



## **YALSA Annual Report Amanda Barnhart, President, 2020-2021**

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

**Vision:** Our vision is that all teens, from a variety of backgrounds including, but not limited to ability, class, gender-identity, sexual orientation, race, religion and power-differentiated groups, will have access to quality library programs and services - no matter where they occur - that are tailored to the community and that create new opportunities for all teens' to promote personal growth, academic success, and career development, while linking teens and staff to resources, connected learning opportunities, coaching, and mentoring.

YALSA's actions are driven by the three priority areas in our latest Organizational Plan: 1) leading the transformation of teen library services; 2) advocacy to policy makers at all levels to increase support for teen library services; and 3) funder and partner development. We also continue to focus on reorganizing and realigning YALSA as an organization.

### **ORGANIZATION INTERIM STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Given that YALSA's Organizational Plan is now three years out of date, the YALSA Board developed a one-year Short-Term Implementation Plan to support the three priority areas in the latest Organizational Plan. The strategies laid out in this one-year interim plan addressed some of the challenges we anticipated would be heightened due to the pandemic(s) impact on YALSA members and their role in the communities they serve, and addressed the organization's need for an updated strategic plan. Such strategies addressed that

- there would likely be no in-person meetings or continuing education opportunities;
- the library field was seeing increases of furloughed or laid off library staff and that libraries were instituting hiring freezes;
- the organization's financial status was not current because of the larger ALA financial challenges;
- members' were needing timely resources that either mitigated the impact they experienced by the pandemic or supported their equity work.



After tactics were communicated to those YALSA volunteer groups tasked to support the interim plan, strategic planning efforts began afresh with the YALSA Board. An emphasis was placed upon researching members' needs, a timeline for strategic planning efforts was created, followed by Essentiam Strategy being selected to lead this work.

Essentiam began their work with the YALSA board in early January and held working virtual sessions for the board at Midwinter and included ALA's Pivot Strategy in discussions. Essentiam also collaborated with the YALSA President's Implementation Taskforce to develop member and non-member surveys which were targeted in their distribution to YALSA members and lapsed members. 721 member responses and 327 non-member response surveys were received, a total of 633 member responses and 327 non-member response surveys whose data were complete to be studied. Essentiam held six focus groups with YALSA members, whereby two additional sessions were added due to increased member interest. Additionally, the President's Implementation Taskforce held focus group sessions with non-members within their respective regions.

A YALSA Strategic Planning Taskforce was created, which included a subgroup of the YALSA Board and YALSA staff, and two non-board members. Together the taskforce participated in three virtual working three-hour sessions with Essentiam as facilitators during April and May 2021. The strategic plan draft would be further edited by additional feedback from YALSA Board and YALSA staff in May and June 2021. A final version of the new three-year strategic plan is expected to be delivered at the YALSA Board meetings during ALA Annual Conference.

To better meet the needs of our members, the Board developed and passed a [Short-Term Leave Plan](#) that acknowledges and supports member volunteers' potential need for a short leave from volunteer duties. This plan supported not only the immediate impact of individuals' families contracting the coronavirus, it also supported a short term leave need for any health or wellness related issue.

In addition to navigating changes resulting from the pandemic, YALSA experienced further growth opportunities with a restructuring of YALSA staff. As three former staff members embarked on new journeys, YALSA's Executive Director utilized these events to restructure and reassign staff responsibilities. In doing so, specific tasks were negotiated with ALA services to continue supporting YALSA's journals and publications and awards. YALSA's events were outsourced to Conferencedirect and a new YALSA position was filled that would focus on both Education and Fundraising, especially in exploring new opportunities for engaging vendors and connecting them with library staff.



## **LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION OF TEEN SERVICES**

### **Grant-Funded Projects & Initiatives**

#### **1. Future Ready with the Library**

YALSA, in partnership with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), received a no-cost extension to work with an additional Future Ready with the Library cohort in its Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant funded project. Each cohort took part in a series of learning modules/activities that supported gaining skills in middle school youth development, college career awareness/readiness, connected learning, outcomes and assessment, and community engagement. New activities were presented monthly using a scaffolded approach to learning. Over the course of the project the learning modules and activities were revised and iterated based on feedback from cohort members and coaches.

In the fourth year of the project, the team piloted a state-wide project of FRwtL that is titled FutureYou. Nine library staff from rural and small libraries in PA participated in the pilot. YALSA is continuing that work with a second PA cohort in 2021. Members of the PA FutureYou cohort presented at the PA Workforce Development Association Annual Conference in the spring of 2021.

