



YALSA's Online Chat: Summer Reading Programs

July 1, 2009

Sarah Debraski: Hello and welcome to YALSA's second e-chat!

Penny Johnson: Glad to be here!

Sarah Debraski: I am YALSA's current President and the host of this chat. Our topic for tonight is a timely one-summer reading.

I'm sure many of you have already begun your summer reading programs and are in the thick of things already.

Tonight is an opportunity to share ideas and programs, tips and strategies with your YALSA colleagues.

Feel free to jump in at any time with questions or comments.

I know many libraries across the country are using the "Be Creative" theme, but I wonder if anyone is online tonight who is not?

Elizabeth Burns: Hi!

Erin Eggebeen: Hi

Sarah Debraski: And I also wonder how much does the theme really impact what you do?

Elizabeth Burns: I am using the theme

Sarah Debraski: Liz (hello!) how will you be implementing the theme?

Penny Johnson: So am I. Our programs are all based on the theme.

Erin Eggebeen: i am using the express yourself thing which is essentially the same thing, I think

Melissa Rabey: my system is too--and it's a great theme, in order to direct your thinking

Sarah Debraski: I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to point out that the President's Program

Elizabeth Burns: & I love the manual

Sarah Debraski: at our conference next week has the topic of nurturing teens' creativity in the library.

Stephanie Malosh: Yes, we try to make all of our teen events relate to the theme.

Sarah Debraski: I hope if you are attending the conference you'll be able to attend this program. I'm quite excited about it.

Elizabeth Burns: of course!

Melissa Rabey: that's a great topic, Sarah! it sounds like a great program

Penny Johnson: This is a great summer for nurturing creativity! So far we've had candymaking, photography, and Guitar Hero!

Erin Eggebeen: I did Guitar Hero as well, along with an "American Idol" type competition

Sarah Debraski: Those all sound like great programs. I've always been curious about the different budgets people have for their programs. Seems like I was always hoping to do \$50 programs, but I know some people spend hundred and hundres of dollars on an event.

Melissa Rabey: I just did a henna program today.

Penny Johnson: Next week we are doing sidewalk art.

Elizabeth Burns: my program is all via mail

Erin Eggebeen: We also did a writer's workshop and have a drama workshop coming up

Sarah Debraski: Melissa did you do the henna program yourself or have someone in to do it?

Melissa Rabey: my system has program boxes, where all the supplies are in a box so any teen librarian can do henna or karaoke or board games so today's program, I mixed up the henna and applied it myself

Erin Eggebeen: Our budget for family through 12th grade programs was 3,000 so we had a bit to work with

Stephanie Malosh: It definitely depends on the program. When we have outside presenters, we typically pay \$100.

Penny Johnson: I have about \$100 a month for teen programs, and that includes the food!

Sarah Debraski: Melissa who puts together the boxes? and does that mean that all the branches have the same programs?

That seems nice and convenient to have the henna-in-a-box!

Elizabeth Burns: program boxes, great idea

Melissa Rabey: a group of us brainstormed the boxes, using our system's storytime boxes as a guide so all the branches have access to the boxes, yes. we have about 12 program boxes

Sarah Debraski: That's such a great way of sharing and not recreating everything yourself.

Erin Eggebeen: It seems like that would save a lot of headaches

Melissa Rabey: definitely--my system mostly has part-time YA people, so this cuts down on people doing work on their own time

Penny Johnson: What are your 12 programs?

Sarah Debraski: Liz, how does your all email program work? I know you are at the Library for the Blind and Handicapped, but do you think some of what you do could work for other libraries?

Melissa Rabey: oh, gosh, I can't remember them all, but here goes: karaoke, henna, Wii, board games, CD clocks, digital cameras

Sarah Debraski: Melissa, does the Wii come in the box??

Elizabeth Burns: right now, it is all via mail b/c we are spread out and half of our participants also do their public library program

Melissa Rabey: there's also some odd options, like gocks (goth sock puppets) and owl pellet dissection

Erin Eggebeen: owl pellet dissection?

