear quite a bit of negative buzz about Freegal, mostly about whether, as a service, it fits into our mission as libraries. The objections I've heard all revolve around the ways in which Freegal differs from other services we offer. It is different from CDs because it gives away (rather than lends) content. It is different from databases because it provides content to only a small portion of library users. It is different from downloadable audiobooks because users generally only use audiobooks once, whereas they will effectively own and listen to these songs for life.

I'll leave the heavy theoretical sparring to the PhDs in library science, but let me posit one theory: these objections all stem from the fact that music is vastly more popular with our customers than databases, audiobooks, and other content. In other words, critics are right that Freegal is different from other services that libraries offer, but not nearly as much as it might seem. The primary reason that Freegal cannot allow unlimited access to a library's customers (as our magazine and audiobook databases do) is that the popularity of downloadable music would make such a database exponentially more expensive.

If we are to take the concerns of Freegal's detractors seriously (and I think we should), we need to be honest about the fact that theoretically these concerns apply to databases and downloadable audiobooks as well, but practically speaking, neither of those products was ever popular enough to prompt concern. If there had been a worldwide phenomenon of pirating Consumer Reports articles, libraries would long ago have been faced with and probably solved these philosophical issues.

Legal and Ethical Issues

On the other hand, even when we narrow the discussion to digital music, in theory
libraries could have resolved these philosophical issues decades ago. In the case of music, the crucial decision was made not by libraries, but by the record industry in the mid-1980s when the industry, ostensibly promoting convenience and audio fidelity, but in reality pursuing (what else?) profit, convinced music buyers (including libraries) to repurchase their entire collections of LPs and cassette tapes in favor of compact discs.

What no one realized at the time was that the record industry had essentially rung its own death knell by switching the world’s musical content to digital music that could be reproduced endlessly and transferred to other listeners, first via blank CDs, later through the internet.

Ever since the introduction of CDs, libraries have been a primary purveyor of pirated digital music—customers check out CDs legally, burn copies onto CDs or hard drives semilegally, and then illegally distribute the copies either physically or over the internet. Libraries have plausible deniability, of course, since they are not directly involved in the illegal aspects, but we shouldn’t kid ourselves that libraries are not already providing free mp3s to our customers. When you add to that the loss rate that most libraries experience for popular new CDs, it’s clear that we’re already spending plenty of money to provide free music to a few people.

When music was available only in analog (on LP, 45, cassette tapes, and radio) it was very easy for libraries to make a simple equation between that content and print. By making the transition to digital, we inherently changed the content we were providing without quite realizing it. Now DVDs can be hacked and downloaded. So can e-books. The concept of a library simply lending an object and then having it returned (with maybe some pages photocopied or a track or two dubbed onto a tape) is rapidly becoming obsolete. Fortunately for us, the mission of the library is not to be a toady to the U.S. Copyright Office. Our mission is to provide information, and seeing as we have already made the decision that digital content is an important component of the information we provide, we really have no choice but to continue along that path.

Late to the Party

So, although librarians should absolutely think through and debate questions about the placement of digital content among library services, it is a debate that we are coming to very late, and practically speaking, I would argue that libraries don’t have time to wait for that debate to be resolved. We need to be in the online music business—there is a whole generation of potential library customers, and large portions of a number of other generations, who don’t use CDs. If we want to stay relevant (we do) and stay in the business of offering music to our customers (trust me, we do), then we can’t wait around for the perfect, most ideologically sound product—we need to be in the forefront of these technologies. As a (perhaps) small example, Debbie Moss told me that “about 20 percent of the patrons using Freegal had not used their library cards in over a year, so . . . we’re re-engaging with some of [our] users.” For me, this speaks volumes about the ways in which technology can and should be used by libraries to connect with nonusers.

There is almost certainly a better way to offer popular music to our customers online. I’m sure many of us could think of ways to improve Freegal, or of an entirely different system that would work better for libraries. And in the meantime, all the Library Ph.Ds out there can come up with the appropriate ethical standards that we should apply to those systems. But those systems aren’t available right now. We are limited to the products that are available on the market, and right now, that means Freegal. Fortunately, there is no reason why we have to be tied to Freegal indefinitely—the content is DRM-free; there is no content manager; there is no long-term contract. When a better product comes along, we can and should grab it. Until then, libraries better have a pretty compelling reason for not offering Freegal to their customers.

Reference

Most librarians would not think to put historical fiction at the top of a list of fiction genres popular with teens. Historical fiction is too often equated with school, facts, and other uninteresting subjects. With some historical novels, that is certainly the case. Within the past decade, however, many works of historical fiction have been published that go far beyond these preconceived notions. What explains this change? Look no further than the mash-up. A mash-up, first used to describe the combination of two or more songs, now refers to any joining of previously separate items, creating a new format or genre. The popularity of the literature mash-up has grown by leaps and bounds since the publication of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. However, before this book, more subtle genre blending has been happening in young adult literature for years.

