

## I. **Project Title:** Closing the Gap: Empowering Public Library Staff to Serve Teens

## II. **Description of Project Partners**

YALSA formed an advisory board of carefully selected stakeholders to help plan the summit and disseminate the report. The members of the advisory board include representatives from various groups and bring expertise in understanding the literacy needs of young adults, serving diverse populations, developing and implementing school and public library programs for youth and young adults, writing and publishing for youth and young adults, and conducting research. Advisory board members were:

- Stacey Aldrich, Deputy Secretary for the Office Commonwealth Libraries
- Mary Frances Burns, Director, Morely Public Library and LLAMA Board Member
- Erica Compton, Project Coordinator, Idaho Commission on Libraries,
- Priscille Dando, Coordinator, Library and Information Services, Fairfax County Public Schools
- Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Associate Professor, University of North Carolina
- Kathy Ishizuka, Technology Editor, *School Library Journal*
- Don Latham, Associate Professor, Florida State University
- H. Jack Martin, Director, Providence Public Library
- Karen O'Brien, Director, ALA Office for Accreditation
- Lee Rainie, Director, Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project
- Jennifer Rinehart, Vice President of Research and Policy, Afterschool Alliance
- Denine Toor, Director, Community Initiatives, Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Larry Wilkner, Publisher at ProQuest
- Courtney Young, Head Librarian and Associate Professor of Women's Studies, Penn State Greater Allegheny and ALA President

## III. **Overview**

Among all age categories, teens are likely to suffer the most in the absence of library services. Additionally, in the last three decades, the skills required for young adults to succeed in the workforce have changed drastically, but the skills emphasized in schools have not kept up with these changes. This has led to a widespread concern that young adults lack the necessary skills for job success and are entering the workforce unprepared.

In an effort to ensure that teens continue to receive relevant and necessary services and resources from their libraries, especially those related to college and career readiness, YALSA held a National Forum composed of a thought-leaders' summit and a series of open, online town halls. These events led to the development and publication of a report that focuses on how teen services in libraries must evolve in order to meet the needs of teens.

## IV. **Changes**

- A one year no-cost extension was requested and granted via a letter sent on July 11, 2013, from Keith Michael Fiels to Sandra Toro
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## V. Activities Completed During the Project

YALSA completed all of the activities it set out to do with this grant project. They include:

**Summit:** YALSA hosted a Summit on Teens and Libraries for 64 attendees in Seattle, Jan. 23 – 24, 2013 just prior to the ALA Midwinter Meeting. Attendees were a mix of applicants and invitees. Details, including session presentations and a roster of attendees, can be found at [www.ala.org/yaforum/about-summit](http://www.ala.org/yaforum/about-summit).

**Virtual Town Halls:** to follow up the Summit and garner broader participation and input, YALSA hosted three virtual town halls throughout the spring of 2013. Details, including session recordings, can be found at [www.ala.org/yaforum/virtual-town-hall](http://www.ala.org/yaforum/virtual-town-hall).

**Report:** The purpose of the Summit and Virtual Town Halls were to gather input from a variety of communities in order to inform the publication of report. YALSA recruited Linda Braun, Maureen Hartman, Sandra Hughes Hassell and Kafi Kumasi to write the report. After reviewing all of the comments gathered from the Summit and Virtual Town Halls, writing began in late summer 2013. A draft was posted online and public comments were sought throughout the month of November. The authors considered the comments when writing the final draft in December. The final report was approved by YALSA’s Board of Directors on December 16, 2013 and published on January 8, 2014 and can be accessed at [www.ala.org/yaforum/future-library-services-and-teens-project-report](http://www.ala.org/yaforum/future-library-services-and-teens-project-report). An Executive Summary is also available from that web page. 2,000 copies each of the report and summary were printed and distributed in 2014 and conferences. Individuals could also request free copies via an online form.

