Family and Community Engagement: Powerful Partnerships Bring Out the Best in Everyone


Interview with NPL Staff on Serving Incarcerated Youth

Removing Barriers to Access: Eliminating Fines and Fees for a Win-Win for Your Library and Teens

Guest Editor: Tess Wilson
MUST-HAVE YA FOR EVERY SHELF

“A brave and beautiful story about sisters, addiction, and finding your place in the world—a book that belongs on every shelf.”
—Kathleen Glasgow, New York Times bestselling author of Girl in Pieces

“A clever, superbly written, laugh-out-loud-hilarious story within a story and movie within a movie about nuclear war anxiety in small-town America. You might not learn to love the bomb, but you will love this book.”
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“Gripping, dazzling, and pulse-pounding, Pollock’s YA debut is a thrill from the first page to the last . . . The final twist is well disguised and truly revelatory.”
—School Library Journal, Starred Review
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» Want more YALS? Members and subscribers can access the latest and back issues of YALS digitally on the YALSA blog at http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/yals/, as well as browse supplemental YALS articles and resources.
ESS WILSON is the guest editor for this issue. She is a LYNCS Outreach Librarian for the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

Today’s library staff are familiar with the unique energy that bursts into their space when school lets out for the day. After a full day of following instruction and conforming to a dictated curriculum, our teen patrons rush into the building ready to relax with a book, play with friends, or get a head start on their homework. We see some of them nearly every day, while others only come in for special events or short visits. The after-school hours are an essential element of many libraries, and we are often relied upon as a dependable stop between school and home. Once the final days of spring come to an end, we begin the next phase of our cycle of service—summer programming. The shift in programming and population is apparent, and continues until the semester picks up, and the cycle begins again.

We might think of this cycle as a seesaw—as one begins, the other comes to an end, and there is balance required during the transition. But we are all aware that the scope of our work extends well beyond these two seasons of service. From our outreach to our policies, there are countless ways we support our teens every day, and the arc of these programs varies widely. In this issue, you will read about long-standing programs that have evolved as needs and circumstances change, as well as some fresh approaches to teen programming and community partnerships.

A partnership between the Nashville Public Library and Woodland Hills Detention Center has given library staff the opportunity to bring parenting workshops and resources to incarcerated youth. Niq Tognoni, Raemona Little-Taylor, Klem-Mari Cajigas, and Liz Atack are the team behind this collaboration, and they were generous enough to tell me about the processes and practices they have developed since 2015. In this conversation, they include information about procedures, outcomes, and logistics, which will (continued on page 41)
Crystle Martin

For my first President’s Column for YALS I am excited to focus on the importance of Year-Round Teen Services.

The Value of Continuous Teen Services: A Position Paper

The YALSA Board of Directors approved a position paper on April 11, 2018, called The Value of Continuous Teen Services: A Position Paper. In this paper the authors describe the changes in demographics and needs of youth necessitating a need for reenvisioning teen services, moving from a focus on short celebrations and programs like Teen Read Week to a cohesive year-round approach to serving teens. It also points out challenges to service such as the negative and stereotypical view of teens that many staff have.

In this document YALSA makes its position on teen services known:

Providing continuous teen services is essential for teens and their families and positively impacts teens by giving them access to the resources and services they need to thrive and grow into productive adults. Year-round services enable school and public library staff to build ongoing relationships with teens, develop multifaceted formal and informal learning experiences that move away from one-and-done experiences to a seamless continuum of learning, and provide opportunities that expand beyond the library walls.

YALSA’s report, the “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action” offers a framework for shifting approaches to teen services that school and public libraries can leverage to provide intentional and sustained, year-round services for and with teens to meet teens’ passions and needs that, for whatever reasons, are not being fully met by schools or other institutions. In adopting a continuous, year-round approach to library services, school and public libraries can give significant value to their community by supporting healthy adolescent development, providing safe spaces for teens to explore their passions, and preparing teens for college, careers, and life.

When school and public libraries choose to focus only on specific, short-lived events like summer learning, Teen Read Week™, and Teen...
Tech Week™, they are not providing the sustained services that meet the passions and interests of teens or that they need to grow into productive adults. Scattered opportunities for learning and engagement do not give teens the ability to build understanding and skills over time, or to apply the knowledge they’ve gained. As a result, many teens, especially those from marginalized communities and low-income families, lack the experiences they need to thrive today and to be successful in the future. This statement emphasizes how teen service should offer teens programs that impact them not only in the present but in the future. To do this the paper recommends to:

1. Identify common teen needs and pinpoint when the need is most likely to arise,
2. Address barriers to access,
3. Provide opportunities for teens to deepen their learning,
4. Leverage community resources to alleviate the burden of program planning on library staff,
5. Commit to building your own skills in areas of need, such as cultural competence, managing community partnerships, community asset mapping, facilitating learning, and connected learning,
6. Create an inclusive welcoming environment year-round.

**Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff**

YALSA has incorporated the underlying principles that support year-round teen services into the Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff.

**Dispositions:**

- Shows warmth, caring, and respect for all teens and their families
- Recognizes and respects the diversity of teens and their families, and understands this diversity impacts all areas of practice
- Recognizes the systemic inequities that exist in our institutions and communities and strives to dismantle them and to provide equitable access for and with all youth
- Values creativity and imagination in learning, and promotes those attributes in teens and in themselves
- Takes an asset-based approach to working for and with teens and their families
- Recognizes that quality library services support teens and families, and bridge the gap between school and home
- Values the importance of collaboration and engagement with youth development stakeholders, community members and organizations, and local decision makers

**Content Areas:**

**Teen Growth and Development:**

Knows the typical benchmarks for growth and development and uses this knowledge to plan, provide, and evaluate library resources, programs, and services that meet the multiple needs of teens.

**Interactions with Teens:** Recognizes the importance of relationships and communication in the development and implementation of quality teen library services, and implements techniques and strategies to support teens individually and in group experiences to develop self-concept, identity, coping mechanisms, and positive interactions with peers and adults.

**Learning Environments (formal and informal):** Cultivates high-quality, developmentally appropriate, flexible learning environments that support teens individually and in group experiences as they engage in formal and informal learning activities.

**Learning Experiences (formal and informal):** Works with teens, volunteers, community partners, and others to plan, implement, and evaluate high-quality, developmentally appropriate formal and informal learning activities that support teens’ personal and academic interests.

**Youth Engagement and Leadership:** Responds to all teens’ interests and needs, and acts in partnership with teens to create and implement teen activities and to foster teen leadership.

**Cultural Competency and Responsiveness:** Actively promotes respect for cultural diversity and creates an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful library atmosphere that embraces diversity.

**Equity of Access:** Ensures access to a wide variety of library resources, services, and activities for and with all teens, especially those facing challenges to access.

**Outcomes and Assessment:** Focuses on the impact of library programs for and with teens and uses data to inform service development, implementation, and continuous improvement.

**Continuous Learning:** Acts ethically, is committed to continuous learning, and advocates for best library practices and policies for teen services.

**Reenvisioning Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week**

The YALSA Board also has recently voted to create a taskforce that will create a new campaign to raise public awareness to the importance of teen services and create a means to help members and the library implement teen services year-round.
YALSA: How did the partnership between Nashville Public Library (NPL) and the Woodland Hills Development Center come to be? Does NPL do work with other incarcerated populations?

Niq: Teen services started visiting the juvenile detention center a few years ago when budget cuts meant the library at the center would close. The teen librarian at the time would bring books for circulation and work with teachers in the school to provide supplementary reading materials. We built a strong relationship with the facility and teens and began to implement programming with the help of the Studio NPL program, Nashville Public Library’s teen learning lab/maker space. We received the LRNG grant to support us in building a more permanent presence in the space and provide dedicated technology for Studio NPL programming at the facility. Raemona Little-Taylor, the lead teen librarian on the project, noticed a number of the young men were fathers and [she] connected with the Bringing Books to Life department (BBTL) to provide parenting workshops to those young men engaged in our program.

YALSA: Were there any existing programs you looked to for inspiration when you began? What was your team’s approach?

Niq: Brooklyn Public Library’s programs at Rikers Island, specifically TeleStory, in which families go to local library branches and do teleconferencing with family members in that facility. Parents get the chance to read stories to their kids via teleconferencing. There are a number of other programs across the country we discovered that work with literacy for incarcerated parents.

Liz: We decided on recording read-alouds as a way to build upon the young men’s previous work and interest in music production. We also wanted to give some way for the young men to connect to their families while they were incarcerated.

We had no idea as to the young men’s prior experiences with children’s books, or being read aloud to as children (and as we have found out, they are varied; some remember being read to aloud as children by often other family members, some have no experience or memory of that). This is why we decided to bring a large selection of children’s books for them to look at and choose from. We focused on great books with rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, books with fathers and children, and books with African American characters (that is, sadly, a reality that we have to contend with—a majority of those incarcerated are African American). We also bring classic books many people are familiar with, like Where the Wild Things Are and Goodnight Moon, for example. A key component of BBTL’s Loving & Learning workshops is the modeling of read-alouds, or reading aloud to parents present. We want to show that being read aloud to is great and model how to do it with their children. That can be a bit of a vulnerable moment, however. We weren’t sure that was the right tack with these young men. When we stumbled upon the Ludacris Llama Llama video, it clicked. We took this as an opportunity to show the young men this and other videos that modeled read-alouds in different ways: Ludacris’s rap, a song version
of Goodnight Moon, and a more traditional read-aloud of, again, Goodnight Moon, done by Levar Burton to Neil deGrasse Tyson.

YALSA: How is the program designed? Is every week a self-contained workshop? Or is there a curriculum arc over a period of weeks, months, or semesters?
Klem-Marí: We designed our “Literacy Mentors” workshops to be four weeks long. They are designed as a series. On week one we meet, introduce what we are doing, show the young men videos, and let them look and choose the book they might want to record for their children. Week two is more book exposure, talking about reading aloud and why it’s important, and make allowances for any young men who may be joining us late (this happens as word and interest spreads). On weeks three and four, we generally record, and the young men also work on their bookplates.

YALSA: What have been the most surprising or exciting aspects of this program?
Klem-Marí: Visiting Woodland Hills has been one of the most rewarding things I have done at the library. I had never visited an incarceration facility before. I have, however, never once felt unsafe or threatened there. The young men, as a whole, are generally polite, kind, and engaged in what we are doing. Fathers in the facility are deeply connected to their children; they are proud of them, talk about them at length, fight for custody, etc. They love their children and are involved fathers, which is contrary to common narratives of young fathers, and/or incarcerated fathers.

Niq: We also see a number of the young men visit the Studio NPL flagship space at our downtown library upon their release. It is exciting to see that their relationships with the library, through our programs, are so well developed that one of the first things they want to do when they finish their court-mandated stay at the facility is come to the library for programming.

Raemona: One of the most surprising aspects for me was seeing the positive impact on the teens. They were always so excited to see us visit, bring books, and share their work. It’s been a life-changing experience for me working with incarcerated youth and using technology to empower them to be content creators instead of just consumers.

YALSA: Raemona noted that some of the teens have presented their work with NPL “as evidence of the progress they have made while at the center.” What has the reaction from judges, educators, or Woodland Hills (WH) staff been like?
Klem-Marí: [We] have not spoken with judges. But feedback from WH staff has been good. They find the fact that the young men are recording books for their kids very touching. Staff know who library folks are and what we are there to do.

Niq: The staff at the facility have, on numerous occasions, expressed their gratitude for our program and comment on the meaningful experiences it has brought to their teens. Many of the staff volunteer to be in videos that the teens make as part of the Studio NPL workshops at the space, and the staff have opened up unused portions of the facility to provide us and the teens more room to work. They also invited in the governor’s wife, and helped NPL host a showcase for her and other education-administrators to demonstrate the work the young men are doing in partnership with the library.

Raemona: Since the library is not a part of their court-mandated program, we are not directly involved with the court system. We would meet with teens after court appearances and they would relay sharing their work with judges as additional evidence of their progress while incarcerated. The reactions from judges, educators, and staff have been overwhelming positive. Teachers have witnessed a culture shift within the facility through the library’s partnership with more teens reading and excited to share their work.

YALSA: Work like this can take an emotional toll. Any advice regarding self-care for library staff or educators?
Klem-Marí: I have found this work to be life giving, actually. But it is difficult to see up close just how dehumanizing incarceration is, how unfair it is, and how punitive. I try to remember that in the time we spend with the young men, we are showing them something different. They are more than “locked up.”

Raemona: It’s important to set aside time to decompress with your team after these visits. The incarceration system is a difficult system to work in, and sometimes it feels like you’re locked up too because you’re behind the same gates during the program. Our staff had dedicated time to check in before and after visits to check in and share the emotional weight.