Melissa Rabey: Sarah: yes, the Wii comes in a box: it's the Wii, extra remotes/nunchucks/wheels, plus Guitar Hero equipment

Sarah Debraski: ooh, do you cut them up and see little bones in the pellets?

Melissa Rabey: yes, exactly, Sarah! it's a great option for boy programming

Elizabeth Burns: (owl pellets???) cool) i think any library could do via mail for kids/teens who cannot physically get to the library

Penny Johnson: Our system has three game packages: Wii, Guitar Hero, and DDR. Very nice to be able to use those packages.

Melissa Rabey: Penny--I agree. the gaming systems/programs are great, especially since they bring in all ages and adults

Sarah Debraski: Good point Melissa. I know sometimes we try so hard to not identify things as "boy" or "girl" but the fact is a lot of crafty type programs definitely appeal almost exclusively to girls.

Erin Eggebeen: I've heard that DDR is waning in popularity. Is this true?

Penny Johnson: I don't know... you should have seen my boys in the Makeover Barbie program last summer!

Sarah Debraski: I think sharing the game packages is probably a good way to get support from your director re: budgets, because it would reduce your own cost.

Melissa Rabey: and that was our concern, Sarah, when we put together the program boxes--that we wanted some boy options

Penny Johnson: And duct tape crafts always bring in the boys!

Stephanie Malosh: Duct tape crafts were also very popular at our library!

Melissa Rabey: not to toot my system's horn too much, but we will be presenting on the teen program boxes at Annual 2010, so you all can hear more then!

Sarah Debraski: By the way, YALSA is offering a program at the 2010 Annual Conference in D.C. on program boxes! oops, Melissa scooped me!

Penny Johnson: Yeah!

Melissa Rabey: jinx, Sarah. :-). Erin--I don't know if DDR is waning. I haven't done any programs with it lately, since we have the Wii now

Sarah Debraski: Is anyone trying to promote any particular books as associated with this theme?

Elizabeth Burns: part of my "by mail" program is sending out booklists

Erin Eggebeen: I was thinking about getting one but don't want to buy it if it's not going to be used. That's why I was asking

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Elizabeth Burns: & with it i'm launching my online newsletter (cannot call it a blog but that it what it is)

Melissa Rabey: I've been using PPYA's Get Creative list from a few years ago

Elizabeth Burns: erin, i was at a meeting last week where the teen librarians said it depended on whether the teens owned the games

Penny Johnson: DDR is still popular here, but not as much as Guitar Hero and Wii.

Melissa Rabey: Erin: have you asked the teens in your library? done a survey or just talked informally to them?

Erin Eggebeen: I made a display of books with titles that fit with my individual programs

Elizabeth Burns: if they owned it - they don't go to th elibrary to play

Melissa Rabey: I've seen that, too, Liz

Erin Eggebeen: I have only been in this position since Feb. and have been still testing the waters

Elizabeth Burns: my summer reading celebration is being tied into my library's "fall festival" and we hope to have games there that kids w/low vision/blind/etc can play

Penny Johnson: I have a rotating "Express Yourself" book display. This week it's cookbooks and next week it will be books on photography.

Erin Eggebeen: Summer Reading is my big time to let teens know we are beginning to have programs for them and for me to figure out what they want

Melissa Rabey: I started in my postion in June 2007, Erin, so I know what you mean.

Sarah Debraski: Good luck with that Erin!

Erin Eggebeen: I've been mostly doing this with the kids at the programs and have put out a few surveys but have had little response so far

Stephanie Malosh: Penny, that's a great idea to have a rotating book display on the SRP theme!

Sarah Debraski: I like the rotating book display-so many options for different ways of expressing oneself.

Melissa Rabey: that's a great step, then. my secret with surveys: enter all the respondents in some kind of drawing

Penny Johnson: I have an "Express your opinion" can in the teen space where I'm asking the teens various questions about what they want and like and don't like.

Erin Eggebeen: good idea, thanks for the tip

Melissa Rabey: the book display idea is fantastic. I wish I had thought of it!

Sarah Debraski: Drawings for prizes and candy are always a good idea!

Penny Johnson: If a teen answers a survey question, he/she gets book bucks to use in the eBay Our Way silent auction in August.