### Dissemination of Report:

Method	Person(s) responsible	Date(s)	Details
e-blasts	Executive Director	Jan. 2014	sent an e-blast to all contacts collected through the Summit
USPS mailing	Communications Specialist	April – May 2014	Sent to 98 partners and our GSLIS mailing list. Also, send out copies as requested via the online form
Article / web site placements	Communications Specialist		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMLS Up Next blog in Jan. 10 2014</li> <li>• Library Journal, Jan. 8, 2014</li> <li>• NWP blog in Jan. 2014</li> <li>• SLJ, Jan. 2014</li> </ul>
Online discussions (archived at <a href="http://ow.ly/IXVpw">http://ow.ly/IXVpw</a> )	Program Officer for Continuing Education	Held 1 in Jan. and 5 in March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One in Jan. to unveil the report and start initial discussion</li> <li>• One held per week in March on: connected learning,</li> </ul>

			cultural competence, librarians as community connectors, literacies, and personal learning networks
Online training (archived at <a href="http://ow.ly/IXVDs">http://ow.ly/IXVDs</a> )	Program Officer for Continuing Education	Throughout 2014	Each live monthly YALSA webinar focused on a different topic from the report
Supplementary materials (accessible from <a href="http://ow.ly/IXVRu">http://ow.ly/IXVRu</a> )	Future of Teens and Libraries Taskforce	Nov. 2014	Includes one-pagers for specific audiences and canned presentations for adaptation
Bloggng	YALSAblog Manager	Throughout 2014	Included topics addressed in the report, such as partnerships, personal learning networks and more
Conference presentations	Taskforce, authors, staff	Throughout 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director gave a sneak peek at the SLJ Summit in Sept. 2013</li> <li>• Linda Braun &amp; Maureen Hartman presented at the 2014 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Jan.</li> <li>• Kafi Kumasi gave a presentation to the East Central Georgia Regional Library System in Feb. 2014</li> <li>• Chris Shoemaker &amp; Maureen presented at the 2014 NAA conference in Feb.</li> <li>• Executive Director presented to SPL in March 2014</li> <li>• Chris presented at PLA in March 2014</li> <li>• Adrienne Strock and Jack Martin presented at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference in June</li> <li>• Executive Director presented at ARSL in Sept. 2014</li> <li>• Maureen presented at the Massachusetts Teen Summit, Oct. 16</li> <li>• Sandra Hughes Hassell presented at the South Carolina Library Association Conference, Oct. 22-23</li> </ul>
<i>Young Adult Library Services</i>	Journal editor	Throughout 2014	Put an initial announcement in the winter 2014 issue and another

			about the Google Hangouts in the spring 2014 issue. Fall 2014 issue is themed “Yes, You Can” and focused on strategies for implementing report recommendations
Media placement	Communications Specialist	Summer 2014	Full page promotion in Youth Today’s Aug. 2014 back to school issue Full page promotion in Ohio Library Council’s Oct. 2014 convention program guide

**Evaluation:**

A project evaluation was conducted in early 2014 by the PALM Center at Florida State University’s iSchool and the final evaluative report can be found online at [www.ala.org/yaforum/about-national-forum-libraries-teens](http://www.ala.org/yaforum/about-national-forum-libraries-teens).

**VI. Project Results**

**National Impact**

The momentum, personal and professional connections, outreach, and report produced as a result of the project have provided librarians, educators, researchers, and other community stakeholders with a framework for ensuring that libraries provide timely, progressive, and excellent services to young adults in this constantly changing environment. Libraries large and small have begun re-envisioning how they serve teens since the report. For example, as a result of the report, the Rye Free Reading Room (NY) is creating a partnership with teachers and teens to mentor and demonstrate STEM skills in afterschool library programs. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh used the report to create a job description to identify potential employees who will be able to implement 21<sup>st</sup> century teen services as envisioned in the report. Librarian Kelly Rottmund stated that the report “gave us the push we needed to begin exploring [teen services] in a way that makes the most sense for our community.”

Librarians and library workers working with young adults have been able to use the materials disseminated as a result of this project as an advocacy tool. Information gathered via the summit and online town meetings along with the report gave these librarians talking points for presentations to administrators, elected officials and funders. Gaining funds for young adult services can be a challenge in the current community and economic climate. Providing those serving young adults in libraries with information on the best way to serve young adults in the early part of the 21st century has enabled them to better speak up for the need for services to this important age group. For example, YALSA member Stephanie Charlefour successfully used the Futures Report to advocate with her administrator for the creation of a makerspace in her library. These isolated

examples point to a growing movement that has the potential to change the way libraries think about and deliver services for and with teens.

