

Voices



NEWSLETTER OF THE YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

A Division of the
American Library Association

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PROGRAM SHOWCASE

Teen Friends of the Educational Park Library San Jose, California

This column is devoted to successful programming for young adults.

The Educational Park Library is unique among the 18 branches of the San Jose Public Library System. It is located on the perimeter of Independence High School (IHS), the twelfth largest high school in the United States. The campus also includes Pegasus, a school program comprised of severely at-risk youth. The majority of the library's customers are the teenagers from IHS and Pegasus who visit the library daily. With the guidance and training of the Young Adult Librarian, Teen Friends of the Educational Park Library was created four years ago and has made a difference in the lives of its members, peers, and the community.

Each member is required to attend monthly meetings and volunteer at least once a month. During the meetings, an agenda is followed that contains items of interest to members, such as volunteer training, input for the Young Adult Collection, discussion of youth issues, sharing news of school and community activities, guest speakers, and special projects.

A recent project completed by members was the planting of a beautiful garden in front of the library. Teen Friends provides volunteer services three times per week. Members are divided into teams with a "Lead" for each team. Policy decisions are made by the Leads after considering suggestions from members and staff. Volunteer duties include sorting and shelving library materials, cleaning children's picture books, assisting peers and other customers with the on-line catalog and assisting staff with special projects.

The library staff offer feedback and suggestions for future projects. A record of volunteer hours is maintained so that active members may receive letters of recommendation for employment, college applications and scholarships.

Another project recently initiated is called The Reading Team. The Reading Team is an intergenerational project in which teens and grandparents come together once a week to have fun sharing books with preschool children. It is a collaborative project between the Educational Park Library, Independence High School, and El

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NOW AVAILABLE
from YALSA

YALSA released two new publications at the 1995 ALA Annual Conference, and both are available for purchase through ALA Order Fulfillment, 155 N. Wacker St., Chicago, IL 60606; 800-545-2433, press 7; fax: (312)836-9958.

- **Output Measures and More: Planning and Evaluation Public Library Services for Young Adults**, by Virginia A. Walter. This newest addition to the Public Library Development Program presents detailed, easy-to-follow steps to improve your service and measure your results. 1995. 200p. ISBN 3452-8. \$25; ALA Member—\$22.50.
- **Youth Participation in School and Public Libraries: It Works.** This book updates two previous books about youth participation. Important elements of the two earlier books are included plus an updated list of libraries with youth participation activities, a video script from an award-winning video, national guidelines, and much more. 1995. 126p. ISBN 7798-7 \$25.

YALSA Members Spread the Word about Customer Service for Young Adults

Thirty YALSA member-leaders received training at the "Serving the Underserved: Customer Services for Young Adults" workshop in 1994 and have since developed a national network of YALSA trainers. In fact, the demand for trainers has been so heavy that YALSA is offering the workshop again during the 1996 ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio.

Conference in Miami.

YALSA President Pat Muller commented on the success of the training, "Serving the Underserved has helped us to spread the word about how to provide service to young adults in public libraries. We are thrilled with the response and the demand that we have had for trainers."

At the request of *VOICES* Editor Jana Fine, three YALSA trainers reflected on their experiences as part of this national network.

Jeri Baker, Young Adult Library Specialist, Dallas Public Library

The almost impossible task of whittling down the seminar's massive notebook, filled with outstanding handouts and exercises, was in itself a great challenge. Thanks to all the trainers who submitted reports to the YA TRAIN list-serve, it wasn't long before the most successful ideas rose to the surface. A pattern quickly emerged that could be used as a framework for structuring a workshop.

The workshop "Conquering Ephebiphobia" was offered to the Texas State Library as a continuing education program. My time to conduct the workshop was made available, at no cost, by the Dallas Public Library; and, in return, the Texas State Library would provide all production services and handle all logistical arrangements. This is definitely the

way to do a workshop series! The workshop, which was offered in four different locations during a two-week period, was coordinated by the inimitable Jeanette Larson, Continuing Education, Texas State Library.

"Serving the Underserved has helped us to spread the word about how to provide service to young adults in public libraries."

Traveling across the state, it's been stimulating and exciting to learn how other libraries are serving young adults. Workshop participants have most frequently voiced concerns for motivating teens to read and convincing administrators that services to young adults are essential. On workshop structure, participants have given the highest marks to the ample time for group interaction. The variety of activities has kept participants focused on workshop content and has staved off feelings of isolation, boredom, and anxiety. Since discussion is generated directly from the responses that participants make to the group exercises, it's great fun to observe the vagaries of group dynamics.