YALSA: What does the future hold for this collaboration?
Klem-Marí: I hope this collaboration continues. This “Literacy Mentors” program has become more popular, even among young men who do not have children. These men record for younger siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews, etc. We had to extend our last cycle to seven weeks in order to get all eight men recorded. The young men are invested in what the library is doing and want to be a part of it.

Niq: Studio NPL has committed to providing a weekly mentor to assist with the BBTL program and to
facilitate other tech-centric programming for incarcerated teens. NPL’s teen librarian also visits weekly to continue book circulation and to engage in fun, hands-on workshops with the teens. Interestingly, control of the space is about to be taken over by a private, for-profit corporation, and we have not yet had the opportunity to meet with them to explore how our programming can fit within their philosophy. We hope the experiences of the teens and staff thus far, however, speak to the value of having NPL at the facility.

YALSA: What advice do you have for other libraries that might want to pursue a partnership like this? Any lessons learned?
Klem-Mari: I’m not sure. I think it was good that the library was the one approached. Jails thrive on secrecy and control, that’s the reality. Us coming in is indeed a ceding of some control. I think the mentor piece is invaluable. Joseph (the mentor) is invested and has formed relationships there. I think the fact that BBTL came in after a relationship was established (through Raemona, Joseph, and the Studio NPL program) helped us as well.

Niq: NPL is always looking for ways to expand our work beyond the library walls. When forming a partnership with another organization, it’s important to understand what your goals and mission are, and what their goals and mission are. Go in with a plan, but be prepared to be flexible. One thing that surprised us at first was the layers of security we had to go through to enter the space (library staff were regularly searched). Often, library statistics are based on sheer numbers—circulation, program attendance, etc. In this case, we had to think beyond those numbers (the facility holds less than fifty) and consider what success would really look like for our partnership; we had to be able to clearly express our goals and tell the story of our success in order to encourage support (financial and otherwise) from the library and community.

Raemona: My advice is, if you work with teens in your library, you can work with teens who are currently incarcerated. Because a teen is a teen no matter where they are. The challenges that we faced were mainly related to navigating the incarceration system, but working with the youth was similar to our teen services work in libraries. You have to set aside time to build trust with the youth or they will see you as just another adult telling them what to do. Niq and I are developing a resource guide for working with incarcerated youth, which will include best practices, lessons learned, and curriculum examples.

New YALSA Report!

Transforming Library Services for and with Teens through Continuing Education

Read about how improving continuing education for library staff can help transform library services!

https://tinyurl.com/YALSA-TransformingthruCE
The Value of Continuous Teen Services: A YALSA Position Paper

Abstract
School and public libraries can play a fundamental and essential role in helping teens prepare for and move successfully into adulthood. Healthy adolescent development requires creating opportunities for teens to engage in year-round high-quality formal and informal learning experiences. While many public libraries ramp up teen services in the summer, or for special programs such as Teen Read Week™ and Teen Tech Week™, many do not provide intentional and sustained year-round teen programs and services. All teens have the capacity to learn, grow, and develop into knowledgeable, caring, and contributing adults, but to do this they must have access to the very best services and programs that school and public libraries can offer all year long.

Problem Statement
Supporting teens through the formative stages of adolescence is a critical role that many school and public libraries have embraced; however, several societal factors have emerged that impact this role. Libraries need to rethink their current service model and be intentional in providing continuous learning experiences for and with all teens, especially those from underserved groups.

- The demographics of teens have shifted. Today, youth between the ages of ten and nineteen make up 13.2 percent of the population. This population will continue to grow, reaching almost 45 million in 2050 (Office of Adolescent Health, 2016). Forty-seven percent of them are youth of color or indigenous youth (Annie E. Casey, 2017).
- Nineteen percent of youth in the United States live in poverty. The numbers are higher for youth of color and indigenous youth (Annie E. Casey, 2017). This growing economic disparity limits teens’ extracurricular participation, which has a significant impact on later outcomes and achievements (Wong, 2015).
- There is a growing gap in access to and use of digital media between privileged youth and nondominant youth, including youth of color and youth who belong to lower socioeconomic groups (Ito et al., Connected Learning, 2013).
- Approximately 6.7 million youth ages fourteen to twenty-four are disconnected, that is, neither employed nor enrolled in an educational program (Bel/field, Levine & Rosen, 2012). These youth often do not have strong support systems from school and/or home. For example, many schools nationwide are hostile environments for a distressing number of LGBTQ students, the overwhelming majority of whom routinely hear anti-LGBTQ language. LGBTQ students who experience victimization and discrimination at school have worse educational outcomes and poorer psychological well-being (GLSEN, 2015).
- Teens are leaving school unprepared for the twenty-first century workforce, as well as other responsibilities associated with adulthood (Youth Truth, 2016).
- For every young person enrolled in an afterschool program who lives in a community of concentrated poverty, two more young people...
are shut out of the program, due to lack of resources to meet the demand (Afterschool Alliance, 2016). Many school and public libraries struggle to support all teens and to address the challenges they face with intentional and sustained year-round activities and services that help them thrive.

School and public libraries frequently:
- Tolerate negative staff attitudes toward teens.
- Plan programs without first seeking teen input, which often leads to low attendance.
- Struggle to create formal and informal learning experiences for teens that amplify youth voice, incorporate community engagement, and focus on high-quality outcomes.
- Overlook the positive impact year-round services have on teens’ learning, engagement, and life outcomes, as well as on the library’s perceived value by community members. Additionally, many public libraries in particular tend to:
  - Focus most of their resources, including staff time, for teen services in the summer months.
  - Schedule programs to take place in the library, thus limiting participation to those teens who have access to reliable transportation.
  - Lack intentionality in program planning by not first considering desired learning outcomes.

This situation is having a negative impact on the perceived value of public libraries. In the 2018 report “From Awareness to Funding: Voter Perceptions of Public Libraries in 2018,” 36 percent of survey respondents indicated that “libraries aren’t as important to kids as they once were.” This number increased from 24 percent in the same survey that was issued in 2008 (OCLC, 2018). The report calls on public libraries to “amplify library resources and impacts for school-age children” because “all public libraries dedicate significant resources to this population, and engaging families is essential to developing future library users and supporters.”

Position

Providing continuous teen services is essential for teens and their families and positively impacts teens by giving them access to the resources and services they need to thrive and grow into productive adults. Year-round services enable school and public library staff to build ongoing relationships with teens, develop multifaceted formal and informal learning experiences that move away from one-and-done experiences to a seamless continuum of learning, and provide opportunities that expand beyond the library walls.

YALSA’s report, the “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action,” offers a framework for shifting approaches to teen services that school and public libraries can leverage to provide intentional and sustained year-round services for and with teens to meet teens’ passions and needs that, for whatever reasons, are not being fully met by schools or other institutions. In adopting a continuous, year-round approach to library services, school and public libraries can give significant value to their community by supporting healthy adolescent development, providing safe spaces for teens to explore their passions, and preparing teens for college, careers, and life.

When school and public libraries choose to focus only on specific, short-lived events like summer learning, Teen Read Week™, and Teen Tech Week™, they are not providing the sustained services that meet the passions and interests of teens or that they need to grow into productive adults. Scattered opportunities for learning and engagement do not give teens the ability to build understanding and skills over time, or to apply the knowledge they’ve gained. As a result, many teens, especially those from marginalized communities and low-income families, lack the experiences that they need to thrive today and to be successful in the future.

Recommendations

School and public libraries are a place for formal and informal learning opportunities that support healthy adolescent development, teen interests, and work to help mitigate the issues teens face by providing year-round teen services. To achieve this, libraries must:
- Identify common teen needs and pinpoint when the need is most likely to arise.
  - Seek feedback from teens, parents, educators, and other adults who interact regularly with teens to learn what teen needs are at different times of the year and use that information to inform program and service planning. For example, if high school students take college entrance exams in the spring, they should offer test prep courses in the winter.
  - Engage with community organizations that support youth to find out the time(s) of year they offer programming to identify gaps the library could fill or opportunities for collaboration.
  - Communicate with the school library and vice versa to share calendars and plans to avoid overlap and identify points of need. For example, if schools will be closed for a teacher in-service day, the public library should plan for an influx of teens.
  - Track teen library use to identify hours and times of the year that are busiest. Work with administrators to use this data to deploy staffing, funds, and resources.
• Address barriers to access.
  ○ Collaborate with school systems and/or appropriate community agencies to secure transportation for teens to the library. For example, a public library can connect with the school district to see if it can be added to the afterschool bus route.
  ○ Advocate for the library to be open outside of classroom hours and evenings and weekends, as year-round teen services require the library being available to teens when teens can use it.
  ○ Arrange for activities and services to take place at locations out in the community where teens spend their out-of-school hours.
  ○ Provide and promote robust online resources for teens so those who have Internet access at home can take advantage of library resources at any time.
  ○ Advocate for steps that will help all youth gain access to online resources, digital tools, and coaches who can guide them in using the tools. For example, speak up for universal broadband.
  ○ Review library policies and procedures to:
    ○ Ensure that they do not put up barriers to access. For example, requiring teens to show an ID or sign a behavior contract before using library resources is a clear barrier to access.
    ○ Enable library staff to connect with teens outside of the library building.
  • Provide opportunities for teens to deepen their learning.
    ○ Build activities and services for and with teens that enable ongoing impact through multipart series, recurring sessions, and ongoing engagement on topics the teens in the community have identified as high interest.
    ○ Incorporate connected learning best practices into year-round programs by facilitating the development of hands-on activities that support teen interests and integrate teen voices into planning and implementation, including project-based learning and service learning opportunities.
    ○ Focus measurement on outcomes to demonstrate the impact on teen lives that year-round sustained services for and with teens have on youth and the community.
  • Leverage community resources to alleviate the burden of program planning on library staff.
    ○ Actively build relationships with teens and their families and engage teens in the design and implementation of activities.
    ○ Identify local experts who can facilitate activities, teach a workshop, give a presentation, etc., related to their area of expertise.
    ○ Take advantage of programs that can provide volunteers and qualified workers, such as AmeriCorps and the VISTA program.
    ○ Commit to building your own skills in areas of need, such as cultural competence, managing community partnerships, community asset mapping, facilitating learning, and connected learning.
    ○ Create an inclusive welcoming environment year-round.
    ○ Work with coworkers to ensure the whole library space (physical and virtual) is welcoming to teens and uphold a whole library approach to teen services.
    ○ Advocate for teen services training for all library staff to ensure all staff are willing and able to effectively serve teens.
  ○ Review and update as needed documents such as job descriptions and staff evaluation forms to ensure all staff are held accountable for serving teens effectively.

Conclusion
Public libraries serve the entire community, from “cradle to grave.” Adults and young children have access to programs and services throughout the year. Teens need and deserve the same continuous service from their public library as other age groups. Today’s teens, especially those from traditionally underserved communities, need more than intermittent school and public library services and programs to thrive and grow into productive adults and engaged citizens. The paradigm shift laid out in YALSA’s report, the “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action,” promotes an approach to teen services that includes intentional and sustained year-round teen programs and services for and with teens. By moving toward a year-round model for teen library services, school and public libraries will enable teens to transition to adulthood successfully. And in the process, libraries will add value to their community and be indispensable.

Selected Resources
Library staff who change their approach from planning teen programs and services in isolation to embedding youth voices in the planning process will see more success with their efforts and with achieving positive outcomes for teens. The following resources can be leveraged by school and public libraries to help provide year-round services for and with teens:
  • Afterschool Alliance - www.afterschoolalliance.org/
References


Presented by Izabel Gronski et. al. for YALSA and adopted by YALSA’s board on April 11, 2018
Welcome to Research Roundup. The purpose of this recurring column is to make the vast amount of research related to youth and families accessible to you. To match the theme of the fall issue, this column focuses on year-round teen services by examining current articles that share opportunities to mentor teens and support their leadership development.

“The Value of Continuous Teen Services: A YALSA Position Paper” available at http://www.ala.org/yalsa/value-continuous-teen-services-yalsa-position-paper. In April 2018, YALSA published a position paper recommending that school and public librarians “support healthy adolescent development, teen interests, and work to help mitigate the issues teens face by providing year-round teen services.” YALSA encourages librarians to offer more continuous services instead of focusing on single programming events to strengthen the relationship between teens and their community. Current research also points to the value of including teens in the planning process to ensure authentic learning experiences and provide young adults with opportunities for leadership and personal growth. This position paper investigates different programming topics that librarians can implement throughout the year to not only welcome teens to libraries but also guide them as they mature into adults. A list of resources is included at the end of the article to assist librarians in presenting strong year-round services for teens.