The findings from this project, as disseminated through the report, have also begun to have an impact on library school curricula. The report provides youth services faculty as well as faculty focused on the future of libraries, public libraries, and school libraries with a road map for training the next generation of librarians to serve young adults effectively. For example, the report led instructors at the UNC School of Library and Information Science to refocus our technology course on connected learning and makerspaces. Additionally, their young adult services class now focuses on multiple literacies, not just print. At Emporia State University instructors there recently reworked the learning outcomes for the main youth services course to align with the recommendations in the report. As a result, these schools are now better equipped to train their students to successfully work in libraries today and into the future. It is envisioned that isolated examples such as these will become a snowball effect and that the overall landscape of library science curricula focused on teen services will evolve over the next few years to become aligned with the report.

For YALSA as an organization, the national impact has been significant. As a direct result of this project, YALSA has been able to establish new partnerships with organizations serving youth, including the Afterschool Alliance, the Connected Learning Alliance, the National Afterschool Association, the National Writing Project, and the YMCA. These partnerships will over the years to come help expand YALSA's capacity to serve its members and to drive positive change in the field of teen services. In addition, they serve to increase awareness beyond the library community about the role and value of libraries in community development. The national impact will continue into the future as YALSA's Board of Directors assembles a new strategic plan for the organization in 2015. The plan will focus on what YALSA needs to do in order to support library staff across the country as they work on implementing the recommendations in the plan.

### **Intended Results**

The summit focused on three areas: research, programs and services, and resources. The outcome for the summit was the development and dissemination of a report that addresses each of these areas. The report has acted as a call to action for the library and education communities and beyond. The report has also helped YALSA begin to address each of the areas covered in the association's Research Agenda (found online at <http://bit.ly/AAyWas>), adopted in October 2011, while also helping to meet IMLS' following strategic goals: placing the learner at the center, promoting libraries as strong community anchors, and serving as a model organization through strategic alignment of IMLS resources and prioritization of programmatic activities.

In the area of research, YALSA put out a call for papers relating to some aspect of the report, and has published the first paper in response to this call "[Radical Change Theory: Framework for Empowering Digital Youth](#)." *Journal of Research on Libraries & Young Adults* 5 (2015) by Kyungwon Koh. Additionally, a second paper was presented at the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting and will be published later in 2015: "Designing the Library of the Future for and with Teens: Librarians as the "Connector" in Connected Learning" by Mega Subramaniam.

Since the publication of the report, YALSA was able to obtain a mix of sponsor and grant funds to support programs, services and resources. In 2015 YALSA will launch a searchable, online database of teen programs. Individuals will be able to submit their own content, which will be vetted by a team of YALSA experts to ensure content meets minimum standards, as outlined by the report. This freely available resource will enable YALSA to advance best practices in programming for teens by providing practitioners with quality content to use for turn-key programs.

The outcomes of the project have helped libraries of all kinds develop effective services and resources for young adults as well as informed graduate school curricula for the next several years. Moreover, the Summit has provided a model for engaging researchers and practitioners in productive dialogue and established a framework for the ongoing review and continual development of young adult services and resources. One such example is the convening held at the spring 2014 Oklahoma Library Association conference, which was organized by YALSA member Amanda Kordeliski. The event is described in volume 13, issue 1 of *Young Adult Library Services* (pages 7-10).

### **Challenges**

In the early phase of the project, the biggest challenge was getting participation and buy-in from beyond the library community. For the Summit, the goal was to engage a wide variety of stakeholders; however, many of the youth-focused organizations and researchers we contacted were unresponsive, expressed disinterest or could not see how this project connected with their work. However, once the report was published, many attitudes changed and YALSA has since been able to start conversations and establish partnerships with some powerful organizations.

After the report was published, a new challenge arose: getting buy-in from the parts of the library community beyond teen services. Connecting with organizations the support library administrators and managers in particular has been a struggle. Incremental progress was achieved, but nothing significant or transformative.

### **Lessons Learned**

This project helped YALSA leaders build skills around the care and feeding of partnerships. Establishing and maintaining partnerships with other organizations

to work toward mutual goals is a time consuming effort, and with YALSA’s small staff is not something the organization was able to make significant progress on. However, this project forced YALSA to make the time and effort to focus on creating partnerships in order to achieve the goals in the project and increase our impact.