Librarians have seen, as Anita Silvey notes, that “today’s teens are crazy about characters (and scenarios) that have little in common with their own everyday lives.” Whether that means historical fiction, fantasy, or science fiction—or a combination of them—many teens are looking for a complex story that sweeps them away from their everyday concerns. While realistic fiction remains popular, many of the most popular novels in the past decade are considered works of fantasy, such as the Harry Potter or Twilight series. As the desire for fantasy titles remains steady, publishers have sought ways to broaden that genre’s appeal. Fusing elements of fantasy, science fiction, or other genres with historical fiction helps meet the demands of today’s teen reader, as well as create a new interest within them for unusual works of fiction.

**Historical Fiction and Fantasy**

Thanks to the popularity of fantasy, mash-ups that combine historical fiction with fantasy are perhaps the most popular kind of mash-up. Just like that Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup commercial, historical fiction and fantasy are two great tastes that taste great together. Several popular historical novels owe their popularity, in part, to the inclusion of fantasy elements within them.

A classic example of a historical fiction mash-up is *Sorcery and Cecelia*, the delightful epistolary novel by Patricia C. Wrede and Caroline Stevermer. Originally published in 2003 and described as a fantasy as written by Jane Austen, this novel tells the story of two cousins navigating a Season in London and country life in an England that has a Royal College of Wizards. The two sequels, *The Grand Tour* and *The Mislaid Magician* continue the story of Kate and Cecelia through marriage and children. *Sorcery and Cecelia* represents one popular approach to joining historical fiction with fantasy: adding magic to a historical setting. In the same vein, there are Marissa Doyle’s novels about the Leland sisters. *Bewitching Season* and *Betraying Season* are set in the 1830s and feature Persephone and Penelope Leland, well-bred twin sisters who happen to have magical abilities. Because magic is not a proper hobby for daughters of the nobility, the sisters must conceal their talents. It is only their desire to rescue a young Queen Victoria that makes the Lelands reveal their abilities to others.

Libba Bray’s exquisite trilogy starring Gemma Doyle is another example. Starting in *A Great and Terrible Beauty* and continuing in *Rebel Angels* and *The Sweet Far Thing*, Gemma slowly comes into her magical birthright to protect the Realm. A shadowy otherworld, the Realm is threatened by actions of the past, and Gemma must undo the damage while maintaining her position as a student in a
gentle Victorian boarding school, I, Coriander by Sally Gardner shows how a fantastic element can be used as a metaphor. Coriander lives in London during the Commonwealth, when music, dancing, gaming and other pastimes were strictly forbidden by the Puritans. Finding a pair of seemingly magical silver shoes, Coriander is taken to a fairy tale kingdom, the world that her mother actually belonged to. While this hidden world is full of exotic beauty, it is withering away, not unlike Coriander’s own world. Only Coriander can rescue the fairy world—and her own—by restoring its health and vitality.

Historical fantasy is not all magic and fairies, however. Equally successful have been novels that give supernatural creatures a historical context. Vampires and werewolves are not romantic young men but bloodthirsty, terrifying beings in these novels. Patrick Jennings’ The Wolving Time shows how outsiders have often been persecuted throughout history. Laszlo’s family is from the region now known as Hungary, but they live near the France-Spain border, working as shepherds. However, Laszlo’s parents are werewolves, and he knows that some day he will become one as well. After the village priest turns against the peaceful werewolves, Laszlo must decide whether to join his parents as wolves or remain fully human. Blood Ninja by Nick Lake has a clever premise: what if ninjas are really vampires? When Taro is run through by a ninja’s sword, his only hope is being turned into a vaccine by a good ninja. Once he becomes a vampire, Taro begins ninja training and hopes to avenge his father’s death.

While some novels give supernatural creatures a basis in reality, others take historical settings and bring them closer to fantasy with the introduction of fantastical elements that change the world. The dark, atmospheric world of Victorian London is the setting for Chris Wooding’s tale of demon hunters and witches, The Haunting of Alaizabel Cray. Thaniel is a wych-hunter who stalks the fearsome creatures known as wych-kin. Finding a beautiful, dazed young woman named Alaizabel, Thaniel decides to save her, even though such action draws him into conflict with the powerful cult that infected Alaizabel with a wych-kin. An equally dangerous world is seen in Marcus Sedgwick’s My Swordhand is Singing, set in a remote Transylvanian region. Peter lives with his father in a small cottage outside the village. Everyone thinks the village gives them protection from danger, but when dead men—what we would call vampires—begin attacking their loved ones and friends, Peter will discover the secret his father has kept all these years.