#### **2. Transforming Teen Services: A Train-the-Trainer Approach**

Over the course of three years, Transforming Teen Services: A Train the Trainer Approach (T3) will train approximately 7500 library staff across the United States and territories in best practices in library programming for/with teens. The project will use the lens of connected learning (CL) to help libraries facilitate computer science (CS) and computational thinking (CT) activities which prepares teens for personal and professional success, and be implemented by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), in partnership with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA).

The final report for the 2020-2021 term has not yet been received to incorporate into this annual report. However, the grant period's second year facilitation adjusted activities to support cohort members during a pandemic, including bringing together this project with staff involved in the YALSA Future Ready with the Library project. These added sessions focused on topics related to self-care, equity, and connecting with the community during times of crisis.

### **Publications**



### **1. Teen Services Competencies Book**

In 2019, plans were established to start the development of a book that would focus in greater detail on the YALSA Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff (2017). Each chapter was to highlight a separate competency and would feature content by fourteen professionals from the field. Due to the impact of the coronavirus upon the authors themselves, as well as the identification that the competencies may not be relevant in the same way they were prior to the pandemic, it was determined not to proceed with the initial plans of development. Rather, we would explore how the more completed portions could be fashioned into other forms of publication and would wrap continued exploration of the competencies into the developing strategic plan.

### **2. Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults**

YALSA staff worked with the Research Journal Advisory Board and were successful in having the journal indexed in both Gale and EBSCO. Additional efforts were being undertaken to index it with ProQuest. This step of indexing the journal is imperative to driving applicable submissions and delivering timely content.

## **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The Board identified and prioritized equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts, specifically on how the pandemic and civil unrest were impacting member volunteers in their YALSA work as well as identifying new resources that would support members in meeting the diverse needs of their teen communities.

### **1. YALSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan**

The first year's work in executing YALSA's EDI Plan (2018-2019) resulted in the identification of a need for four EDI Taskforces to support the work in four of the five goal areas. Member volunteers began their work Fall 2019 and efforts were quickly derailed due to the impact of the pandemic on members' volunteers professional and personal lives. Extensions for the completion of the volunteer group charges were made in 2020 and the status of these groups each looked different by 2021. A more thorough report will be delivered at the YALSA Board meetings at ALA Annual Conference on the challenges encountered by and the outcomes made by these groups efforts. YALSA also seeks to address any actions dropped by the board during the pandemic and the last few years to discuss and plan for next steps. A board document is planned to address this issue at the next board meetings too.

### **2. Spectrum Scholars**



YALSA supported two [Spectrum Scholars for the 2020-2021 term](#):

- Keyana Branch, YALSA Scholar, Emporia State University
- Alice Perez Ververa, YALSA Scholar, University of Washington

Keyana Branch further engaged with YALSA by participating in YALSA's Strategic Planning Taskforce. YALSA continues to consider how to more actively engage the YALSA Spectrum Scholars in the association and in leadership roles.

### **3. Collection Development & Readers' Advisory**

Two member volunteers served on YALSA's first year participation for the REFORMA/ALSC/YALSA Pura Belpre Award. The 2021 Youth Media Awards saw a new Young Adult Narrative category for the award. The award manual was updated and the celebration program went virtual.

### **4. Continuing Education**

The Education Advisory Committee worked with member volunteers and the President's Implementation Taskforce to target the development of webinars for members and Snack 'n Chat virtual sessions for everyone (non-members included) that addressed members' needs to serve diverse communities during a pandemic and that supported the field in their professional development. Snack 'n Chat sessions were a new and free offering this year developed by the President and the President's Implementation Taskforce as YALSA attempted to support all library staff serving teens amidst furloughs, lay-offs, hiring freezes, and great change.

- **Webinars**

August 2020: *School Librarians and School Counselors: Computing Together*

September 2020: *Virtual Dungeons and Dragons: A Virtual How-To Guide*

January 2021: *How to Engage and Program for LGBTQ+ Youth*

April 2021: *Teen Mental Health: In Their Own Words*

- **Snack 'n Chat Sessions**

October 2020: *Navigating Post-Secondary Readiness in the Time of COVID-19*

December 2020: *Serving the Public and Self-Care During Difficult Times*

March 2021: *Gather Your Peeps - YALSA Interest Groups*

### **5. Volunteer Working Groups**

The YALSA Board identified a need for an Evaluating Volunteer Resources Taskforce that will support all volunteer groups in using a DEI lens in their association work. This includes evaluating group charge(s), resources and training provided to leaders and committee members of these groups.