“Adulting 101: When libraries teach basic life skills” available at https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2018/05/01/adulting-101-library-programming/. Author Anne Ford describes a popular new idea in year-round teen services involving teaching basic life skills. Adulting 101 programs might have originally been planned for older patrons, however, librarians are reporting high attendance from teenagers. Teresa Lucas, assistant director of North Bend Public Library in Oregon, and library assistant Clara Piazzola “created a monthly series of six programs focused on cooking, finances, job hunting, news literacy, apartment living, and miscellaneous topics such as cleaning an oven and checking engine oil” (Ford 2018). The enthusiastic teen response has led numerous libraries to continue offering monthly sessions on skills ranging from basic sewing to choosing insurance. Programming costs are minimal and oftentimes community members volunteer to teach specific areas of expertise. The Adulting 101 series provides a meaningful service to teenagers preparing for their future.

“VolunTeen Summers: The experience” available at

Kimberly Kinnaird
continue to be among teens’ favorite makerspaces and technology centers, according to author Linda Jacobson, *Let Teens Lead*. See [https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=Hendren%202017](https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=Hendren%202017).

Teen leaders have gained skills in interviewing, problem solving, and other creative programming. By treating their volunteer hours as an actual work experience, teens are given a valuable opportunity to hone real-life skills that will serve them well in future employment. The library reports higher retention rates for their teen volunteers and plans to continue reflecting on and improving their already successful VolunTeen program.

“Teens were more engaged, staff got to know the teens better, and the teens gained skills in interviewing, problem solving, project management, and other areas that will help them succeed” (Hendren 2017).

“Let Teens Lead” available at [https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=let-teens-lead-makerspaces](https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=let-teens-lead-makerspaces). According to author Linda Jacobson, makerspaces and technology centers continue to be among teens’ favorite year-round programs in many libraries. These teen hangout spaces can include everything from robotics components, 3-D printers, and video games to typewriters, board games, and sewing machines. “Working successfully with teen makers means being willing to step back and dispense with structure if needed. It also means resisting jumping in to direct activities and offer help” (Jacobson 2018). Librarians keep teens interested by rotating new materials frequently and allowing them to be the experts in their own space.

“Teen Leadership Development Through a Teen Gaming Program” available at [http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/vol-15-no-4-summer-2017.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/vol-15-no-4-summer-2017.pdf). Not only do teens enjoy the camaraderie of learning new technology or playing games with their peers but they can also build leadership skills by presenting programs and organizing tournaments. Central Library in the Boston Public Library system employs Teen Tech Mentors and Teen Gaming Specialists to plan and present technology workshops and gaming tournaments for tweens and teens. These teen positions are paid $11 an hour and expected to work four hours a week during the course of one school year. “These opportunities support teens’ deep exploration of their interests and passions in the gaming and technology fields as well as encourage the development of leadership, professional, and industry skills” (Dowds, Halpin, and Snow 2017). At the end of the program, the Teen Tech Mentors and Teen Gaming Specialists have gained valuable work experience, forged professional contacts, and begun building their portfolios and resumes for future employment opportunities in their fields. This article includes specific information about the skills taught and expected outcomes to allow other librarians to begin hiring Teen Tech Mentors and Teen Gaming Specialists at their own libraries.

“Library Takeovers: After hours Nerf games and more at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library” available at [https://commons.pacificu.edu/olaq/vol23/iss4/11/](https://commons.pacificu.edu/olaq/vol23/iss4/11/). Of course, some teen programming is simply for entertainment. The Corvallis-Benton County Public Library in Oregon hosts monthly Teen Takeovers where only teens are allowed in the library after hours to play Nerf battles or video games, watch movies, or complete crafts. Authors Bonnie Brzozowski, Elizabeth Johnson, and Kristy Kemper Hodge note that the Nerf games among the books have been the most attended Takeovers, which inspired tweens and adults to ask for their own Takeovers. “Takeovers are all about having fun and connecting with others and have proven to be incredibly popular” (Brzozowski, Johnson, and Hodge 2017). These after-hours events encourage more people to visit the library, some for the first time. As they stage Nerf battles in the stacks, teens have an opportunity to see different services the library offers.

Including teens during the planning and preparation stages of year-round programming promotes more interest, but also gives young adults a forum to voice their opinions and enact change. By encouraging teens to develop these leadership qualities, librarians can serve as mentors on the journey toward a productive and successful adulthood.
Removing Barriers to Access: Eliminating Fines and Fees for a Win-Win for your Library and Teens

I can think of several instances where teens had excessive fines and fees on their accounts, either from overdue books or missing items from their childhood. One girl, I recall, had over $80 on her account and couldn’t use the library resources, even though she wanted to check out books. Her mom had used her card irresponsibly, and now the teen was paying the price for it. Another teen, a boy, had over $30, but they were books checked out from his childhood that he would have neither remembered nor been able to find. I could only offer a resolution form and hope for the best.

—Meagan Huber, Senior Teen Services Associate, Pikes Peak Library District

As this story demonstrates, late fines can create a significant barrier to using the library for some teens—often those who need access to libraries and reading materials the most. Fines most deeply impact teens in low-income households. These teens may lack transportation to return materials to the library, and paying fines—which can add up very quickly—can be challenging for families with a tight budget. Some teens don’t check out materials at the library as they know they may not be able to return them on time, and some have blocked library cards due to accumulated fines and fees they can’t afford to pay. Being blocked from library services is also a cause of great embarrassment and shame. Many teens will simply stop using the library when they are unable to clear their accounts.

Addressing the issue of overdue fines fits directly into Content Area 8 of YALSA’s Teen Competencies, Equity of Access: “Ensuring access to a wide variety of library resources, services, and activities for and with all teens, especially those facing challenges to access.” Librarians provide thoughtfully developed YA collections for teens to borrow, particularly those that might not have the household income needed to purchase them. Unfortunately, while librarians encourage all teens to avail themselves of the collection, the policies of many libraries are doing just the opposite.

If your library charges overdue fines, it is far from an anomaly. In January 2017, Library Journal surveyed a random selection of public librarians to learn about their libraries’ approaches to fines and fees. Of the 454 respondents, 92 percent reported collecting fines for late returns on at least some materials. Of the 92 percent, only 5 percent reported not charging fines on juvenile materials.

Since that survey, however, there’s been a growing movement in public libraries to eliminate at least some overdue fines. Libraries in communities small and large—from Yankton, South Dakota, to Baltimore, Maryland, to Weld County, Colorado, and many more—are beginning to go fine-free on at least children’s materials. This is an important trend toward more equitable library service that all libraries can join.

You can play an important role in advocating for equitable service for teens (and other ages) at your library by encouraging your administration to end overdue fines on at least some materials. First, request a meeting with your library’s administration to advocate for removing overdue fines; alternatively, prepare your case in written or digital form to present to your administration. Either way, prepare thoughtfully by gathering information,
crafting talking or written points and visuals, and honing your ask.

**Gather stats and stories.** Gather as much statistical information as you can about the impact that overdue fines have on teens in your community, including the number of teens that have blocked library cards due to fines and fees. Collecting stories directly from teens about the impact that fines have on their library and reading habits is critical. Engage with library patrons, but don’t neglect to reach out to non-library users. Gather these stories as well, as eliminating overdue fines may be the barrier they need removed in order to become library users.

You may also be able to gather statistics on the amount of revenue generated by fines on YA materials (or on YA cards); this is likely to be a very small amount. Typically, overdue fines from all materials make up less than 1 percent of public library budgets.²

**Debunk the myths!** If you ask anyone to explain why libraries charge overdue fines, you’re likely to get some version of these responses: “So people will bring their stuff back on time,” and/or “Fines bring in a lot of valuable revenue.” If you’re advocating for changing this policy in your library, you’ll need to debunk these myths. These assumptions—likely held by your community, your governing body, and maybe even your fellow colleagues—are not true.

The Colorado State Library (CSL) released a white paper advocating for the elimination of fines and fees on children’s material after a review of our profession’s literature revealed no data to support the idea that charging fines results in more timely returns of materials or brings in more revenue than it costs to collect fines.³ In addition, the literature review revealed overdue fines serve as a barrier to access for low-income community members. CSL’s findings serve as powerful ammunition as you develop your talking points and build your case.

**Talking Point: Overdue fines do not make materials come back faster**

In the last few years, by monitoring the length of hold times before and after eliminating overdue fines, libraries that have recently eliminated overdue fines have found that hold times have not increased. Salt Lake City Library’s hold times were practically unchanged (9.8 versus 9.6 days) in the first three quarters after dropping all late return fines, and San Rafael Public Library (Cal.) reported no change in hold times in the three years following the elimination of late fines on children’s and teens’ materials.⁴

In addition to data from recent policy changes, research studies provide powerful statements. In three surveys of North Carolina libraries conducted between 1983 and 1991, researchers compared circulation statistics of libraries with different overdue policies. This research revealed *no significant difference in the overdue rates of libraries that charged overdue fines and those that didn’t.*⁵ Another surprising fact: charging nominal fees did not affect the return rate of materials, but the existence of heavy fines did.⁶ Those nickels, dimes, and quarters per day that libraries charge don’t do a darn thing. If you really want materials to come back promptly, you need to charge truly punitive fines, perhaps $5.00 a day.

**Talking Point: Overdue fines do not generate much income for the library**

To start with, overdue fines typically make up a very small amount of a library’s budget—typically less than 1 percent. Add to that the often-overlooked costs required to collect those dimes and quarters, and the actual revenue generated is very small. Between staff time, mailing overdue notices, fees for processing credit card payments, and collection agency fees, it turns out that much less revenue is collected than it appears. Some libraries that have carefully tracked revenue from fines before and after eliminating them have found that collecting fines was actually cost neutral, or even cost *more* than the revenue coming in.

**Talking Point: Overdue fines serve as barriers to access (instead of teaching responsibility)**

The American Library Association encourages libraries to promote “the removal of all barriers to library and information services, particularly fees and overdue charges.”³⁷ Researchers in 2004 found libraries in economically disadvantaged areas of their community had significantly lower circulation rates than middle-class neighborhoods, and library users “were reluctant to check out books because they feared having to pay overdue fines.”³⁸ Low-income caregivers surveyed by CSL researchers identified library fines and fees as one of the factors preventing them from using the library.³⁹ At a time when libraries fight to showcase their relevance and importance in the community, we should welcome all library users, not establish policies that turn them away and reduce usage.

A common related claim made is that libraries need fines to teach young people responsibility. Beyond the moral argument to this claim, the truth of the matter is that most children, and many teens, cannot get to the library on their own in order to return books on time, yet they’re the ones penalized for situations beyond their control. Isn’t it, after all, each family’s right to teach lessons to their children and not the role of the library? Rather than a lesson in responsibility, the policy becomes a punitive barrier.
Talking Point: Dropping late fines can increase circulation and library visits

Libraries across the country are dropping late fines, and they supply rich data to support your efforts at your library. For example, Salt Lake City Public Library dropped overdue fines for all materials in 2017 and, in the first three quarters following the policy change, reported these surprising results: a 10.9 percent increase in checkouts, a 10.8 percent increase in borrowers, and 3.6 percent new library cards issued—all of this with virtually no change in hold times.¹⁰ Similarly, San Rafael Public Library eliminated late fines on children’s and teens’ materials in 2015. Circulation of those collections increased with no change in hold times, and youth borrowers increased 40 percent.¹¹

Talking Point: Libraries across the country are dropping overdue fines

Since becoming interested in this topic in 2015, we have eagerly watched this trend grow and grow. In trying to keep track of the news of library system after library system dropping overdue fines, we began a document to keep track of the movement. We invite you to visit it, view circulation policies, find links to local news articles covering the change, and add to it as you succeed at your library and learn of others that do.

Prepare visuals. Visuals in print or digital form will help you make your case in meetings, written appeals, and verbal presentations. Infographics—layering pictures and symbols with thought-provoking data—are powerful and succinct tools to use as you make your case. Visuals don’t need to be fancy or require extensive design knowledge; instead, include photos, illustrations, and graphics that can interact with and amplify your message.

Honing your ask. Prepare an ask that’s specific, firm, and compelling. Strongly advocate to eliminate fines on at least children’s and YA materials (or simply address materials for all ages). Providing fine amnesty periods or introducing programs that allow patrons to reduce existing fines and fees by donating food, reading, or volunteering at the library are not acceptable substitutes for eliminating fines as they are not ongoing and cannot remove barriers to library use on a long-term basis. Further, these systems may also present additional barriers for some patrons.

You may also wish to advocate for wiping existing fines and fees for teens to provide for a fresh start, so that those teens that need access to books and library services the most will have the opportunity again. Seattle Public Library’s Fresh Start program provides an excellent model.