Erin Eggebeen: I did that as an incentive for book reviews with my program but didn't think about doing it for other stuff

Sarah Debraski: Just wanted to let you all know that YALSA has a Summer Reading interest group. The convenor, Kim Patton (also YALSA's incoming President-Elect) will be joining us, but is having some technical difficulties.

Out of curiosity-how many of your libraries offer summer reading programs for children, teens, and adults?

Penny Johnson: Summer reading seems to be down for us this year compared to the last few years.

Elizabeth Burns: my summer reading is basically combined; no adult program

Melissa Rabey: just children and teens here, although we are talking about doing a winter reading club for all ages

Erin Eggebeen: We are just starting it for adults but have had children and teens for a while now

Penny Johnson: We have a children's program (completed 5th grade or younger) and a teen program (completed 6th - 12th grades). Our director sponsors an adult reading program during the winter.

Erin Eggebeen: we have a family program for young kids, a k-4 program and a 5-12 program. this is a trial year for adults

Sarah Debraski: You know, it seems like it wasn't that long ago that summer reading programs for teens were a new thing. It is so gratifying that it is the standard now.

Erin Eggebeen: it seems that most of my participants are in grades 5-8. I only have a handful in grades 9 and 10 and none in 11 and 12

Elizabeth Burns: the bulk of my participants are about fifth to 8th also

Erin Eggebeen: I'm not sure why that is

Sarah Debraski: Do you all permit all types of reading to "count" for however your program is structured?

Elizabeth Burns: some younger, a handful older

Melissa Rabey: the participants from my library are mostly middle school, but there's also a fair number of high schoolers

Sarah Debraski: The bulk of my participants were always that age group, too.

Penny Johnson: I have a good representation from all grades, boys and girls. Lucky I guess.

Elizabeth Burns: i have all reading including of course audiobooks

Erin Eggebeen: we keep track of how many minutes they read and get prizes based off of that

Elizabeth Burns: i give kids the option as to whether they want to measure hours or books read

Stephanie Malosh: Yes, we do. We count reading books, magazines, newspapers, & listening to books on CD,

Melissa Rabey: we do by time, and we don't ask or question what they're reading

Penny Johnson: We count minutes read, it doesn't matter what they read. Listening to audiobooks or reading aloud to younger children also counts

Elizabeth Burns: i did time onl last year and some kids asked to do number of books

Stephanie Malosh: We also count by hours and allow them to enter a weekly giveaway for Barnes & Noble gift cards.

Elizabeth Burns: i have a question for others, do you require kids to read something they borrow from your library?

Penny Johnson: Teens here earn 100 book bucks for every 15 hours they read.

Erin Eggebeen: i let them get a prize after every 4 hours they read up to twelve hours, but the last prize is a bigger one

Melissa Rabey: no, Liz--anything is open for their reading. although most of the kids who are participating are reading library books

Penny Johnson: No, Elizabeth, we don't specify.

Erin Eggebeen: they can read whatever they want

Stephanie Malosh: No, at our library it doesn't matter whether to book they read is from our library.

Sarah Debraski: Interesting, Liz. I never did require it, but it never came up because the kids were physically in the library and presumably checked stuff out.

For your prizes do you have budgets or rely on donations?

Elizabeth Burns: i just know that kids from my library may use the local library for programs but for reading someplace else

Erin Eggebeen: a little of both

Penny Johnson: This is the first summer where teens have to wait until August to actually get any prizes. I'm not sure how it will work.

Elizabeth Burns: donations re budget for prizes

Melissa Rabey: for the first time ever, my system had a budget for teen prizes. previously, we had requested donations of gift cards

Elizabeth Burns: we do weekly mailings (letter, activity, incentive)

Stephanie Malosh: Our prize budget comes from the Friends group.

Penny Johnson: Donations and budget for prizes here too. Friends group helps as well.

Sarah Debraski: Sounds like you all have a fair amount of support!

Lisa Martinez: i'm not doing prizes this year. just goody bags. teens complained others cheated.