### **Young Adult Services Symposium**

A comparable number attended the 2020 Virtual YALSA Young Adult Services Symposium on November 6-8, 2020, where it saw 588 participants. YALSA provided twelve total registration stipends for qualified applicants, six to a library member with at least one year of experience, and the second to six students enrolled in an ALA or NCATE accredited library with a focus on serving young adults to attend the conference. They were:

- Bel Outwater, University of North Carolina Greensboro
- Sarah Wall, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
- Jana Wiersma, University of North Texas
- Megan Schwindler, University of Missouri
- Mary Haltom, Texas Woman's University
- Katrina Kmak, Emporia State University
- Rebekah Corley, Library Assistant, Teen Liaison at the Landa Branch of the San Antonio (Texas) Public Library
- Brittany Garcia, Teen and Adult Services Supervisor at the Rancho Cucamonga (California) Public Library
- Sandy Leon, Adult and Youth Services Librarian at Center Moriches (New York) Free Public Library
- Esperanza Pacheco, Assistant Director at the Englewood (New Jersey) Public Library
- Dana Peterson, Youth Services Librarian II at the South Cobb Regional Library; Mableton, GA
- Allie Stevens, Director, Calhoun County Library; Hampton, AR

The 2021 Symposium is planned as a hybrid model with in-person events to be held in Reno, Nevada, on November 5-7, 2021, the location intended for the 2020 Symposium before it went to an all virtual model. Furthermore, YALSA contracted with Conferencedirect to find future location sites to host upcoming Symposiums.

### **Virtual Book Award Ceremonies**

With the change to virtual conference meetings and sessions, YALSA celebrated their book award winners and honors in virtual environments:

- Non-Fiction Winner & Honors, Tuesday, February 10, 7pm ET
- Non-Fiction List, Wednesday, February 24, 7pm ET
- Morris Award Finalists, Thursday, February 25, 7pm ET
- Printz Virtual Celebration, Thursday, May 27th, 7pm ET



- Odyssey Award, Thursday, June 24, 7pm ET

### **TeenTober**

The second celebration of TeenTober occurred throughout the month of October 2020. TeenTober is a new, nationwide celebration hosted by libraries every October and aims to celebrate teens, promote year-round teen services and the innovative ways teen services helps teens learn new skills, and fuel their passions in and outside the library. TeenTober replaces YALSA's previous Teen Read Week™ and Teen Tech Week™ celebrations, allowing libraries the flexibility to celebrate all types of literacies according to their library's schedule. Library staff are encouraged to utilize this new celebration to advocate for and raise awareness of the importance of year-round teen services in libraries.

### **Member Grants, Awards, and Scholarships**

- The first cycle of the Joann Sweetland Lum Memorial Grant was selected in January 2021. Laura Haverkamp, Librarian at Dreher High School in Columbia, SC was the inaugural recipient.
- In late Summer 2020, the Minudri Scholarship was established as a YALSA member benefit, in memory of ALA Past-President Regina Minudri. This scholarship will support an individual in graduate school who is studying to work with teens in libraries. This opportunity will be more heavily promoted and communicated as its application acceptance cycle approaches.

## **ADVOCACY**

### **Board Advocate**

In the Spring of 2020, YALSA selected its first individual to hold an ex-officio Board Advocate position that would support YALSA's advocacy and partner efforts with the ALA Advocacy Office as well as increasing external partners. For the 2020-2021 board term, Stacey Shapiro collaborated with the following parties:

- ALA Advocacy Office to be identified as the contact on youth related library issues.
- American Bar Association Commission on Homelessness & Poverty and the Massachusetts Bar Association Civil Rights and Social Justice Section, where YALSA reached out to its members in Massachusetts to connect them with a virtual discussion on the wide range of legal needs of youth who are at risk of, or



experiencing homelessness. The conversation focused on legal needs, resources such as the ABA Homeless Youth Legal Network and the new Homeless Youth Handbook for Massachusetts, and how we can collaborate to develop and expand legal services for Massachusetts youth. Collaboration efforts continue to be explored for a future Snack 'n Chat session, which occurs quarterly and is available to non-members, as well as potential Symposium session.