If eliminating fines is a hard sell, you may consider advocating for an information-gathering trial period. During a period of six to twelve months, your library can track borrowing rates, impact stories, patron comments, and revenue generation versus cost of collecting fines. At the end of the trial period, your library administration can evaluate the viability of continuing without fines.

Involve teens directly. Stories are a compelling and necessary component of your advocacy work. Invite your teen patrons to share their experiences with late fines.

As an example, we chatted with Rhyia B., age eighteen, about her situation. Rhyia uses the library often, and she has her entire life; she attended story time as a child, participated in summer reading, and enjoyed teen programming. Like most teens on the cusp of adulthood, as she learns the ins and out of being an adult, she sometimes falters. In the busy activity of her senior year, including applying and getting accepted to college, she some-

Encourage teens to represent their own interests to your library’s administration.

“I would check out materials quite often as I preferred to check out the books I read in my high school book club from the library. However, my library card has been suspended due to excessive fines so I have been unable to check out materials as of last year… This definitely effects [sic] my relationship with the library in that I can no longer check out materials, and beyond that there is also a feeling of almost criminal shame going in.” —Rhyia B.

Encourage teens to represent their own interests to your library’s administration. Ask them to share the impact that overdue fines have on their access to books and library use, and explain what it will mean to them to have fines eliminated; this may be done in person at a meeting with your administration, via video, or through a written statement or interview.

Next Steps

What if your best efforts don’t sway your administration? Ask why. Depending on the response, try to gather
and present additional information to address doubts. You may find it effective to recast your ask; for instance, if you advocated for the elimination of all fines, consider limiting your ask to fines on children’s and YA materials, or for a trial period of six or twelve months. You can also try again in a year (sometimes it’s a matter of timing, and simply introducing the idea plants the seed for future asks).

If your advocacy is successful and at least some fines are eliminated, promote the change widely to teens in your community, including—and especially—those who don’t use the library. Use common channels that will reach teens, like middle and high schools, social media, after school and summer program providers, partner organizations, and popular teen gathering places. A warm welcome message can coax a teen who once felt excluded to return to your library for a fresh start.

YA librarians are thrilled when they see teens checking out a stack of books and magazines, and teens should feel encouraged to do so, rather than be fearful of the late fines that might accrue. Based on research, these user-friendly policies will bring more teens into the library, especially low-income populations who need libraries the most.

Librarians have an opportunity to play a meaningful role in the lives of teens and families in their communities, and it’s time to stop enforcing a policy that serves no purpose. If overdue fines alienate teens rather than making them return materials faster, why keep this out-of-date, out-of-touch rule? By eliminating library fines and fees, at least on children’s and teens’ materials, public libraries become more welcoming. Teen literacy skills are crucial to success in high school and through adulthood, so it’s critical that teens from all income levels in our society have access to materials they can use daily at home for enjoyment, school work, and information.

2. Ibid.
10. Bromberg, Peter. Impact of going fine free. Salt Lake City Public Library. 2018. https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pk77n53ujmsi2ec/ADyjVQnQm0hWKZm-

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Family and Community Engagement: Powerful Partnerships Bring Out the Best in Everyone

Learn how to create a supportive environment for youth who have experienced trauma.

Bernie Farrell

On a Friday in fall 2014, the twelve participants in the first Learning Dreams/Youth-Link Emerging Adults Project met in a small library meeting room to go over last minute details. Learning Dreams staff made sure that everyone understood and signed an agreement about treating all group members respectfully and keeping equipment and resources safe and secure. The group then walked to the second floor of Hennepin County Library—Minneapolis Central, and library staff led them through two locked doors into the Best Buy Teen Tech Center. The large and brightly colored space is filled with art projects created by teens. It includes a soundproof recording studio and booth, a 3-D printer, multiple computers with professional-level graphics and music production software, keyboards, guitars, sewing machines, and much more. Open for teens only Monday through Thursday, that Friday in 2014 was the first time that emerging adults were welcomed to this space and given access to these resources.

Family and community engagement is a primary focus for libraries around the country. Partnering with Learning Dreams, a project of the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, made it possible to engage an underserved group of emerging adults in a way that the library could not do alone (About: Learning Dreams, n.d.). Though this partnership focuses on emerging adults who are also experiencing homelessness, many of their developmental tasks are true for those who have more social, emotional, financial, and systemic supports.

Emerging adulthood is the “state of being beyond adolescence but not yet fully adult, trying out adult roles but not yet immersed in them, on the way to adulthood but not there yet” (Arnett, 2012).

Over five years, the partnership has developed incrementally and led to transformative results both for program participants and in the way each organization operates. This article will highlight the history of the partnership and community engagement lessons learned along the way.

Setting the Context

Hennepin County Library is a large Midwestern public library system that includes urban, suburban, and rural locations, with wide variations in community demographics and needs.

Minneapolis Central Library is a destination and a haven for youth in the community—both teens and emerging adults ages eighteen to twenty-four (Arnett, 2012). Many youth visit downtown Minneapolis because it is a major transit hub. They frequent Minneapolis Central Library, and more specifically Teen Central, the teen library within the building, as well as the Teen Tech Center. The Teen Tech Center is a space for teens to use new technologies with support and assistance from other teens and adult mentors. They are able to share their work with other teens across the globe through The Clubhouse Network (The Clubhouse Network).

Teen Central opened in 2006 as one of the first public library spaces devoted specifically to teens. Planned with extensive input from a teen advisory group, it included unique architectural features, dedicated staff, and guide-
lines for use developed by teens (Baca, 2006).

Teen Central truly became a place youth could call their own, and the fiercely dedicated staff continued to advocate within the building and the library system for change in how teens are viewed and treated as library patrons. This coincided with the growth of teen services as a distinct area of youth services and collections throughout the country.

As teen services grew, teen librarians nationwide learned that building relationships with youth, paying attention to the quality of the social and emotional experiences teens were having, giving teens opportunities to create and lead, and providing consistent services were among the most important aspects of their work (Center for Youth Program Quality).

In 2010, Hennepin County Library saw the need to deepen its commitment to quality youth programming and to develop persistent and sustained support for teens to engage with new technologies and literacies and become not only consumers but also creators of multiple forms of media and self-expression. In 2013, the Best Buy Teen Tech Center opened at Minneapolis Central Library, right next to Teen Central.

Similar to YouMedia (You Media Learning Labs Network), which has expanded to centers in other libraries and a professional learning community, Teen Tech Centers are part of the Clubhouse Network. With 100 locations in eighteen countries, “each Clubhouse provides a creative, safe, and free out-of-school learning environment where young people from underserved communities work with adult mentors to explore their own ideas, develop new skills, and build confidence in themselves through the use of technology” (The Clubhouse Network). With dedicated professional staff, teen staff, and adults as volunteer mentors, the Teen Tech Center has become a place of community, creativity, and support for teens ages twelve to nineteen, particularly for the community of youth experiencing homelessness or insecure housing. However, emerging adults aged out of teen services when they turned twenty, and it was increasingly apparent to staff and community partners that there was a significant unmet need at Minneapolis Central.

Community Need

“Youth on their own make up 16 percent of the total homeless population counted in October 2015. Compared to their representation in the total Minnesota population, children and youth age twenty-four and younger are the most likely of all age groups to be homeless,” according to Wilder Foundation’s most recent report on youth homelessness in Minnesota (Wilder Research, 2017). For this report, youth experiencing homelessness include unaccompanied minors (age seventeen and younger) and young adults (ages eighteen to twenty-four). Sixty-three percent of these youth live in the Twin Cities metro area (Minneapolis, St. Paul).

Youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota are “less likely than adults to stay in shelters, more often staying temporarily with friends or in places not intended for habitation. Minors experiencing homelessness in particular have fewer shelters available and have fewer legal provisions for housing and other basic needs. Finding youth outside of the shelter system is extremely difficult, and the numbers reported here are an undercount. Nevertheless, nearly one-third of youth on their own in the 2015 study were found outside of the shelter system—a higher percentage than any other group. This is especially true for male youth, of whom 40 percent were interviewed outside of formal shelter programs” (Wilder Research, 2017).

Other facts about youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota include:

• Racial disparities are glaring in this population;
• LGBTQ youth are overrepresented (18 percent);
• Many youth experiencing homelessness have children of their own;
• Nine out of ten youth have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience, including trauma and abuse;
• The majority have serious health issues, including mental health or chronic physical health problems; and
• More than half have experienced violence and exploitation related to their housing or homeless situation.

Among young adults experiencing homelessness, 52 percent are in school, and 68 percent of nineteen- to twenty-four-year-olds have completed high school or received a GED (Wilder Research, 2017). This compares to 69 percent of Minnesota graduates enrolled in postsecondary education programs (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2017) and an 82 percent overall state high school graduation rate (Minnesota Department of Education, 2018).

Despite all of these challenges, these youth are resilient and full of hopes and dreams for the future (Wilder Research, 2017).

A Partnership Develops

When the Teen Tech Center opened in 2013, Learning Dreams staff were partners in the Youth Opportunity Center at YouthLink. YouthLink is a nonprofit in downtown Minneapolis that helps young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three on their journeys from homeless to hopeful (About Us: YouthLink, 2018). Learning Dreams staff heard directly from emerging adults about the Teen Tech Center and the frustration they
felt about being unable to access both the resources and youth-focused staff at the Teen Tech Center and Teen Central once they turned twenty. Access to creative programs, tools, and opportunities to experiment in the arts and technology worlds become very limited or costly after the age of eighteen. This identified community need resulted in the idea of pursuing ways to make the Teen Tech Center available to emerging adults ages twenty to twenty-five in partnership with YouthLink and Learning Dreams during hours the Teen Tech Center was closed.

The planning phase for the first cohort of the YouthLink/Learning Dreams Emerging Adults Project began in summer 2014. At that point, the Teen Tech Center had just completed its first full year of operation. The start-up year was successful from the point of view of teens, who embraced the Teen Tech Center. It also had positive effects on Teen Central, which continued to provide traditional library services and saw a decrease in behavior and security incidents along with an increase of teens using that space for individual pursuits, reading, studying, and hanging out. Behind the scenes, teen staff were grappling with a significant change in service model and needed competencies.

The connections made during their time in the Emerging Adults Project have led to employment as youth outreach workers at YouthLink, jobs with local arts organizations, and to the development of individuals’ professional networks as independent artists and entrepreneurs.

As library staff and Learning Dreams staff sat down to plan the practical realities for the pilot group, both partners wholeheartedly agreed that services to emerging adults were important for Minneapolis Central Library to address. Both organizations are committed to supporting individuals in reaching their educational, personal, and career dreams and goals, and both organizations support individuals in their unique journey to reach these goals. The partners both understood that youth experiencing homelessness often experience educational disruptions, and that these emerging adults were now fully responsible for their own education and career paths, without the family and community supports available to many of their peers. As part of this initial planning process, staff identified what both the library and Learning Dreams wanted to accomplish in the present as well as long-term goals and dreams.

Library youth services staff had concerns about their capacity for supporting an additional service. They were concerned that the quality of teen services would be diminished by this pilot project, and that the space and community for teens that they had worked so hard to develop would be compromised. Youth services staff were concerned about possible damage to or loss of expensive equipment and use of supplies that could negatively affect the Teen Tech Center. The Clubhouse Network emphasizes the importance of each network member’s space being a place where youth can see their work prominently displayed and leave projects in progress undisturbed, and Teen Tech Center staff were concerned that sharing the space with another program would affect their ability to be faithful to the Clubhouse Network learning model.

Learning Dreams staff were concerned about the lack of services and access to technology for emerging adults at the Minneapolis Central Library. They were also concerned about the negative experiences that emerging adults had at the library. As youth workers and artists, they were concerned about their own lack of knowledge of the technology available in the Teen Tech Center.

Library and Learning Dreams partners recognized that they had significantly different approaches to their work, and they strove to leverage the expertise and possibilities of each. One great benefit to the partnership was the availability of Learning Dreams staff to be in frequent contact with the Emerging Adult Project group members on and off-site and their long-standing relationships with community service providers for serving youth experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

Out of an open discussion of concerns, library and Learning Dreams...
staff developed some initial guidelines for the work. They developed an agreement that each participant in the pilot group would sign, committing to how they would treat one another, the space, and the equipment. Library staff set aside a physical storage area for pilot group members’ projects and materials and a secure area on the server. Learning Dreams youth workers were in a position to make the commitment of respect meaningful to participants, and to return to it frequently over the course of the project. Learning Dreams staff also took the lead in meeting with each emerging adult to set goals for their participation in the project. Learning Dreams staff led the work of holding participants accountable for their behavior, reminding them of weekly meeting times, and gathering the group outside the space prior to each weekly visit to the Tech Center. This structure provided an opportunity for group members to resolve any issues or renegotiate agreements about using shared resources.