In terms of logistics, a basic lesson learned was the amount of time and human resources needed to plan, implement and evaluate a grant of this size. This was YALSA’s first IMLS grant, so managing the grant project was a learning experience for both YALSA’s staff and board.

Lastly, on a positive note, YALSA learned to think big. YALSA took a risk in initiating this project, but in the end, it was warmly received both from within and without the library community. As a result, the nation has a new vision for library services for and with teens, and YALSA is working harder than ever to help ensure that all teens succeed in school and are prepared for college and careers because of the services and resources they have access to at their local library.

## VII. Next Steps

### Aligning/Leveraging YALSA resources – 2014 and 2015

How	Who	When	Notes
Revisit all YALSA guidelines and papers	National Guidelines Oversight Committee	2014 - 2015	Added to 2014 – 2015 Strategic Committee Task list: supposed to submit recommendations by 12/30/14
Compare the Research Agenda w/ the report to identify gaps and update agenda as needed	Research committee	2014 - 2015	Added to 2014 – 2015 Strategic Committee Task list: supposed to be working on this throughout the year and be done by June 2015
Incorporate into 2015 strategic planning process	Board, SP committee	2015	
Revisit committees and official groups to ensure alignment with the report priorities and recommendations	board	2015	
Inventory products and propose new ones for board consideration if there are gaps	Staff, Publications Advisory Board	2015	Publications Advisory Board supposed to submit recommendations by spring 2015
Revisit digital badges –	Program	2015	

maybe only if Competencies change?	Officer for Continuing Education		
Revisit all grant YALSA applications & criteria, to ensure they ask for measurable outcomes and/or require a partnership	Program Officer for Conferences and Events	2014	

**Supporting Practitioners – 2014 and 2015**

<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Help members share report with their administrators by creating check list, tips, etc.	taskforce	2014	Resources posted online in Jan. 2015
Offer a session at Midwinter 2015 that focuses on one recommendation in the report	taskforce	2015	Two sessions were offered: one on connected learning and the other on partnerships
Providing funding to help front line library staff implement changes, explore emerging practices, etc.	board	2014 - 2015	Applied for IMLS grant in Sept. 2014. Board will also discuss options beyond IMLS
Find and leverage partners who can collaborate with YALSA	Board and Executive Director	2014 - 2015	Developed a possible partner list in 2014. Need to research who best potential partners are
Create and provide incentives: travel money, recognition to members	board	2015	The Board voted to direct MAE Trust funds toward support of member projects that align with the report
Explore creating an online self-assessment (with the planning questions included in the report) and learning plan that practitioners can use to gauge where they are in terms of achieving changes called for in the report		2015	



Build this focus into the mentoring program	Program Officer for Continuing Education	For the 2015 – 2016 cohort	
Identify Academy video topics & recruit people to make them	Taskforce	2015	
<i>JRLYA</i> : send out a new call for papers focused on the report	JRLA Editor	April 2014	
<i>YALS</i> : recurring column or update	YALS Editor	Oct. 2014	Fall 2014 issue featured theme & launched the new column
Create & provide a means for collecting and sharing success stories from those members who've begun making changes based on the report's recommendations	Taskforce researches options and makes a recommendation to the board	2014 - 2015	Created an online form in fall 2014, and also collecting stories via the #act4teens hashtag
Create & provide an online space for those on the leading edge of making changes based on the report to connect with one another and exchange ideas and information	Taskforce researches options and makes a recommendation to the board	2015	

**Getting buy-in from the library community**

How	Who	When	Notes
work with RUSA youth section to update YA reference guidelines	New joint committee	2014 - 2015	
collaborate with other divisions such as LLAMA to host webinar/write articles/etc. about why teens matter for community and workforce development	Taskforce	2015	
Work with other Divisions such as ALSC to promote to their membership. Joint program/alignment some how	staff	Summer/Fall 2014	A call to divisions went out in July 2014 but YALSA received no

			response
Host panel/discussion/conversation with leaders in other divisions (AASL, PLA, other) to identify alignments/discuss impact	taskforce	2015	
Have a presence at the ALISE conference	Research Committee	2015	YALSA hosted an exhibit booth