Erin Eggebeen: our prizes come out of the program budget, but a lot of businesses contact us and donate prizes as well

Elizabeth Burns: i don't do prizes, just weekly incentives/gifts

Erin Eggebeen: what kind of incentives do you do?

Sarah Debraski: Does anyone other than Liz allow online tracking of books?

Stephanie Malosh: We also give 2 free books to every summer reading participant. That money is donated by our local credit union.

Penny Johnson: I tried to do online tracking last year, and it just didn't seem to work.

Melissa Rabey: my system does--we started it this year, so kids or teens can either track their time online or use the traditional paper log

Penny Johnson: I guess I'd rather give the teens a reason to come to the library!

Stephanie Malosh: We don't do online tracking, but I wish we did! It would make things easier.

Sarah Debraski: In terms of what books you display or promote, please consider the Teens Top Ten nominees.

Elizabeth Burns: my library serves all teens in the state so we cannot require them to come in but we do encourage them to get involved in their local library programs

Erin Eggebeen: we do sign ups and book reviews online, but not book tracking

Penny Johnson: We purchased the "official" reading charts from Upstart

Sarah Debraski: If your teens read them throught the summer, then they can vote on them.

Melissa Rabey: Penny: in my system, you have to come to the library to get your weekly prize drawing tickets, so they still have to come even if they're doing it online

Sarah Debraski: The YALSA blog has been having regular posts about the various titles. You can get more info at ala.org/teenstopten

Melissa Rabey: Sarah: I'm planning to do a lot of Teens Top Ten promotion this year, starting in August

Penny Johnson: I am planning a big campaign for the Top Ten books in August.

Sarah Debraski: Awesome, Melissa!

Elizabeth Burns: it's frustrating -- I don't think any of the books are available in the format my kids read but i'll doublecheck, i may assume wrong

Sarah Debraski: Seems like another good way to get teens involved online and while it's not

Melissa Rabey: books have been *flying* off the shelves at my branch this summer, so I hope it'll work out

Sarah Debraski: quite the incentive/contest type thing we talked about before, I think it's appealing to kids to vote. (See: AMerican idol)

Penny Johnson: I'm considering borrowing our system's 14 laptops for an actual "election day" for Top Ten.

Erin Eggebeen: that's a great idea

Melissa Rabey: what a cool idea, Penny!

Erin Eggebeen: I put out a display of all the books and they seem to be going off the shelves, so I hope that's a good sign

Sarah Debraski: That's really neat, Penny!

Penny Johnson: There are some great books on the list! I'm trying to get them all read myself!

Erin Eggebeen: what are everyone's favorite programs this year? Mine are my HBP party and my drive in movie showing of Twilight

Penny Johnson: Wow, we've got such an array, it's hard to choose!

Stephanie Malosh: My favorite program is a "Rockstar Workshop". We're teaching kids to mix their own music!

Melissa Rabey: I helped put together a teen theater group that presented a short original play in May. the teens were incredible to work with

Erin Eggebeen: Stephanie, do you have someone special coming in to do that?

Penny Johnson: Our third annual all-nighter film festival will be featuring the five Harry Potter movies the night #6 is released.

Stephanie Malosh: We have a local teacher that is in a band, but I think it's something anyone could teach.

Lisa Martinez: The lolita tea party has drawn the most teens in so far.

Erin Eggebeen: Did you have to change the date with the release date being changed?

Stephanie Malosh: We're using a free program called Audacity, which allows teens to mix and record music on computers

Penny Johnson: Of course that means I get home from Annual on Monday night and stay up all night with teens on Tuesday night. I love my job!

Erin Eggebeen: I got screwed up with that and my HP program

Sarah Debraski: Lolita tea party?

Penny Johnson: Yes, we changed the date.

Sarah Debraski: Lolita tea party?

Penny Johnson: Candymaking drew just as many teens as Guitar Hero for us.

Lisa Martinez: it's a japanese pop subculture. they got to dress up and drink tea.

Sarah Debraski: Stephanie that would be a good Teen Tech Week program, too!

Elizabeth Burns: lolita? like the anime lolita, not inviting old professors to meet your young teens?