Over time, leadership for this “pre-work” shifted from Learning Dreams staff to some of the emerging adults themselves, providing opportunities for them to lead meetings, design and manage projects, and be responsible for materials and budgets.

At the end of the each three-month session, Learning Dreams staff interview each group member to reflect on their initial dreams and goals and the progress or changes they made. Group members reflect on their experience in the Teen Tech Center and if or how their relationship to the library had changed because of the Emerging Adults Project. Learning Dreams staff write a report highlighting the experiences of group members at the end of each session and share it with library staff.

Emerging adults who are new to the program are pleasantly surprised that they are trusted to use the equipment and technology. They start to imagine new possibilities for themselves at the library. They start to understand the links between their dreams and creative work and possible educational or career paths. In 2015, Emerging Adults Project members created a video highlighting the impact of this program. One member said, “This opportunity helped me further my skills in my creative process and being in a space with likeminded artists helped me grow as well” (2015 Emerging Adults Project Members, 2016).

In their 2017 exit interviews, group participants described a range of personal outcomes. These included:

- Increased skill in organization;
- Identifying steps to reach a goal;
- Cooperation with others;
- Learning to use new tools and building confidence with technology;
- Completion of resumes and improved writing skills; and
- An experienced sense of safety, stress relief, support, hope, and pride in their community (Stein, Brune, & Spika, 2018).

The connections made during their time in the Emerging Adults Project have led to employment as Youth Outreach workers at YouthLink, jobs with local arts organizations, and to the development of individuals’ professional networks as independent artists and entrepreneurs. Members have enrolled in classes at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, with navigation support from a project volunteer mentor who is also a faculty member at the college. Members have also made connections with adult services library staff at Minneapolis Central who have expertise in foundation grant searches, small business development, and patents.

**A partnership practices and improves**

After the 2014 session wrapped, library staff and Learning Dreams staff met to debrief and plan for the second year. Learning Dreams staff shared the reflections from the emerging adult group members, and both sets of partners shared what went well and what could improve.

This annual debrief is critical to the success of the partnership. It is a primary way each of the partners builds trust with the other and learns about one another’s work styles, the strengths each partner brings, and the constraints that need creative problem solving. One of the Learning Dreams staff members said, “The key is that every year, we try something a little different. We all get together and look at what came in on our final reports and interviews, and what little shifts can we make. Everyone is committed to the dignity and integrity of the young people in here. We’re getting better and better at maximizing partnering with young people” (Brune, 2018). There is a lot of sharing of disciplines and an understanding that no one has to have all the skills, but team members inform and support each other’s practices and possibilities.

Learning Dreams staff and library staff have both had to let go of their need to be experts in using the technology available in the Teen Tech Center. As the partnership has matured, the team has developed documentation and there is an expectation that everyone knows how to turn on the equipment and save work on the server. Beyond that, library staff have specific technology and research skills, and the team leverages partnerships with guest artists and community members who do workshops in response to the interests of the Emerging Adults Project members.

Learning Dreams staff have flexibility in scheduling and training in youth work that library staff do not have, which reduces the burden on and possible burnout for library staff. Library
staff are building relationships with emerging adults who may be experiencing homelessness or personal crisis. Many members have experienced trauma. Learning Dreams staff are able to follow up with group members beyond the weekly sessions, and library staff are able to advocate for them as they navigate the library. Training for library staff in understanding the effects of homelessness, trauma, and experiencing racism has been valuable for the team.

Some of the changes made, although they seem minor, enhance the feelings of dignity and community for group members. Based on input from the emerging adults, a staff bathroom closer to the space is now available to them. The group members themselves honor the teen-only aspect of the Teen Central space, but going through two locked doors to get to the Teen Tech Center was frustrating and did not feel welcoming. Group members recommended getting a doorbell to accommodate any group members who arrive late.

Consistency and follow-through are crucial to the success of this program. The youth services manager at Minneapolis Central advocated for changes in scheduling to ensure that there is a consistent staff person available for each Friday session. This scheduling reflects identifying and responding to the needs of the patron, rather than a long-standing practice in weekend schedules that had staff rotating on Fridays and Saturdays. Staff report that the ability to be part of the group each week helps them build relationships with group members and be more responsive to their questions. Often staff will do some research and bring in some resources the next Friday based on conversations from the week before. Group members, library staff, and Learning Dreams staff experience this consistency as important to the trust they develop in working with one another.

**Library Services Transformed**

The first three-month session of the Emerging Adults Project in fall 2014 hosted twelve participants. Three more sessions followed in 2015–2017, and the numbers grew to fifty-two participants in 2017. Over that time, returning members have taken on responsibilities as group leaders, managed budgets, and learned how to give one another respectful feedback on artistic work. Group members, with mentoring from Learning Dreams staff, developed and presented to the adult services manager an idea for a monthly open mic program. That program, called Echo, is currently part of Minneapolis Central Library’s regularly scheduled programming and is coordinated and hosted by former members of the Emerging Adults Project. They have aged out of the Emerging Adults Project and now fully participate in adult services at Minneapolis Central Library.

In July 2018, the first six-month session of the Emerging Adults Project launched. In addition to recruiting membership at YouthLink, former members are recruiting friends and staff from the Teen Tech Center are referring emerging adults who are aging out of teen services. Over thirty individual emerging adults have participated in the first month.

Although the project started with teen services staff in a primary role, one of the long-term goals of the project was to embed adult services staff into this project. The current primary library staff liaison to the Emerging Adults Project combines adult services and teen services in his role. This ensures that youth and emerging adults see him working in Teen Central, at the adult service desks and in the Teen Tech Center.

Before the first session of the Emerging Adults Project, graduate students from the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota interviewed emerging adults who spent time at YouthLink’s Youth Opportunity Center and the Minneapolis Central Library. They found that interviewees were unaware that library resources in Teen Central were available in other parts of the library. Interviewees experienced staff in other parts of the building as intimidating, unwelcoming, and too reserved (Cacich, Scott, Scott, & Vocasek, 2013). Supporting more staff in developing competencies in serving both teens and adults, rather than the usual model of children and teens, is one way to continue being responsive to the community of patrons at Minneapolis Central Library.

Providing a safe and welcoming space for youth and emerging adults who have experienced trauma and homelessness takes time. It can be a messy and circular process. This was an “aha” moment for the adult services manager who recently said, “I now understand the necessity of the mess.” It often looks like a lot of sitting around and talking before there is enough trust to do creative work or try new technology. “Resource-heavy programming is critical to making progress, especially with young people who have experienced trauma or have histories of violence. Resource-intensive work typically serves a relatively small number of individuals. The long-term benefits extend well beyond the impact on the targeted individuals by interrupting the cycle of violence” (Results Minneapolis, 2016). As libraries move toward more relational and less transactional interactions with patrons, the challenge is identifying priorities and consistently allocating staff and resources toward those areas where intensive service is needed. The Emerging Adults Project aligns with Hennepin County
Library’s commitment to identifying and being responsive to local community needs. It aligns with Learning Dream’s commitment to helping people discover their dreams and connect to learning opportunities to make those dreams a reality. It aligns with Hennepin County’s commitment to reduce disparities (Chanen, 2018) and to be more responsive to the needs of emerging adults as they age out of other government services.

For library staff to be successful, the training and support needed is less about becoming experts in using particular equipment or technology and more in understanding the effects of trauma and homelessness. This has influenced not only the Emerging Adults Project but also how staff at Minneapolis Central interact with all patrons, including children and families. Working alongside social workers, youth workers, and street outreach workers helps library staff become more comfortable with a relational style that might not lead to a “completed reference transaction” but builds trust and community over time. This trust building creates the opportunity for traditional library services to happen when the time is right. Working alongside community partners also supports library staff in understanding that, while the work they do is valuable and life changing for patrons, they do not have to take on responsibility for all the challenges that patrons face.

Staff at Minneapolis Central Library understand and support the Emerging Adults Project. Partners in the youth work community report that Minneapolis Central Library has developed a strong reputation as a youth-friendly place. Most importantly, emerging adults experience Minneapolis Central Library as a community where they more often feel welcomed and where staff show genuine interest and care. They know that the library is a place where they can dream and grow.

Powerful partnerships take time and intention to create, but when we take the time to partner, reflect, and change, we can improve and strengthen our services and be truly responsive to our communities in ways that neither partner can achieve alone.

As one of the team members said, “[This work] it’s invaluable and such a pleasure. It’s really important not to say, poor homeless kids out there for whatever reasons. Usually it’s beyond their control. When they are supported, loved, and cared for, with opportunities like this, they can do just about anything” (Spika, 2018).

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Minnesota Department of Education. 2018. Minnesota Report Card. Retrieved August 8, 2018, from Minnesota Department of Education: http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#/graduation/orgid--999999000000__groupType--state__graduationYearRate--4__p--1


BERNIE FARRELL, MLIS, is the Youth Services Coordinator for Hennepin County Library. Previous to that she managed Children’s and Teen Services at Hennepin County Library—Minneapolis Central and worked as a youth services librarian at one of Hennepin County Library’s Bloomington, Minnesota, locations. Although she has lived in other states, she considers herself a true and proud Minnesotan.

Members: $36
Non-members: $40
Teenspace: A Space to Be

Making the case and the space for teens


These are the sounds of teens exploring, creating, and supporting one another in Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s (CLP) Teenspaces. These are not quiet spaces, but places where teens are actively exploring their interests with the support of library staff.

CLP supports the teens of Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania in every one of its 19 locations. Across these branches, CLP Teen Specialists all have the same goal, “to empower teens to be builders of their own future.” Through their role as caring adults and mentors, the Teen Specialists work to create a welcoming space where teens can explore their interests.

This exploration happens throughout the year and not just during the summer months or for special programs like Teen Read Week™ and Teen Tech Week™. However, this wasn’t always the case at CLP. Historically, our Children’s Librarians acted as both the Children’s and Teen Services person at each location. Those of you doing this work know the difficulty of balancing these responsibilities, especially since most libraries and their communities prioritize early learning, not only because of the developmental research supporting it and because this is often seen as an easier audience to draw in and engage than teens.

At CLP, we recognized that Pittsburgh teens needed and deserved our support. A 2006 RAND study revealed that low high school graduation rates at Pittsburgh public schools can be traced to problems arising during the critical middle school years, and sixth grade in particular. Afterschool programming is commonly available for children in elementary school, but significantly less available for those middle and high school students who fall into the range targeted by Teen Services. In 2011, by a margin of two to one, city voters passed a referendum to add .25 mills to all real estate tax in the city. With some of this increased tax revenue, CLP made the decision to add dedicated Teen Specialists to its locations. This staff increase allowed us to prioritize services to teens year-round and not just during Summer Reading and Teen Read Week as we had in the past.

YALSA’s recent position paper, The Value of Continuous Teen Services, suggests that providing continuous teen services gives teens access to the resources and services they need to grow into productive adults. YALSA states, “School and public libraries are a place for formal and informal learning opportunities that support healthy adolescent development, teen interests, and work to help mitigate the issues supported by the developmental research.

2Afterschool Alliance, America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand (2014), 14.
At CLP, we promise to provide our teens with a “Space to Be.” Our Teenspaces are a:

Space to get away.
Space to meet new friends.
Space to discover new interests.
Space to learn new skills.
Space to feel part of something bigger.
Space to feel good about who you are today.
Space to explore who you’ll be tomorrow.
Space to be accepted, appreciated, and welcomed.

Space to be yourself. Space to be silly. Geeky. Free. Space to be. The Teenspace values that guide the work of our Teen Specialists, and ideally all public service staff who encounter teens, are to:

Be welcoming.
Be safe.
Be creative.
Be intriguing.
Be caring.
Be passionate.
Be empowering.

FEATURES

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Space to be accepted, appreciated, and welcomed.

Teens face by providing year-round teen services.” YALSA recommends six actions that will help libraries achieve this.

The last action YALSA recommends is the one CLP Teen Services starts from, the one we believe all success with teens stems from, and one that doesn’t require extra Teen Services staff—“Create an inclusive welcoming environment year-round.”

CLP Teen Specialists work to accomplish this by communicating, and living, the Teenspace promise and values in their work with teens.

Staff who embrace these values are our most important resource. Without them, even a Teenspace with all the latest gadgets, comfiest furniture, and coolest decorations would be an empty space, because we need welcoming, creative, and caring people to invite teens in, make them feel they belong, and empower them to take ownership and be a leader within the space.

It was affirming in 2014 to see our focus on year-round Teen Services reflected in the YALSA Futures Report, which called for libraries to be spaces “where individuals can learn how to connect and use all types of resources, from physical books to apps to experts in a local, regional, or national community.” CLP uses the YALSA Futures Report and accompanying Teens First graphic as guiding documents and embraces the “Teens First” approach “where youth engagement, youth voice, and youth leadership are embedded throughout teen services.”