These are just a few examples of the rich works that are created when fantasy is united with historical fiction. Both fantasy and historical fiction are built upon the world the author creates for the reader: exploring its environment, explaining its rules, and introducing characters that fit within such a world. The only difference is that historical fiction uses the past as a starting point, while fantasy relies upon an author’s imagination to create a new world or put a new spin on our own world. When the author reinvents the past with fantastical elements, it gives the novel more opportunities for creativity. The fantasy is given a sense of reality thanks to history and the historical fiction is given a shot of vitality from fantasy. As long as fantasy remains a popular genre, there is always doubt that historical fantasy will continue to be published.

**Historical Fiction and Science Fiction**

Historical fantasy may have received more attention, but equally popular genre blends have existed for even longer. For example, history and science are often fused in works that feature time travel. Although it is not always explained how the character traveled into the past, the real point is seeing how the character adapts to this unfamiliar setting. One of the best-known examples is The Devil’s Arithmetic by Jane Yolen. Hannah does not fully understand why her grandfather is still so angry about the Nazis and their actions during the Holocaust. During the Passover Seder, Hannah is selected to open the front door for the prophet Elijah. This sends Hannah back in time, to a Polish ghetto in the 1940s. Thought to be a girl named Chaya, Hannah slowly and horribly realizes what the Holocaust did to the Jewish people. Restored home just as magically, Hannah now has a greater empathy for her grandfather.

In The Black Canary by Jane Louise Curry, a strange shimmer is the indication of the time portals that transport James from modern-day London to the 1600s. Finding himself stuck in the past, biracial James becomes part of a children’s choir that entertains Queen Elizabeth. Although his parents are well-known musicians, James always disliked the hardships of a performer’s life. As a member of the choir, though, he realizes his own musical gifts, and discovers what makes his parents travel the world to sing and play. With this realization, James will have to find out if he wants to travel back to his own time. Like James, Tommy from Backtracked by Pedro de Alcantara also struggles with his modern problems in the past. Tommy is a big fan of New York City’s subways, riding on them to distract himself from how his jerk of an older brother has been lauded as a hero since dying on 9/11. His trips to the past let him see the subways being built and allow him to work out his modern-day problems.

Any melding of science fiction and historical fiction does not have to be light on the science. In some novels, like Black Powder by Staton Rabin, it is alien technology that helps create a time machine, providing a strong grounding in
science fiction for this story. Langston decides to travel back to the 13th century, using his teacher’s time machine, to stop Roger Bacon from using his formula for gunpowder. Langston’s best friend was just killed in a drive-by shooting, and Langston thinks that if gunpowder had never come to the West, his friend would still be alive. The author cleverly uses elements of both science fiction and historical fiction to craft the story. Philip Reeve takes a slightly different approach in his Victorian scientific tales, creating an alternate British Empire that controls the neighboring planets as well nations of the Earth. These novels are full of scientific gadgets and historical attitudes. In Larklight, we meet Art and his sister Myrtle, who live in a house that takes up an asteroid that orbits the Moon. Their adventures include giant spiders, space pirates, and more, continuing in Starcross and Mothsstorm.

Going beyond time travel lies another approach to combining science fiction and historical fiction: steampunk. Considered a sub-genre of science fiction, steampunk envisions a world with engineering and technology that is futuristic for that period.³ This does not mean that Queen Victoria uses an iPad—but she might use a device that runs on steam to send messages to far-flung parts of the British Empire. And steampunk does not have to be set in the Victorian period; Scott Westerfeld’s Leviathan proves that. In this novel, an alternate version of World War I begins with each side having very different weapons from the historical armaments. The Central Powers, including Germany and Austria-Hungary, has giant machines known as clankers. Meanwhile, England and the other Allies use giant animals that have been genetically engineered. Representing these two combatants are main characters Aleksander, an Austrian prince on the run from assassins and Deryn, a British girl who passes for a boy to join the British Air Service. Westerfeld creates an utterly compelling novel based on historical events yet full of original scientific elements. It is likely that in the future, steampunk will do more to convincingly combine historical fiction with science fiction.

**Historical Fiction and Adventure**

For readers in search of a good, fast-moving story, librarians often recommend adventure stories—many of which are set in the past. In our time of precautions and comforts, the idea of sailing across the ocean or traveling to the frontier is foreign. In the past, travel and its dangers were often the only way for a young person to make their dreams come true. So modern readers find many thrills in historical adventure.