Sarah Debraski: Oh, I read an article about it in Geek magazine!

Melissa Rabey: I just read Gothic Lolita by Dakota Lane, that deals with that subculture

Elizabeth Burns: got it! thought so!

Lisa Martinez: yeah, gothic lolitas. not the latter. lol

Erin Eggebeen: I was thinking the same thing, Elizabeth

Penny Johnson: I have got to start reading Geek magazine.....

Sarah Debraski: Penny, it is a great magazine. we get way too many subscriptions at my house, but I really enjoy it! Here's a question for you:

With all the advance planning that goes on (publicity, forms made up, etc.) do you ever come up with a program idea mid-summer and just do it?

Erin Eggebeen: I've done that a lot this year

Sarah Debraski: And, how often do you recycle programs from the year before?

Erin Eggebeen: Well, a few times at least

Elizabeth Burns: for my mailings, i have some flexibility in being able to add things last minute

Melissa Rabey: it's pretty rare for me.

Stephanie Malosh: No, we print our event calendars out in advance, so we aren't able to add programs at the last minute.

Penny Johnson: No, I don't have time. We have Teen Tuesday every single Tuesday.

Melissa Rabey: we recycle pretty frequently now with the program boxes. I've done henna the last three summers, and we've gotten a good turnout every time

Erin Eggebeen: I usually end up adding to or slightly altering my programs, sometimes at the last minute

Lisa Martinez: i recycled 1 program because it was so popular (sushi social).

Stephanie Malosh: We sometimes recycle programs if they have a high attendance and the teens ask for them again. Tie-dye has been done annually for a few years now!

Penny Johnson: But I'm already planning for fall, so any ideas I get I can put into the future calendar.

Melissa Rabey: me, too, Penny--my system's deadline for fall programs to get into our quarterly calendar of events is Monday

Sarah Debraski: I've always found that long lead time frustrating and would sometimes just have an "off the main calendar" event so I could have it.

Penny Johnson: I'm very excited about our Teen Read Week finale. I got approval for it yesterday.

Sarah Debraski: Please share, Penny!

Melissa Rabey: I can do that, Sarah--I guess I've become a victim of thinking that without the calendar of events, I won't get a turnout

Penny Johnson: We are going to participate in the "Thrill the World" event on Sat. Oct. 24. Joining with people all over the world dancing the Thriller dance at the same time.

Erin Eggebeen: I just have to have my programs in line by school registration, which is nice

Penny Johnson: I'm now seeking permission to hold this event on our courthouse square downtown. How's that for beyond reality?

Melissa Rabey: sadly, I have to go start closing down the library for the night. nice talking with everyone!

Penny Johnson: Bye, Melissa!

Erin Eggebeen: that would be awesome, Penny

Sarah Debraski: Penny, that sound s so neat. I have to ask--did this come about after MJ's death or was it eerily planned before?

Penny Johnson: Instructional DVDs on how to do the dance only cost \$25 on the Thrill the World website. We are going to have drop-in sessions all week to learn the dance.

Elizabeth Burns: i love that idea & now may have to go get that dvd

Penny Johnson: No, Sarah, evidently this is done every year. But the planners are hoping for a world record this year

Sarah Debraski: I am going to tell everyone I know about this.

Erin Eggebeen: that does sound like a lot of fun!

Penny Johnson: I know, I can't believe the good luck of this event falling right at the end of TRW!

Sarah Debraski: Do you all have big finales for your SRPs as well?

Elizabeth Burns: mine is being tied into a big biannual event at the library, that way i'm not competing w/ the planners of that event for funds etc

Erin Eggebeen: My biggest program was Monday night, but I do have a final pizza party

Stephanie Malosh: We will be having video games, "clean out the closet" crafts, & making ice cream sundaes.

Penny Johnson: Our eBay Our Way silent auction will end our summer, coupled with a smoothies party.

Erin Eggebeen: They will get their final prizes, do karaoke and guitar hero again and have a few drawings

Sarah Debraski: Where do you get your program ideas? Do you seek out program ideas from other librarians/come up with your things on your own?