We’ve experienced a major shift in the last few years as our staff have begun to identify as mentors and educators in an informal environment and highlight the free, exploratory nature of our spaces and programs.

This focus on supporting teens all year long is reiterated in a recent YALSA position paper, The Value of Continuous Teen Services, which posits “all teens have the capacity to learn, grow, and develop into knowledgeable, caring and contributing adults, but to do this they must have access to the very best services and programs school and public libraries can offer all year long.”

School Year

It’s important for us to get outside the library’s walls in order to connect with teens and communicate the kind of welcoming space we’ve created for them. CLP Teen Specialists do this through our CLP – BAM! (Books & More!) outreach model. In this model, staff set up tables in school cafeterias, from which they can offer library services—card sign-ups, checkout, interactive and hands-on activities—and invite them to visit one of our branches. This is often a first step in building relationships with teens and helps us reach teens who don’t know about (or aren’t able to visit) the library. It builds a foundation that allows teens to see staff as welcoming, caring adults who can provide support of any kind. Because even if we are not the best suited to help with their needs, we can find out who is!

Once teens become library users, we offer a variety of interest-driven programming through weekly Teen Time programs at all our locations. To achieve this, we plan—or co-plan along with teens—programs that explore what excites them, what makes them curious, or what they want to learn more about.

At many of our locations, we don’t have the capacity to offer structured teen programs more than once a week, so we ask staff to prioritize one Teen Time per week and make themselves available to teens during the after-school hours (e.g., 2–5 p.m., 3–6 p.m.). During these nonprogram times, staff talk to teens about their day, suggest low-key, self-directed activities that require little staff intervention (e.g., a sticker maker, Magna-Tiles, drawing supplies), support self-directed learning, and address any immediate teen needs. Many times our teen volunteers take the lead on planning, setting up, and overseeing these self-directed activities to keep folks engaged during the hours they’re at the library. Often teens need help with things that can’t wait or aren’t best addressed by a program, for instance, filling out an online job application,
talking through their magnet school options, determining which teacher or counselor can help address bullying, fixing a broken backpack strap, or designing a poster for social studies.

We also offer interest-driven programming through Labs Workshops and Open Labs programming at eight of our locations. The empowering aspect of offering a space to be, with the “Teens First” outcome embedded into our philosophy, is that relationships are prioritized. Even as we provide cool gadgets and recording studios in our spaces, we still put teens first and always consider their diversity of needs beyond the technology and makerspace. The Labs is our space to mentor teens in the use of creative technologies. Out-of-school learning is integral to the educational equity and access often missing in the structure of formal experiences. This often results in systemic oppression of youth and, ultimately, the dismissal of their voices. § Our Labs program, Workshops, and Open Labs provide the space, equipment, and opportunities for teens to explore their creativity and talents with the guidance and encouragement of mentors, which can lead to academic and personal success. We try and provide teens with the tools they need to amplify their voice in our space, but also within our community’s civic life.

We create meaningful connections through our CLP – BAM! school outreach, where youth can mess around on our beat machines and musical gadgets, make buttons, and chat with staff. Open Labs gives teens the opportunity to level up these skills out of school. During these programs, CLP provides teens with the materials and staff support that allows them to embody the hanging out, messing around, and geeking out framework. Teen specialists in every branch collaborate with Labs Mentors—teaching artists focusing on skill building through their area of specialty. Through this design, teens can direct a program with a mentor at their side on unplanned open workshop days. Want to learn how to record that beat you made in the cafeteria with your friend’s lyrics? We got you! Most of our Labs spaces are equipped with professional recording equipment, with two locations featuring full studio setups. While these spaces are an amazing resource, the relationships are key to their success. From the support of teen specialists in the lunchroom to the encouragement of Labs Mentors in our teen spaces, we find that offering a Space to Be provides the opportunity for teens to explore interests in a low-pressure setting. Apprehensive teens receive a network of support from peers and staff at all levels.

Once we notice an increased interest in lyric writing, slime making, or when some ambitious teen wants to learn photo editing, we plan accordingly. Our Labs Workshops provide a more formal learning experience led by Labs Mentors. The workshops are often guided by our badge learning pathways, a year-round opportunity to develop skills teens can brag about during their next job interview, college application, or scholarship essay. These learning pathways are directed by the services teens requested most: Photo and Video, Graphic Design, Computer Science, Audio, Textiles, and Library Volunteer Opportunities. We offer year-round checkouts of some of our more popular equipment—most often our DSLR cameras. If a Labs Workshop focuses on Photo 101, teens interested in earning a DSLR and Photographer Badge can check out and use these items.

Workshops encourage participation in our annual events like the annual Labsy Awards, a celebration of teen achievements in 2D and 3D Art, Filmmaking, Photography, Invention, Fashion Design, and Music. We offer teens the materials, technology, and guidance they need to fully realize an idea; we strive to reduce any barriers that might keep our teens from submitting the next Labsy Award—winning fashion design. As outlined in The Future of Library Services for and with Teens, the library “is a kitchen for ‘mixing resources’ in order to empower teens to build skills, develop understanding, create and share, and overcome adversity.”

At CLP, our space becomes a recording studio, a science lab, a forum for discussing current events, a safe space to learn about healthy relationships, a place to meet a teen specialist to work a job application, or sometimes...an actual kitchen. Creative technology is present in our Labs and TeenSpace, but we eschewed building a typical makerspace and built our services on YALSA’s teen outcomes, using technology to support their development. Guided by this philosophy, we hope to sustain teen services and advocate with youth well into the future.

**Summertime**

Like everyone else, we become consumed by all-things Summer Reading once the school year ends. We encourage all our teens to read five books during the summer so they go back to school ready to learn in the fall. Our Summer Reading incentives—TeenSpace-branded drawstring bags and new YA books—are great motivators, as teens are psyched to keep the books they select.

Summer learning loss can seriously impact a teen’s later successes. “By the end of 6th grade, students who experience summer learning loss are an average of two years behind their peers.”§


§Beth Yoke, “Adopting a Summer Learning Approach for Increased Impact: A YALSA Position...”

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*Connected Learning Alliance, “Educational Equity and Out-of-School Learning” (2016).*
Although local summer programs strive to meet this need, many are inaccessible due to cost, paperwork, documentation, and barriers like the need for teens to provide child care for their families during summer months. Every summer, we meet the needs of teens and support their learning and development by continuing to offer Teen Time. In addition to regular programming, we also offer Summer Skills Intensives. The planning for these five-day workshops begins in January, with teen input throughout. Labs Mentors who work closely with our youth identify an interest or skill popular among their community teens and, with this subject identified, they pursue a collaboration with a partnering organization offering their expertise.

From street art to game design, Intensives provide ten teens the opportunity to develop a skill alongside a group of supportive peers. Participating youth are compensated and supported by a team of mentors, which includes a teen employee hired to support their peers in this learning opportunity. Intensives tend to be a rewarding experience for all. Staff get to learn from the experts they are collaborating with and spend time bonding with a core group of teens who commit to the program. They are connected to a network of support in our staff, partners, and peers. Teens collect references, additions to their resumes, library skills badges, and hopefully some new friendships. Culminating projects have wide community impact, ranging from open mic nights, to neighborhood carnivals developed by teens, and Soundcloud success!

At the core of these Intensives are the wide range of individual interactions and experiences. These moments might look like honest conversations about the music business while we enjoy a pizza, a partner directing a teen to their afterschool program or a community open mic night, or nearby adults peeking in to watch as the teens create. Every summer, the culmination of our commitment to supporting youth year-round becomes evident to staff at all levels, library patrons, and teens hanging out in the space while the workshops occur.

We know that teens are leaving school unprepared for the workforce, so another way we support them during the summer months is through Learn & Earn, an eight-week summer youth employment program offered by a local organization. During their employment with us, teens learn basic workplace expectations like how to clock in, keep to their schedule, and be welcoming to customers. They also learn how to navigate our public transit system, as they take the bus between library locations. These teen employees are a crucial part of our summer lunch and summer snack

CLP–Allegheny staff with De’Jon front and center on cosplay day.
program, taking a leadership role in managing it every day. While we’re happy to coach teens through these basics, we love being able to support them in exploring their interests through their work. We always say we need to connect teens with experts in the community who can support their interests. But in many cases, teens are experts who can support other community members!

Teen employee De’Jon had the brilliant idea to increase awareness of PhenomeCON, our annual fandom convention, by having the entire staff at CLP – Allegheny cosplay on the same day. Our staff may have never come up with this brilliant and effective promotional idea!

Ankita, who worked at CLP – Knoxville, taught a cooking class on how to cook a Nepali recipe. Both of these teens’ ideas lent themselves to bright, active @CLPTeenspace Instagram posts and stories, which show that the library is a welcoming, creative space to be.

While we were fortunate to receive additional staff, this isn’t a necessary asset for those who hope to provide continuous services to teens. If employing a mentor dedicated only to teen programming isn’t possible, consider involving volunteers, local artists, or teen leaders who are willing to share their skills.

Ultimately, embracing interest-driven, year-round programming can be as simple as involving teens in your planning process. Do you have a Teen Advisory Board? Get on their agenda! A few regulars who hang out by your desk four days out of five? Find out what they imagine for the future of their space. And as important as it is to work with those already in the library, inviting input from teens from the community at large can be just as vital. Outreach is an opportunity to explore needs we might not encounter in our everyday routines; keeping our approach fresh with new perspectives is essential. Engaging teens—both within and beyond library walls—in these conversations gives them a larger stake in the space, ownership over what happens there, and agency in the library as it evolves.

While we’re happy to coach teens through these basics, we love being able to support them in exploring their interests through their work.
Friends of YALSA (FOY) was created to ensure excellence in the Association’s traditional programs and services to library workers serving teens and to support growth in new directions as our profession meets the exciting challenges of the 21st century.

Each year, FOY funds are used to support over $16,000 in member scholarships, grants and stipends, including a Spectrum Scholar and Emerging Leader. Funds also support areas such as advocacy, continuous learning, research, planning for the future and teen literacy & young adult literature.

Become a friend in any giving category by making your tax-deductible donation via credit card or sending a contribution by mail.

Visit www.ala.org/yalsa/givetoyalsa/give today.
For months, I randomly poked my head into the HYPE Teen Center at Main Library. My mission was twofold—first, I hoped to build a relationship with Amisha who was new to the department, and second, I wanted to spend time listening to the teens. One of the tools we use to identify funding opportunities is to ask staff “what is your moonshot idea?” When we ask this question we usually have to push people to think bigger—we dare them to let go of restrictions and dream.

We felt so strongly about HYPE Teen Radio and believed in Amisha’s idea so heartily that we decided early on to self-fund the initial start-up of the project. When somebody is willing to take a leap it’s important to be supportive, but also to reinforce that things will not be perfect and we are going to make mistakes. Mistakes are important for success. As the Executive Director of the DPLF I am more interested in funding and resourcing the journey, not necessarily focusing on the final product. Success is not guaranteed, and I believe that to unlock potential you need to give people the entire runway to take off from.

I am incredibly proud of Amisha, and I am humbled to have played a small role in helping her bring 791.4 HYPE Teen Radio to life. I can’t wait to see where she takes this and what comes next.

The Initial Idea

After I was laid off from the Detroit Public Library (DPL) in April 2011, I landed at the Grand Rapids Public Library in June of the same year. I had only been a librarian for a year and a half before the layoff and was curious about what type of librarian I could be, so I threw myself into work and was promoted twice in three and a half years. I was still searching for my style of librarianship when several factors brought me back to my home library system, DPL. Within a few months, I was promoted and placed in the HYPE Teen Center located in the Main Library. HYPE had experienced some tremendous wins and exciting activities since opening in 2008. We’re talking about fashion shows, after-hours parties, talent shows, and the library’s very first makerspace. (No pressure for the returning new librarian, right?)

Maintaining relevant programming for teens and young adults is an ongoing process. When planning year-round programming and services for teens, there are the usual considerations: planning meetings, drafting contracts, reviewing equipment, and checking in with your teens. Coming to terms with lackluster interest and limited participation is a humbling experience, and it can force you (or free you) to try something different. Programs that were once hot and poppin’ begin to seem outdated and passé. One of the more popular programs HYPE boasted was Open Mic Night. So, at the request of my teens, I started them back up. For the first two months, they were a hit! However, teen interest waned quickly. We went from monthly open mic events to bimonthly, then quarterly, nights in an attempt to maintain the excitement. After a year of this, there were plenty of crickets showcasing their talents. We were back to square one.