Several historical series take advantage of history’s nautical adventures. L.A. Meyer’s Bloody Jack adventures feature Mary Faber, an orphan who passes as a boy to join the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars. Known as Jacky, she is involved in a dizzying array of ship battles, social struggles, secret spying, and warfare in this series. Through it all, she believes that she will be able to find and marry her sweetheart, whom she met when she was living as a boy. Another similar series is Adventures of a Young Sailor by Paul Dowswell, which follows Sam’s attempts to form a career in the Navy. He faces obstacles like capture, forced service on a merchant vessel, accusations of treason, and transportation to Australia, but these are not enough to make Sam give up on his naval career.

On the other hand, sailing ships are not the only way to find adventure. For Cat Royal, the heroine of an eponymous series by Julia Golding, 1790s London is full of excitement. Having grown up the ward of the Drury Lane Theater, Cat is determined to protect her home and the life she loves. That means facing up to London’s street toughs, getting help from her aristocratic friends, and saving her best friend from the bonds of slavery. In Helen Hemphill’s The Adventurous Deeds of Deadwood Jones, Prometheus was born on the day the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. Now thirteen, he lights out with his cousin, determined to find his father who was sold away before freedom. On the trail, Prometheus’s skin color does not matter—it is his skill with horses that does. And in the Wild West of the 1870s, adventures aplenty are possible for two African American boys.

**Conclusion**

There has been some disdain for the mash-up format. In discussing Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter, Publishers Weekly noted that it is not truly a mash-up, but that it “works off the premise of the mashup, taking something somewhat sacred and highbrow (here an iconic American historical figure) and pairing it with a low-brow pop culture fascination.”⁴ But mash-ups in young adult literature do not seem to work in the same way. Instead, they seem more focused on simply combining unlikely elements to tell a richer, more complex story. Perhaps because young adult literature has spent so many years being disdained, its authors are more willing to try a disdained format like the mash-up. By giving the mash-up its due, and fully exploring what this technique can achieve, young adult authors have made the mash-up respectable.

Whether or not you feel mash-ups are good literature, it seems that they are here to stay. This can only be a good thing for fans of historical fiction, as mash-ups help spread this genre beyond its core base. The books highlighted in this article are just a few examples of historical fiction mash-ups: a wide range of titles further explores connections between historical fiction and other genres. Mash-ups give readers a fresh look at genres that they
might otherwise overlook, whether it is historical fiction, fantasy, or science fiction. In addition, hardcore genre fans can find new twists on common plots when a historical element is added. Time will tell, but one can hope that the historical fiction mash-up proves as long-lived as zombies, vampires, and other supernatural creatures. YALS

The Books


References

The Reader’s Advisor Online. Online: www.readersadvisoronline.com. Libraries Unlimited, an imprint of ABC-CLIO.

This resource is a dream come true for teen librarians. Its intuitive interface enables multiple access points to the content of the *Genreflecting* series published by Libraries Unlimited. Easy to use search screens result in bibliographic information (including a link to your library’s online public access catalog) and descriptions about specific books, with a Read-Alike Finder that allows a narrowing or broadening of results by genre, appeal, character, topic or theme, and location. A Read-Alike Quick List offering Related Reads and Author Read-Alikes is a unique feature that gives librarians the option of printing lists for patrons in a hurry. Below the bibliographic information about the work are informative descriptions of the Related Reads, Now Consider (offering genre suggestions), Author Read-Alikes, Series Related Reads, and links between Fiction and Nonfiction Read-Alikes. This resource is a godsend to anyone looking for books in a series, as it provides series order. Every genre category has a pop-up definition that can broaden any librarian’s reader’s advisory palette, and the help screens are clear and concise.

With more than four hundred genres, subgenres, and reading interests, this database is a virtual treasure trove that no librarian will want to be without, and it is updated monthly. The Browse By search allows serendipitous searching, while the Advanced Search offers more specificity. Whichever way you choose to go about it, the bottom line is this—the Reader’s Advisor Online is a resource that gives thorough, precise results, fulfilling its promise of “bringing books and readers together.” —Pat Oey, Student, San Jose State (Calif.) School of Library and Information Science


This resource will help librarians develop their teen collections and assist patrons in discovering gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) titles. Annotations include brief but descriptive plot summaries, awards received, and type of literature (GLBTQ), and they are organized according to different genres/categories. Titles range from classics (1969) to those published as recently as 2009. Books are classified according to major themes (keywords follow if other major themes might also place them in another category). Chapters cover realistic fiction, “issue” books, genre fiction (historical, mystery, speculative), books in different formats (graphic novels, manga, poetry, verse), and nonfiction.