### **Advocacy Resources Community Listening Taskforce**

The YALSA Board established the Advocacy Resources Listening Taskforce to explore the meaning of advocacy to members and the identification of resources that members need to support them in their professional endeavors. The group was charged to hold focus groups and produce a report at the Board's meetings at the 2020 ALA Annual Conference. Using the report alongside information gleaned from the strategic planning surveys and focus groups, the Board will determine which YALSA advocacy resources need to be updated or sunsetted. The developing strategic plan is incorporating this into its goals and tactics.

## **FUND AND PARTNER DEVELOPMENT**

### **Fundraising to Support Member Services & Resources**

#### ***Friends of YALSA***

Each year Friends of YALSA is tasked with raising over \$14,000 to support member grants and awards. The Financial Advancement Committee organizes this fundraising effort. YALSA did not achieve its goal in FY 20 due to the impact of coronavirus upon planning aspects .

#### **1. Grants**

YALSA partnered with three different groups who submitted Institute of Museum and Library Services grant applications for the 2021 year. No update has yet been received on the outcome of these applications at the time this report was submitted.

- *Developing Library Cryptoclubs Led By High School Student Mentors* with the University of Chicago to produce a model for informal STEM library programming that reduces the need for librarians to become STEM content experts in the programs they offer.
- *Transforming and Scaling Teen Services for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* with the University of California, Irvine proposes to build on [Connected Learning Lab's](#) successes working with library staff to develop and pilot tools that help staff assess connected learning program design and learning outcomes.



- *Artificial Intelligence education project* with the Michigan State University proposes to design an Artificial Intelligence education program for teens with low socio-economic status.

## **2. Hotspots for Member Volunteers**

In 2021, the YALSA Financial Advancement Committee developed a campaign to raise funds to cover member grants and awards as well as raise additional funds to purchase hotspots for YALSA's member volunteers with slow or unreliable internet access.

### **Partnerships to Expand Impact**

During the past year, YALSA developed internal partnerships with a few ALA Affiliates as well as external partnerships that supported YALSA's interim strategic plan.

#### ***Internal Partnerships***

- Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) received an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant that explores the state of Black History Month (BHM) programming offered at public libraries, and identifies significant gaps. YALSA's President agreed to serve on their National Advisory Committee, which included two virtual meetings, reading and feedback assignments, and sharing communications of the grant's participation opportunities to YALSA members. The NAC continues their work to collaborate on dispersing findings from the first year grant cycle and BCALA prepares for next steps to submit a second request to IMLS that furthers the initial BHM work of this project.
- In preparation for celebrating CALA's 50th anniversary in 2023, select board members worked with a CALA representative to propose an action to both CALA and YALSA boards to establish a joint member volunteer group to develop a booklist that highlights and promotes Chinese American creators and characters to commemorate the 50th anniversary of CALA. This [joint taskforce](#) would select titles for the list in conjunction with ALSC.

#### ***External Partnerships***

- YALSA participated as a National Advisory Committee member for the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant project Reading Nation Waterfall: Increasing Access to Literacy and Libraries for Native American Children and Families. This grant's primary goal is to increase access to literary resources and libraries for Native American children and families. The anticipated outcomes of the project will be increased convenience, access, and availability to free, librarian curated children's books for Native American



children, increased culturally relevant library programming and resources, and formation of strategic local partnerships between cross-disciplinary organizations working collaboratively to assess and address this issue locally. While this work is currently focused on the elementary age group, there are plans to target the teens age group.

- YALSA is a member of the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) and YALSA's Immediate Past-President contributes to the knowledge and expertise of their field to discussions of media literacy related issues. For Media Literacy Week, information was disseminated in partnership with Netflix's "Clips and Conversations" about [The Claudia Kishi Club](#), a short documentary where "Asian American creatives pay passionate tribute to the iconic, stereotype -busting Baby-sitters Club character."
- Representatives from the MediaWise Program of the Poynter Institute - a media literacy organization - agreed to partner with YALSA by providing resources to members via a webinar scheduled for the summer.
- [IBM Open P-TECH](#) has free digital learning curriculum that targets teachers to equip the teens for roles that require technical skills, but not always a traditional university degree. In partnership with YALSA, representatives held a virtual Train-the-Trainer event in April for YALSA members interested in the topic. The event introduced resources and demonstrated how to use the platform. YALSA members were given access to the site and could then determine whether they wanted to become registered to implement programming. Another virtual Train the Trainer event is planned for August 2021.
- MasterClass worked with YALSA to establish free one-year access to all MasterClass content for YALSA members. This added member value item is otherwise priced at \$180/year and covers +100 classes across 9 content areas.