Erin Eggebeen: I used the manual as a springboard and came up with a lot from there

Stephanie Malosh: I talk with the other part-time YA librarians at our library, and I also browse the events calendars of other libraries.

Elizabeth Burns: the manual and then look elsewhere to see what i can tinker with

Penny Johnson: Some of each. I really enjoy the YA-YAAC email list. My TAB group is also very helpful.

Erin Eggebeen: there are a few that were results of lightbulb moments in the middle of the night, too

Penny Johnson: Gotta love those midnight ah-ha moments!!

Stephanie Malosh: Oh, and I also use the manual as well as program ideas that the California Library Association creates.

Erin Eggebeen: I've gotten some good ideas from that list too, Penny

Elizabeth Burns: my aha momentsw are in the car and then i have to remember them for the whole drive

Penny Johnson: Is everyone going to Annual?

Sarah Debraski: Has anyone ever tried to tie in their own summer reading program to a school's summer reading list?

Erin Eggebeen: i have two programs next week and two more the week after so i can't get away

Elizabeth Burns: i'll be at annual

Penny Johnson: Our schools don't have a summer reading list.

Elizabeth Burns: i allow summer reading list books/books for other things to count. (i'm not sure why people wouldn't, but parents ask)

Erin Eggebeen: ours don't either-- they just have AR lists and the kids usually want to get away from that by summer

Stephanie Malosh: We don't tie it in with the school's reading list, but we do order extra copies of books on the list so that teens can find them at our library.

Sarah Debraski: It sounds like you all have pretty positive school list experiences, which is great!

Erin Eggebeen: does anyone do book discussions in the summer? If so, is your turn out better or worse than other times?

Penny Johnson: I'm trying to find a grant for a new project. I'm wondering if any of you have done this. I'd like to have a copy of all the school textbooks in our reference collection. This year we obtained all of the elementary textbooks, but of course the middle and high schools lists are much more substantial.

Elizabeth Burns: i'm hoping eventual that kids will respond to online posts about books

Erin Eggebeen: we don't have that, but we are also in a small college town so we work with their library a lot, too

Sarah Debraski: Penny are you in a large library?

Erin Eggebeen: yeah, more online discussions would be nice here, too

Elizabeth Burns: penny, do you have a good contact at the schools, then?

Penny Johnson: No, Baraboo WI is a smaller community (pop. 11,000)

Elizabeth Burns: it can be hard enough to get a booklist, lol, let alone the new textbook lists

Sarah Debraski: Textbooks are so expensive I can see why you would need a grant for it.

Penny Johnson: I do have a good contact at the schools. But with the budget crunch the schools can't just give us a copy of each of their books, unfortunately.

Erin Eggebeen: Especially trying to keep up with new editions

Sarah Debraski: What a help that would be to a child doing their homework at the library, but who had forgotten their book.

Stephanie Malosh: Yes, we have trouble getting booklists from schools too, but we try to stay persistent and patient.

Elizabeth Burns: it sounds like a great idea

Penny Johnson: Luckily the school district gave us their vendors, so we can purchase used. Yes, the elementary collection has been very helpful for students and parents. Also, homeschooling parents like to browse the collection.

Elizabeth Burns: do you allow the kids to borrow them? or is it like reference & it stays in the library?

Penny Johnson: They are reference only.

Sarah Debraski: We've got just a couple minutes left here. Is there anything anyone would like to add?

Erin Eggebeen: It was good talking to you all, but I am due back at the desk now. Have a good night!

Sarah Debraski: I've really enjoyed this conversation with all of you.

Penny Johnson: This has been great! I look forward to meeting some of you at Annual! Come watch the Baraboo Bookers in the drill team competition!!!!

Elizabeth Burns: this is a great resource; when is the next one?

Sarah Debraski: Liz, I'm not sure when our next chat will be, but please don't forget that the Summer Reading Interest Group talks about this all year long.

Beth Yoke: we're working on getting a regular chat schedule going, Liz. we don't have an exact date yet, but we'll post it online when we do

Sarah Debraski: Good night everyone, have a great summer!

Beth Yoke: bye!

Linda Braun: Bye Sarah, thanks.