The first section includes books with GLBTQ main characters who are questioning their sexuality, experiencing first loves, and coming out to their friends and family. Other chapters/titles include GLBTQ characters or issues in supporting or secondary roles to other characters or themes. The final chapter ends with advice about collection development—why library collections should include GLBTQ titles, how to find quality GLBTQ literature for teens, how to promote the collection you have, and a discussion about concerns that librarians may have with this type of literature (restrictive collection development policies, dealing with challenges, and so on). The appendix includes a list of Web sites with resources for GLBTQ teens that offer support and information, as well as book suggestions and authors of GLBTQ literature to watch. For selectors on a budget or those who need some additional guidance, there are core lists of five, ten, and fifteen recommended titles that will quickly round out collections. The book is generally well written and relevant.

—Karin Thogersen, Young Adult Librarian, Huntley (Ill.) Area Public Library.


This book is designed to teach parents of school-age children about Web 2.0 products to help them connect with their children. That said, the book is actually written for people who have never before heard of a single 2.0 product and have only a vague idea about how to use the internet. It covers blogs, social networks, wikis, search engines, podcasts, RSS, Web sites, forums, photo management, and graphic generators, and it has a small chapter on ethics. Most of the book could have been written years ago, and there is a plethora of other books on the same topic.

Chapters include a list of vocabulary words for concepts that may or may not be important for the chapter, and a list of questions from parents with answers, most of which were previously addressed in the chapter. Mildly helpful screenshots are included, as well as detailed lists of instructions for particular Web sites. Drawbacks include a few mislabeled screenshots and mildly inaccurate or overly simplified definitions. The organization could be better, but I appreciate the author’s emphasis on the fact that just because you find something on the internet, it does not mean that it is not copyrighted. The back of the book has a list of lesson plans for instructing others that correspond with each chapter. —Sandy Sumner, Instruction and Outreach Librarian, Morehead (Ky.) State University.
Readers’ Advisory for Children and ‘Tweens is a practical guide to readers’ advisory for children ages birth through 12. The book offers helpful suggestions and some great advice on conducting readers’ advisory interviews and on issues and trends that a librarian may encounter when working with parents and children. Several sections provide book lists, broken down by age groups and topics, of suggested titles, including read-alikes, graphic novels, emerging readers, reluctant readers, nonfiction, poetry, folklore, cultural books, and materials for different age groups.

Although it provides only basic information, this book is up to date, and it is an easy and quick guide for suggesting titles to children and ‘tweens. It mentions several Web sites, along with a list of books, that can help locate book recommendations for children. The author has also included helpful suggestions and ideas for promoting books to children and parents. Additionally, the author has annotated and reviewed several social networking sites that allow tracking and sharing what is read with other librarians. Primarily aimed at children more than young adults, this book is a good addition for libraries that need a professional resource in the area of children’s readers’ advisory, and where ‘tweens are a large part of the service group. — Cara Waits, San Antonio (Texas) Public Library

Guidelines for Authors

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

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

Index to Advertisers

ALA Public Programs Office ......................... cover 3
Association for Library Service to Children .......... 19
Disney Book Group ..................................... cover 4
HW Wilson .................................................. cover 2
YALSA ..................................................... 12, 48
Read YALSA’s 2010 Awards Speeches

Speeches from YALSA’s 2010 literary award winners are available online at www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists. Download PDF versions of this year’s speeches, including those from:

- Jim Murphy, accepting the 2010 Margaret A. Edwards Award for An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793; Blizzard! The Storm That Changed America; The Great Fire; The Long Road to Gettysburg; and A Young Patriot: The American Revolution as Experienced by One Boy.
- Deborah Heiligman, accepting the 2010 Nonfiction Award for Charles and Emma, as well as finalists Candace Fleming, Philip Hoose, Tanya Lee Stone, and Sally Walker.
- Libba Bray, accepting the 2010 Michael L. Printz Award for Going Bovine, as well as honor book authors John Barnes, Deborah Heiligman, Adam Rapp, and Rick Yancey.

In addition, you can watch L.K. Madigan’s video acceptance for Flash Burnout, which won the 2010 Morris Award, as well as the full Printz ceremony. YALSA also offers bookmarks featuring its 2010 award winners. All of the tools and videos can be found at www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists.

Register for Midwinter Meeting

Join YALSA January 7–11 in San Diego

YALSA has big plans for San Diego—and we want them to include you! The ALA Midwinter Meeting will take place January 7-11, 2010 in Boston. Register by December 4 at www.ala.org/midwinter to save up to $25 over onsite registration fees. Here are a few highlights from YALSA’s Midwinter schedule (complete details available on the YALSA wiki www.tinyurl.com/yalsamw11):

**Friday, January 7**

Join us for our Midwinter Institute, Teen Services and the Whole Library, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This workshop will provide support to teen services librarians in working with all library departments and staff in providing, advocating for, and promoting teen services. Participants will explore:

- The changing demographics of teens and how that will impact library services
- Recent research on teens and its implication for library services
- Tools and techniques for managing teen services within the larger library context
- Successful tactics for gaining funding and administrative support for teen services

- Serving specific teen populations, including older teens and teens who do not typically visit the physical library
- Tips for building partnerships across library departments to strengthen teen services

Registration for this additional event costs $195 for YALSA members, students and retirees; $235 for ALA members; $285 for nonmembers. Registration opens October 1 at www.ala.org/midwinter. If you want to attend this workshop without attending Midwinter, follow the instructions at www.tinyurl.com/yalsamw11.