Although teen interest was sincere, I began to understand that confidence...
levels varied. And I learned something when promoting upcoming mic nights—not all of them know how to perform in front of an audience, and the ones with experience aren’t challenged anymore. It became clear to me that we needed to combine the fun and excitement of performing with the tools necessary to perform.

**The Collaboration**
The collaboration between myself and the DPL Foundation was a fluke. Sean had visited HYPE on several occasions, and had attended Teen Advisory Board meetings in the past. He had even come down to see what the teens were involved in a few times. But one day he inquired about my hopes for HYPE. “If you could do anything in HYPE, anything at all,” he asked, “what would it be?”

I had been toying around with the idea of podcasting for a couple of years and had endured a few false starts. Since a coworker had recently told me his daughter’s school had an internet radio station, and it seemed like a feasible pursuit, I put the idea to Sean.

After voicing my desire to offer podcasting in HYPE, which later would be named 791.4 HYPE Radio, the planning began. Sean and I regularly checked in with each other, which proved to be necessary in keeping the momentum going. Our next step was setting up the studio. While we already had space available, the equipment was another thing altogether. Our resident tech expert, Tim Turner, offered up his services to research the best recording equipment and software, and ultimately designed a recording studio and the editing studio. All of this was new to me. I had never worked this closely with a foundation director, and I am not what you would call a techie, so connecting with a technology master was a different experience indeed. But I am so glad I saw this project through, despite these new working dynamics.

**Crafting Goals/Objectives**
In order to keep developing this program, I needed to offer training opportunities for interested teens. I reached out to the Detroit School of Arts and was connected with their Communications and Broadcasting instructor, as well as another educator.
With a multimedia/communications background. With the help of these experts, we were able to provide a nine-week Broadcasting Bootcamp. Workshops covered plagiarism, scripting and segment outlining, interviewing, PSAs, research, and speech.

The main objective of 791.4 HYPE Radio was—and continues to be—giving teens the necessary tools to present themselves and their interests in a format the public can enjoy. Through podcasts, teens can become ambassadors for their schools. Podcasts can give the next renowned food critic their first platform. Teens can discuss fashion, sports, and pop culture that interest them and their peers. Ultimately, the most fun (and sometimes stressful) part of this whole endeavor is that the content is entirely up to our teen creators.

Recently, I encountered a group of artists and producers laying down tracks in the editing and production studio. They were enthusiastic about honing their craft and seemed to be having a blast to boot. I saw an opportunity, so I crashed their studio session. I asked if I could hear what they were working on, and they agreed. For about ten minutes, I simply observed their process of creation, absorbing their energy.

After noticing an issue with the sound quality, I started asking about EQing techniques. Was the software causing the problem with the sound of the track, or was it the equipment? They explained the issue I was hearing and confirmed that a couple of tracks were recorded elsewhere. This may have been the longest that I had spoken with these four young men. I wasn’t shocked by their knowledge of the mixing board, editing tracks in GarageBand, or looping vocals. I was impressed by their maturity in receiving feedback. They were open to my critiques and questions, perhaps taken aback by my knowledge of the process. Either way, that kind of dialogue is the pinnacle of what a teen librarian could ever ask for.

Now was the time to up the ante. I suggested that these musicians start hosting their own podcast. They were apprehensive and wary. I mentioned this could be a collective effort or a solo endeavor. No takers. I then explained that others could benefit from hearing about their creative process and their plans for future collaboration. Misha, I thought to myself, you’re losing ‘em.

Then, in a last-ditch effort to spark interest, I pulled up Mixlr.com and showed them the website and explained its features, which includes an events calendar, follower statistics, and the showreels where their very own live broadcasts would be recorded and saved. Now the questions were flying! “Will it be 791.4’s podcast or our own?” “Yours. You would be building your brand. You know how to make music, now I want you to expand your skill set.” Their next question was: “When do you want us to start?”

The Future of 791.4 HYPE Radio

We have made a lot of progress since we began 791.4 HYPE Radio, but we aren’t finished. In fact, we’re just getting started! Some of our upcoming plans include coordinating a cooperative with two or three of our surrounding schools to offer opportunities for students to earn high school credits. My hope is to have juniors and seniors dedicate two semesters to a full school year to creating a digital portfolio of their work, whether they are on-air talent, producers, program managers, or serve in other capacities. In addition, we are in the early stages of planning our first podcasting festival. One piece of advice I can offer readers is to be willing to collaborate outside of your work sphere. This experience has strengthened my faith in others’ dedication to encouraging teens and young adults to flourish. People gave of their time freely. Others dreamed with me. Don’t be afraid to dream out loud, and seek out opportunities to share your dreams with others.

Sean and I presented 791.4 HYPE Radio: Teen Podcasting in the Library under the Radical Libraries, Archives and Museums track at the 2018 Allied Media Conference, which was a great chance to share our individual
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experiences with colleagues who converged on Detroit for this weekend of knowledge sharing. Letting others see an initiative still in the midst of being created was a humbling experience, and it reminded us that it is okay if you aren’t an expert in your new pursuit. You do not need to know everything. You will make mistakes. We are bound to overlook something when embarking on a new project, and that is okay. Be realistic about the difficulty in embarking on a new initiative.

Just like our young musicians, podcasters, and producers, we find the uncertainty of the unknown has the potential of turning us away. And sometimes it is necessary to try out different approaches before a new program sticks. Sean’s question to me was the challenge I needed to bring the teens of Detroit what they desired: another opportunity to create. This is how 791.4 HYPE Radio started, and this will be how we continue to grow. This is how we Help Young People to Excel.

SEAN EVERETT is the Executive Director of the Detroit Public Library Foundation. While attending Wayne State University working toward a degree in psychology, the Main Library was his favorite place to study. He started as a volunteer with the Foundation in 2013 and was named the Executive Director in 2015. Prior to working at the Foundation and living in Detroit, Sean spent ten years working in the private sector holding positions in Human Resources and Operations Management.

AMISHA HARIJAN is the Assistant Manager of the HYPE Teen Center and Children’s Library of the Detroit Public Library. After earning a BA in Africana Studies and a Master in Information and Library Science (with a focus in fine and performing arts) from Wayne State University, she found her calling in youth librarianship. She has also served youth (and those young at heart) at the Redford Township District Library and Grand Rapids Public Library. Most importantly, she’s mommy to Viktor Vaughn, the cutest black German Shepherd–Labrador puppy in the universe!

Guidelines for Authors

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

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

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Allie Stevens and Kaitlin Frick

Introduction

The ALA Emerging Leaders program, now in its twelfth year, is a leadership development program for librarians with fewer than five years of professional experience. A selected group of no more than fifty participants work in small groups on projects designed to solve problems for different ALA divisions, round tables, and task forces, while networking and gaining insight into the structure and function of ALA. In our time as 2018 Emerging Leaders, we worked on a project for the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) entitled “Defending Intellectual Freedom: LGBTQ+ Materials in School Libraries.”

For this project, we were tasked with creating a resource guide and infographic that could be used to aid school librarians in developing and defending the inclusion of LGBTQ+ materials in their schools—both in the curriculum and in their library collections. The guide uses the framework of the new AASL National School Library Foundations as scaffolding, so school librarians can also become more comfortable with AASL’s standards before introducing them into their curriculum. Much of the material and activities are also relevant to public libraries as well as educators, particularly those in conservative areas where challenges to LGBTQ+ materials may be more common. For the purposes of this article, we assume that readers already have a basic understanding of the reasons why libraries should be including LGBTQ+ materials in their collections. If you would like to read more about this issue, start with ALA’s Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (2014).

In order to make this resource guide accessible as quickly as possible for school media specialists and other librarians, we created several entry points. There is a list of specific questions linked directly to the relevant sections of the guide for those looking for immediate assistance with a particular concern. In addition, we created a chart in the format of the shared foundations framework that allows groups or individuals to use the guide as a professional development tool while also serving as a quick reference for locating specific information.

In addition to the framework chart and the resource guide itself, we—along with AASL’s graphic designers—created an infographic that can be used when talking to stakeholders about the inclusion of LGBTQ+ materials for young people in school and public libraries. This infographic contains statistics and quotations regarding LGBTQ+ students and access to LGBTQ+ materials, along with highlighted pieces of information from the resource guide. It can be useful in bringing school administrators, teachers, and parents on board with inclusive collections in the interest of all children served by a school or public library.

Project Highlights

This guide can be used by both school and public librarians year-round in support of LGBTQ+ inclusive collections and spaces for young people. In terms of community involvement, policies and procedures, and collection curation tips, much of the information in this guide is applicable to all
libraries serving youth, though public librarians may not face the same level of pushback as school librarians from what we refer to in the guide as “concerned adults.” Despite the potential for challenges and the inherent discomfort those challenges may cause for librarians, our young people deserve to “see themselves reflected in the library collection, and…all students who visit the library [should] see an accurate representation of the diversity in the world” (Gartley 2015).

With year-round teen services in mind, some key areas of the resource guide we’d like to highlight include: implicit bias assessment, both the importance of and resources for; identifying community stakeholders and partners; policies for collection development and challenges to materials; displays and cataloging; and procedures and practices for having conversations with “concerned adults.”

**Implicit Bias Assessment**

Before one can truly begin the work of curating an LGBTQ+ collection, it’s important to consider existing implicit biases. Do you have any fears or concerns about creating a more diverse collection? What materials are you most comfortable including in your collection? Which ones are you least comfortable with? Frequently, even those of us who think we have moved beyond the biases we may have learned as children are still harboring some hidden biases. Taking an implicit bias assessment and being open to potential discomfort caused by the results is an important step in moving past biases and into a more open and anti-oppressive mindset.

Some excellent resources for assessing your personal bias include the Harvard-based Project Implicit Test and the Anti-Defamation League’s Self-Assessment of Anti-Bias Behavior. Once you understand your own biases, you can be better prepared to respond to them when curating your collection—and when dealing with challenges brought forth by “concerned adults.”

Another way to combat the implicit biases that may affect your purchase of library materials is to perform a regular diversity audit of your collection. A diversity audit can help you answer questions about the percentage of LGBTQ+ titles in your collection, and can help you establish a baseline for increasing your collection of titles with LGBTQ+ characters and content. The results of a diversity audit

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**Features**

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can also illuminate previously unnoticed implicit biases, and can help the library take steps to rectify those biases by allocating financial resources to particular areas of the collection.

Identifying Community Stakeholders

As librarians, we recognize the importance of knowing our stakeholders. But sometimes we forget the next step, which is involving them in the process. We’re not suggesting you ask your stakeholders for their input on the books you select, but everyone who encounters your collection should be aware of and fully understand the policies and procedures for handling challenges to materials, as well as the reasons for including those materials in your collection. By maintaining transparency with your stakeholders, you create a network of allies in defending the right to access. Having this network in place before challenges occur is important—not only for ensuring positive outcomes to challenge situations but also for your own mental and emotional well-being.

Beyond engaging with stakeholders, it’s important to be aware of and connected with community partners who can help strengthen your collection and program offerings, as well as offer support during difficult times. By collaborating with partners who are LGBTQ+ inclusive, library staff can deepen their own knowledge and understanding of issues related to building a strong, diverse collection and creating more inclusive instructional/programming practices. Furthermore, community partners can be an invaluable resource for connecting library patrons (whether in the public or school setting) with information not available through the library’s purchasing channels. Topics such as asexuality, for instance, may be underrepresented in or absent from your collection, but a local organization or special interest group could offer patrons the information they’re seeking.

Policies for Collection Development and Challenges to Materials

One of the strongest ways to support the inclusion of LGBTQ+ materials in libraries is through careful drafting of policies. Both collection development policies and detailed challenge procedure forms play an important role in preventing the challenge and removal of specific LGBTQ+ titles from the collection. Including LGBTQ+ specific selection aids can create concrete justification for the purchase and inclusion of these titles, and a well-crafted policy and form for challenging library materials can de-escalate situations with administrators/parents/patrons who are concerned about the inclusion of particular items in the collection.

Collection development policies should be regularly revisited and continually updated to include specific LGBTQ+ selection aids as newer and better sources become available. Books containing LGBTQ+ content and characters are frequently overlooked for historically “prestigious prize lists that librarians often rely on when choosing stock” (Peall 2017), so including these specific types of selection aids can justify the purchase and inclusion of these materials. Some examples to include in your policy are Lambda Literary reviews (and the accompanying Lammy awards), Stonewall Book Award winners and honor titles, titles positively reviewed by the GLBT-RT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Round Table) Review Committee, and titles selected for GLBT-RT’s Rainbow Book List.