Find out how you can get more involved in YALSA at YALSA 201, 4-5 p.m. Designed for members who are active YALSA participants, you can chat with YALSA committee chairs and YALSA’s nominating committee about moving into leadership positions or you can discuss becoming a YALSA author with the publications committee.

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.

Join us from 8-10 p.m. for YALSA’s Not-So-Silent-Auction, location TBD! Enjoy light refreshments as you bid on fabulous items donated by your fellow YALSA members. Planned by the Financial Advancement Committee,
proceeds from this event will support the Friends of YALSA. (See a complete list of biddable items at the YALSA Midwinter wiki, www.tinyurl.com/yalsamw11). Interested in donating an item? Donations will be accepted through Dec. 15; contact Pam Spencer Holley at pamsholley@aol.com for more information.

Saturday, January 8
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, 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 for a continental breakfast, with meetings beginning at 10:30 and finishing at noon.

Sunday, January 9
YALSA elections open soon, so before you vote, come to the YALSA Coffee with the Candidates Forum from 10:30 to noon. Meet and mingle with the candidates who are on the ballot for the 2011 election, including President-Elect, Fiscal Officer, Secretary and Board of Directors at Large. Attendees will enjoy light refreshments and get the chance to win door prizes.

Want to know what teens really think of books released this past year? Come hear local teens reflect on the nominees for the 2011 Best Fiction for Young Adults list at the BFYA Teen Session, 1:30–3:30 p.m.

Want to get involved in YALSA in a more informal way? Looking for others who share your interest areas in teen services? Come to YALSA’s Discussion and Interest Group Open House, 4–5:30 p.m. 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.

YALSA is thrilled to introduce a new annual feature to the Midwinter Meeting, the Past Presidents’ Lecture Series, 4–5:30 p.m. Our inaugural lecture will be presented by Mary K. Chelton, professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at Queens College in New York and founder of Voice of Youth Advocates.

Monday, January 10
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 award announcements include:

- the Alex Awards, honoring the ten 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 Young Adults, plus the honor recordings (co-administered with the Association for Library Service to Children [ALSC])
- the William C. Morris Award, for the best first book written for young adults by a previously unpublished author.
- the YALSA Excellence in YA Nonfiction Award, for the best nonfiction book written for young adults.

Can’t make it? Watch the event live via a webcast from the ALA homepage or liveblogged on the YALSA Blog, http://yalsa.ala.org/blog. Details on both will be available on the YALSA wiki in December.

Meet with your colleagues at the Joint Youth Division Member Reception from 6:00 to 7:30. Join your colleagues from ALSC, the American Association of School Librarians, and YALSA for light refreshments and a cash bar.

Finally, cap off your time in San Diego with the Morris/Nonfiction Awards Program and Presentation from 8 to 10 p.m. Help YALSA celebrate the 2011 winners for the Morris Award and Excellence in YA Nonfiction Award! Authors will be invited to speak about their winning titles and light refreshments will be served.

To register and learn more about YALSA’s plans for Midwinter 2011, visit the YALSA Midwinter Wiki at www.tinyurl.com/yalsamw11.

New Publications from YALSA

Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA’s Competencies in Action

As high school enrollment continues to rise, the need for effective librarianship serving young adults is greater than ever before. “Young Adults Deserve the Best: Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth,” developed by YALSA, is a document outlining areas of focus for providing quality library service in collaboration with teenagers. In this book, Sarah Flowers identifies and expands on these competency areas. This useful work includes:

- Anecdotes and success stories from the field
- Guidelines which can be used to create evaluation instruments, determine staffing needs, and develop job descriptions
Applying for More Than $40,000 in Grants and Awards from YALSA

Deadline: Dec. 1

More than $40,000 worth of grants and awards are available to YALSA members. The deadline to apply for the following grants and awards is December 1, 2010. To learn more, visit www.ala.org/yalsa, and click on “Member Awards and Grants.” Awards and grants available this year include:

- **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 the 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 Teen Literature Program.** 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 $500 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.

YALSA Names Spectrum Scholar

As part of its commitment to improving diversity in the profession, YALSA chose Hoan-Vu Do as its 2010-2011 Spectrum Scholar. Do will attend the San Jose State University School of Library and Information Science. Do is YALSA’s third sponsored Spectrum Scholar, a program funded by the Friends of YALSA. YALSA has made encouraging diversity in the profession a priority.

The Spectrum Scholarship Program provides scholarships to American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students pursuing graduate degrees in library and information studies. Its mission is to improve service at the local level through the development of a representative workforce that reflects the communities served by all libraries. Since 1997, the ALA has awarded a total of 683 Spectrum Scholarships.

Connect Troubled Teens with the Power of Reading

Great Stories CLUB applications open through November 19

ALA’s Public Programs Office and YALSA announced the theme and book titles for the fourth round of Great Stories CLUB grants. Electronic applications for the reading and discussion series will be accepted Sept. 13 through Nov. 19 at www.ala.org/greatstories. Funding was provided for this program by Oprah’s Angel Network.

YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee selected “Second Chances” as the Great Stories...
Club theme, along with the following titles:

- *Dope Sick* by Walter Dean Myers (Amistad, 2009)
- *The Brothers’ Torres* by Coert Voorhees (Hyperion, 2009)

Launched in 2005, the Great Stories CLUB (Connecting Libraries, Underserved teens and Books) is a book club program designed to reach underserved, 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. Potential organizations for Great Stories CLUB partnership include juvenile justice facilities, drug rehabilitation centers, nonprofits serving teen parents, alternative high schools, agencies serving teenaged foster children, shelters serving homeless and runaway youth, and other agencies. For tips on creating a partnership, visit www.ala.org/greatstories.

Following the application process, 150 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 and other resources. Small cash grants ($100-$200) will be awarded to up to 25 sites for the support of program-related expenses.

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

The ALA Public Programs Office promotes cultural and community programming as an essential part of library service in all types and sizes of libraries. Successful library programming initiatives have included the “Let’s Talk About It” reading and discussion series, traveling exhibitions, film discussion programs, LIVE! @ your library and more. Recently, the ALA Public Programs Office developed www.ProgrammingLibrarian.org, an online resource center bringing librarians timely and valuable information to support them in the creation of high-quality cultural programs for their communities. For more information on the ALA Public Programs Office, visit www.ala.org/publicprograms.

**YALSA’s New Research Journal Seeks Manuscripts**

This November, YALSA will launch its new, online, open-access, peer-reviewed research journal, the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* at [https://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya](https://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya). Research that used to be published in YALS will now be published in the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults*. The first issue will feature papers presented at the 2010 Young Adult Literature Symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Nov. 5-7.

The purpose of the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* is to enhance the development of theory, research, and practices to support young adult library services. *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* promotes and publishes high quality original research concerning the informational and developmental needs of young adults; the management, implementation, and evaluation of library services for young adults; and other critical issues relevant to librarians who work with young adults. The journal also includes literary and cultural analysis of classic and contemporary writing for young adults.

Submissions and questions about the new research journal should be sent to Jessica Moyer, editor, at yalsaresearch@gmail.com or jessicamdmoyer@gmail.com. Before submitting a paper, please read through the call for papers and the author guidelines at the journal’s website, [http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya](http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya).

**YALSA Governance Update**

The YALSA Board was very productive at this year’s Annual Conference. Here are a few highlights:

- The board approved a policy for the brand new YA literature blog and the proposal for the readers’ choice booklist. The blog will launch later this year and the reader’s choice list will launch in 2011. Each will provide opportunities for teens and librarians to get involved in learning about, talking about, and highlighting great reads for teens.
- This year YALSA offered travel stipends to five YALSA members to attend and participate in Library Advocacy Day. The stipends were funded by donations to Friends of YALSA. Because of the success of this program, and because YALSA is committed to helping members be strong advocates, the YALSA Board voted to continue to fund these stipends over the next several years.
- Every five years, the YALSA Board evaluates the association’s dues structure with an eye to guaranteeing the association’s fiscal health and high quality service to members. The board agreed to place a dues item on the 2011 YALSA ballot to find out from members if a revision of the dues is viable. The vote will include a proposal to add a new membership rate, “non-salaried members,” to the existing categories of membership in the Association. A separate ballot item will ask members to consider raising dues $10 for regular members and $5 for students and retirees.
- The board approved a new interest group — Managing YA Services — with the mission to be a forum for supervisors and managers to exchange ideas on supporting staff at all levels that working with young adults in public libraries. The group will also develop strategies and tactics to address the needs of current and future managers in young adult services.
- The Evaluation Tool Task Force presented a draft of the tool that the board asked them to prepare.
completed this tool will help libraries evaluate the quality of their teen services. The evaluation instrument is being developed as a complement to the recently revised competencies, Young Adults Deserve the Best, and the board agreed that when complete will be highly useful to a wide variety of audiences including library administrators, trustees, library school faculty, and teen librarians.