A vital part of every strong collection development policy is a challenge form, also often called a “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form. Your library’s challenge form should require the challenger to have read the entire book and ask them to cite specific passages they feel are grounds for removal of the title, along with their reasoning. If your library does not currently have a challenge procedure and form, or if you are concerned that your form may need updating, the 2014 article “Be Prepared with a Challenged Materials Policy” by Rebecca Cruz is a good place to start.

Displays and Cataloging

In a 2017 article for Knowledge Quest, Rachel Altobelli, who is now openly gay, states: “If I had walked into my middle school library or high school library and seen all the LGBTQ+
themed books shelved together, perhaps with a helpful rainbow sign, I would have walked right out of that library and never returned” (Altobelli 2017, p. 13). As library staff, we may be excited to call attention to the presence of materials for and about LGBTQ+ youth, but we must be careful to do so in a way that does not require potentially at-risk young people to identify themselves as LGBTQ+.

Creating displays that call out and/or only include LGBTQ+ titles can also add to the “othering” of those in the LGBTQ+ community. These titles should be included in all library displays, both physical and digital, and should be worked into the curriculum as often as possible. Bookmarks and brochures featuring exclusively LGBTQ+ materials can also be helpful, as they allow students to select the titles they are interested in without the book itself necessarily advertising the content. Our resource guide contains a blank flowchart that can be filled out to highlight LGBTQ+ titles for young adults from a wide variety of genres.

In addition, you can use displays to inform your community stakeholders and encourage them to engage with issues of censorship, intellectual freedom, information literacy, and/or intellectual and physical access. A particularly appropriate time to do this is during Banned Books Week and Banned Websites Awareness Day, though such displays are certainly important year-round. ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom has a variety of display ideas highlighted on their website to get you started.

Creating displays is only one way we assist patrons in finding library resources. Another, arguably much more important, way is through properly cataloging materials. In order to rectify the long-standing neglect of cataloging standards to properly note LGBTQ+ titles, the Yale University Library recommends adding a 690 tag to the MARC record for all such titles in your collection. This addition will make LGBTQ+ titles easier to find in your OPAC, increasing their accessibility to users of the library. If you’d like to take a more in-depth look at the issue of cataloging and organizing LGBTQ+ materials, check out “Classifying Identity: Organizing an LGBT Library” by Kristine Nowak and Amy Jo Mitchell (2016).

Procedures and Practice for “Concerned Adult” Conversations
When a parent, patron, or supervisor approaches to tell you someone has objected to a title in your collection, it can be difficult not to react from a place of strong emotion. In our resource guide, we refer to these as “concerned adult” conversations, since frequently the person questioning the inclusion of a title cites their “concern” for children or teens as their reasoning. Having a well-rehearsed procedure in place for how to handle these conversations can prevent an emotional reaction and help you de-escalate the situation before it ever becomes an official challenge (and can protect you in the event a situation does become an official challenge).

Never underestimate the value of being prepared. Know your policies and procedures, have your support system in place, and practice how you would respond to specific situations. That’s right, practice. Our resource guide offers a few scenarios, taken from real situations experienced by school librarians in public and private institutions, that are designed to get you thinking about how to utilize all the information you’ve prepared yourself with. Here is one such scenario:

The parent of a fourth-grade student at your school complains to the principal about the inclusion of Drama by Raina Telgemeier in your elementary school’s collection. The principal forwards the complaint to the school’s superintendent, who orders the book be removed from the library’s shelves. Assuming your current district challenge policy involves a formal review process before books can be removed from library collections, what steps might you take to remedy this situation and/or ensure similar situations don’t occur in the future?

Public librarians need only replace “principal” with “manager” and “school’s superintendent” with “director” to create a scenario they might face. Thinking through the ways you would respond to situations like this can help mitigate those snap judgments and emotional responses we’re all prone to when our decision-making abilities are questioned. For more scenarios beyond the ones offered in our guide, check out Protecting Intellectual Freedom in Your School Library: Scenarios from the Front Lines by Pat R. Scales (2009) and Protecting Intellectual Freedom in Your Public Library: Scenarios from the Front Lines by June Pinnell-Stephens (2012).

Further Implications
While our resource guide was designed specifically to aid school librarians in curating and defending their LGBTQ+ collections, this guide has a lot to offer for library staff in a variety of environments. Anyone working with books or digital materials for youth—whether in a public or academic setting—can use the information contained in the guide to more clearly and strongly justify and support the inclusion of LGBTQ+ materials in their library’s collection for all ages. Furthermore, the issues we’ve highlighted here—from implicit bias and diversity audits to display and cataloging best practices—are by no means exclusive to LGBTQ+ materials. It is our hope that librarians and educators seeking to create more equitable, anti-oppressive collections
KAITLIN FRICK is a Senior Children’s Librarian with New York Public Library’s 53rd Street branch. Aside from her regular programming, Kaitlin plans and implements monthly author programs focused on booktalking diverse titles for children and teens, conducts sensory story time outreach, and reads nonstop. She was a member of the 2018 ALA Emerging Leaders class, reviews for School Library Journal, blogs for ALSC, and is a member of the 2018–2020 GLBT-RT Reviews Committee. Kaitlin can be found on Twitter @UnheardMelodies or reached via e-mail at kaitlinfrick@nypl.org.

ALLIE STEVENS is the Director of the Calhoun County Library, a very small, rural library in southern Arkansas. Allie was selected as a 2018 Library Journal Mover & Shaker, was a member of the 2018 ALA Emerging Leaders class, and is the coordinator for YALSA’s Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers blog team. Allie is on Twitter @alphabeticalie and can also be reached at allie@calcolibrary.com.

works cited

The YALSA Update

Blogging Opportunities Available!

- The Hub: YALSA’s teen collections blog is looking for diverse voices to blog about issues related to working for/with teens to develop and curate materials in all formats for teen collections. Bloggers are asked to make a 6-month commitment with an opportunity to extend for another 6 months based on performance. Volunteers are accepted year-round. Complete the online form to express your interest: http://bit.ly/1ERdi4A
- YALSAblog: YALSA’s teen services blog is looking for forward-thinking and innovative voices in teen services to blog about challenges, successes, and failures relating to teens, learning and libraries. Bloggers are asked to make a 6-month commitment with an opportunity to extend for another 6 months based on performance. Volunteers are accepted year-round. Complete the online form to express your interest: http://bit.ly/1ERdi4A

Apply Now for the 2018 Summer Learning and Teen Summer Intern Program Grants

Eligible YALSA members can now apply for the 2018 Summer Learning Resources and Teen Summer Intern Program grants.

Through generous funding from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, two types of grants are available: Summer Learning Resources Grant and Teen Summer Intern Program Grant. The purpose of the grants is to help libraries combat the summer slide, as described in YALSA’s position paper, “Adopting a Summer Learning Approach to Increase Impact” (tinyurl.com/YALSAsummerlearningapproach).

Twenty-five summer learning resources grants, worth $1,000 each, will be awarded to libraries in need and will allow them to provide resources and services to teens who are English language learners, struggling in school and/or who are from socio-economically challenged communities. Twenty-five teen summer intern program grants, also worth $1,000 each, will be awarded to libraries to support the implementation of summer learning programs while also providing teens a chance to build hands-on job skills.

Interested applicants are invited to apply for the grants if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be a YALSA member at the time the application is submitted and throughout the grant implementation process.
- Summer learning program must be administered through a library.
- Summer learning program must be open to all teens in the community.
- Library must be within 20 miles of a Dollar General store.

To learn more about the grants and to apply, please visit our Summer Learning website at summerreading.ning.com. Apply by January 1, 2019. Recipients will be notified during the week of February 12, 2018. For information about joining YALSA, visit www.ala.org/yalsa/join. YALSA/ALA membership starts at $65 per year.

New YALSA Publication Now Available: Teen Summer Learning Programs: From Start to Finish

YALSA’s newest publication, Teen Summer Learning Programs: From Start to Finish is now available in the ALA Store! Whether you’re just starting the transition from summer reading to summer learning, or have already completed the transition, this guide will help you think through the nuts and bolts of designing, implementing, and improving your summer learning program to ensure success. From planning & budgeting to community engagement and program examples, you won’t end up short on ideas for your teen summer learning program. Buy it now in the ALA Store! ALA members receive a 10% discount.

Apply Now or Nominate a Colleague for YALSA’s Member Awards & Grants (*Two New Awards Available!)

Each year, YALSA offers over $195,000 in awards and grants exclusively to its members ranging from programming grants to travel stipends to volunteer and writing awards. Most have a December 1st deadline.

- Board of Directors Fellowship
- Collection Development Grant
- Conference Travel Stipends
- Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship*
- Frances Henne Research Grant
- Great Books Giveaway
- Innovation in Teen Services Award*
- MAE Award for Best YA Literature Program
- National Library Legislative Day Travel Stipend
- Volunteer of the Year Awards

Visit http://tinyurl.com/yal-sawards-grants to view the full list of awards, stipends, scholarships, and grants offered.

2019 YA Services Symposium Call for Proposals & Location Coming Soon!

Keep an eye out in early December for the call for program proposals for
Our 2019 YA Services Symposium, which will take place Nov. 1-3, 2019. Also, in the coming weeks, keep your eyes peeled for the reveal of the symposium location!

Want to get updates about the symposium, including an announcement when we open the travel stipend applications? Sign up at tinyurl.com/yalsasympoiumupdates. Learn more about the symposium at www.ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium.

Welmers sponsors YALSA's Service to Young Adults Outstanding Achievement Award

YALSA is excited to announce the generous sponsorship of its Service to Young Adults Outstanding Achievement Award by longtime YALSA member, Marney Welmers.

The Service to Young Adults Outstanding Achievement Award recognizes a member who has demonstrated significant, unique and sustained devotion to young adult services through substantial work across the trajectory of their career.

The $2,000 award is given out every two years to one recipient, generously sponsored by Marney Welmers. Applications are due December 1 during odd-numbered years and is awarded the following year. The application for the next award year will open in 2019. Learn more.

FROM THE EDITOR (continued from page 2)

undoubtedly prove useful for anyone attempting a similar program.

Approaching access from a different angle, Beth Crist and Meg DePriest make a strong case for eliminating fines as a way to increase access for teen library users. This conversation has been circulating around offices and discussed in journals for some years, but addressing this issue through a teen services lens is eye-opening. There are many reasons to consider eliminating fines—or, at the very least, finding more workarounds—and the talking points included here are a wonderful foundation when engaging staff in this dialog. Later in this issue, Kaitlin Frick and Allie Stevens present a practical toolkit and bountiful resources for library staff who might face challenges to LGBTQ+ materials in school or public libraries. This, too, is an article full of materials ready to be referenced in both internal conversations and in interactions with the public.

When Hennepin County Library partnered with a local youth-centered educational project, it enabled the library’s Youth Services Coordinator, Farrell offers an in-depth view of this partnership, which supports marginalized and underserved youth through creative programming. From the steps taken in forming a partner relationship to the importance of recurring debriefs, this article gives readers a thorough, micro-to-macro view of a valuable community partnership with widespread impact. Through this solid collaboration, this project has brought technology and opportunity to countless Minnesota teens.

Both the Carnegie Public Library (CLP) and the Detroit Public Library (DPL) are incorporating media and technology into their spaces in innovative ways. In the Teenspace at CLP, teens can record music, work with textiles, and much more. Guided by an interest-led design that prioritizes teen involvement, this library has passed the reins to its teens when it comes to engagement in the library. Kelly Rottmund and Kristin Morgan offer insight into what goes on behind the scenes in an environment that “empower[s] teens to be builders of their own future.” At the DPL, podcasting has become a vehicle for teen voices. 791.4 HYPE Radio gives teens a space to record and express themselves, and Amisha Harijan and Sean Everett have big plans for its future. Images of teens involved in both of these programs were graciously provided by Trista Dymond at DPL and by the CLP staff, and I am thrilled to feature them—and the hard-working teens they celebrate—on the cover of this issue.

On a recent historic tour through the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s Oakland branch, our tour guide excitedly shepherded us toward the teen area. She noted that, in a previous iteration, it had been called the James Anderson Room. Anderson was a notable figure in Pittsburgh’s library history, providing young Pittsburgh workers free access to his personal library and leaving such a legacy that his name became synonymous with teen services for a time in our library. This morsel of history was a welcome reminder of what teen services has been, how it has changed, and the capacity for impact this work has. The libraries and library staff featured in this issue are encouraging this evolution every day, and I hope you enjoy reading about—and learning from—their pursuits in year-round teen services.
New Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff!

Learn how you can improve, evaluate, and speak out for teen services from this set of guiding principles.

www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines/yacompetencies

INTERESTED IN getting involved in YALSA?

Check out our quick and easy infographic to learn about the many ways you can get involved virtually and in person!

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—Booklist

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—School Library Journal

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