- At Midwinter 2010, the YALSA Board voted to create an award to honor a YALSA member group chair, member group member, or entire member group for their outstanding work. A proposal for the award was discussed and the board agreed to move forward with the proposal by submitting required documents to the ALA Awards Committee.

    The YALSA Board also met via conference call in August, primarily to discuss post-conference reports from Chairs; however a few items of business were addressed, including:

    - The board voted to create a logo use policy for YALSA’s logos
    - The board approved the location for YALSA’s 2012 YA Literature Symposium, which will be in St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 2-4, 2012.
    - The board discussed establishing a writing award for YALSA and directed Sarah Flowers to work with YALSA’s other editors to come up with a proposal.

This list of discussions and decisions made by the YALSA Board in D.C. and via conference call is a small example of what the board worked on in June and August. The full agendas, downloadable supporting documents and minutes are available on the YALSA web site in the Governance section. YALS

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New books from yalsa

**Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA’s Competencies in Action**  
*Sarah Flowers for YALSA*  
The need for effective librarianship serving young adults is greater than ever before. *Young Adults Deserve the Best* expands YALSA’s competencies to turn theory into practice. 2010. 136 pages. ISBN: 978-0-8389-3587-3. $43.20 ALA members, $48 nonmembers. Order at www.alastore.ala.org or 1-866-SHOP-ALA.

**Annotated Book Lists for Every Teen Reader: The Best from the Experts at YALSA-BK**  
*By Julie Bartel and Pam Spencer Holley*  
Julie Bartel & Pam Spencer Holley combed years of YALSA-BK archives to create fully annotated, cross-referenced lists of the best in YA lit. Includes CD-ROM with reproducible handouts and customizable bibliography. 2010. 250 pages. ISBN: 9781555706386. $65 ALA members, $58.50 for YALSA members (with discount code YALSA). Order at www.neal-schuman.com or 1-866-NSBOOKS.

**Risky Business: Effectively Taking and Managing Risk in Library Services to Teens**  
*Linda Braun, Hillias J. Martin and Connie Urquhart*  
Risky Business helps YA librarians contemplate the every day risks they take. Change is risky business, but librarians must be prepared to initiate change to best serve teens. 2010. 160 pages. ISBN: 978-0-8389-3596-5. $49.50 ALA members, $55 nonmembers. Order at www.alastore.ala.org or 1-866-SHOP-ALA.

**Multicultural Programs for Teens and Tweens**  
*Edited by Linda B. Alexander and Nathyun Kwon*  
Multicultural Programs for Teens and Tweens is a one-stop resource that encourages children and young adults to explore different cultures through library programming with dozens of flexible programming ideas. 2010. 240 pages. ISBN: 978-0-8389-3582-8. $45 ALA members, $50 nonmembers. Order at www.alastore.ala.org or 1-866-SHOP-ALA.
Apply by November 19 for a Great Stories CLUB Grant

Connect with hard-to-reach, underserved teens by conducting a Great Stories CLUB reading and discussion program in your library. Online applications will be accepted through November 19 at www.ala.org/greatstories.

The Great Stories Club reaches underserved teen populations through books that are relevant to their lives. Libraries located within or working in partnership with facilities serving troubled teens (including juvenile justice facilities, alternative high schools, drug rehabilitation centers, and nonprofits serving teen parents) are eligible to apply.

Teen participants are invited to read and keep three theme-related books, as well as discuss each title with a group of their peers. The program’s ultimate goal is to inspire young adults who face difficult situations to take control of their lives by embracing the power of reading.

YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Interest Group selected “Second Chances” as the Great Stories CLUB theme, along with the following titles:

- *Dope Sick* by Walter Dean Myers (Amistad, 2009)
- *The Brothers Torres* by Coert Voorhees (Hyperion, 2009)

For more information on the Great Stories CLUB, including guidelines, book descriptions, application instructions, and feedback from past participants, visit www.ala.org/greatstories or contact publicprograms@ala.org.

The Great Stories CLUB (Connecting Libraries, Underserved Teens, and Books) is a book club grant program organized by the American Library Association Public Programs Office, in cooperation with the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Funding was provided for this program by Oprah’s Angel Network.
New in the fanged and fabulous New York Times best-selling series

Blue Bloods

Praise for Blue Bloods:

★ “De la Cruz introduces a conception of vampires far different from traditional stake-fleeing demons, coupling sly humor with the gauzier trappings of being fanged and fabulous.”
—Booklist (starred review)

“The intriguing plot will keep teens reading.” —School Library Journal

“A juicy voyeuristic peek into the lives of rich Manhattanites—who happen to be vampires.”
—Kirkus Reviews

Don’t miss the rest of the Blue Bloods series:

bluebloodsbooks.com hyperionteens.com