Skills acquired as a YA trainer transfer with considerable agility from one adult education setting to another. Last spring when Dallas Public Library decided to train volunteers to give tours

of the Central Library, I was asked to present an orientation program for members of the Municipal Library Board and other volunteers. Several of the techniques which had been introduced in the training were easily adapted for this effort. Training techniques were also incorporated into a classroom setting when I was invited to teach, in an adjunct capacity, a young adult materials course at the University of North Texas School of Library and Information Sciences. This fall, I will be conducting a workshop on library services to the aging community and plan to use similar training exercises. I can hardly wait to use carousel brainstorming to stimulate discussion on service attitudes and barriers on serving CAS—the chronologically advantaged!

As a member of YALSA for more than 20 years, I would describe my experiences as a YA trainer as a highlight of my professional career. Not every workshop is perfect, and there's always room for improvement. However, the workshop's inherent capacity for flexibility and expansion will continue to make this project stimulating, challenging, and yes, most of all, fun.

Judy Druse, Curriculum Media Librarian, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas

My experiences as a YALSA trainer have been worthwhile and rewarding but, most of all, fun. I meet new people from across the county, investigate common concerns, see attitudes change, share my successful techniques with others, and hear about their successes in return. It has changed my life. Every cartoon or comic I read is considered as a workshop opening. Statistical resources found for individuals at the university reference desk are scoured for pertinent YA statistics to use as a "startling statistic"

opener. I carry pencil and paper on shopping sprees and trips to the grocery store to jot down merchandising ideas that can be adapted for use in a library young adult area. I browse bookstore shelves for titles like "Workshops that Really Work."

Advertising brochures for executives and managers that used to end up in file 13 (the wastebasket) are now perused for sources and ideas. You laugh, but it's true!

I recently spent a week in Racine, Wisconsin, being trained to serve on the NCATE Board of Examiners. An additional benefit of this training was several techniques I can use in my workshops, but I often had to stop myself from thinking, "Carousel brainstorming would have been a better technique to use here" or "role play would have reinforced these principles." As an icebreaker, the participants divided into groups according to only child, youngest child, middle child, and oldest child. Then, we shared childhood experiences, reported to the group at-large, and moved into different groups twice more to repeat the process. During this exercise, my fingers itched for the paper and pencil left at my table. I had to jot down this exercise. I knew I would use it again.

A current theory in education is that teaching calls for a multiple intelligence—linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Teaching must include activities that use the written or spoken word, numbers and critical thinking, visual aids, music, and the whole body; teaching must involve cooperative learning; and teaching must evoke personal feelings. My response the first time I read about this approach was, "Exactly! The active learning strategies used by the trainers who trained me do exactly this." What a revelation! I started using some of these same techniques in my classes at the university. I now lecture as little as possible. I use active learning strategies, instead—I still need some good ideas for incorporating music, though.

Following a presentation at a children's workshop in the Kansas City area, I was invited back to do two training sessions for the Johnson County (Kan.) Public Library. I have one more on my schedule to do for this system. I'm their personal trainer. I'm also scheduled to do workshops in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Carney, Nebraska, in October 1995. In April 1996 I'm presenting a preconference at our state library meeting and doing an all-day workshop for the Central Iowa Regional Library. Are YALSA trainers needed or what? What a gratifying experience! So, at least for the moment, this is my way of life.

Adela Peskorz, Coordinator of Young Adult Services, Minneapolis Public Library

It was five years ago that I first moved to Minnesota and (besides redefining my definitions of cold) discovered that the supportive and LARGE community of young adult librarians I was familiar with at the New York Public Library had absolutely no counterpart here in my new home state. It wasn't until three years ago that the Minneapolis Public Library created a Young Adult Services Department and hired me as its coordinator. It was then I realized that not only did I have to start virtually from scratch, but, as the only public librarian in the state hired to work exclusively in young adult services, I had no local peer support network to turn to for brainstorming, comparison, or just general kvetching.

I could have, and did, share my passion for this specialty with many, but you know, enthusiasm, no matter how much you have of it, can only go so far. Naturally, when I saw the initial notice for the first "Serving the Undeserved" training seminar, I hungrily jumped at the opportunity. Here, after all, was my chance to develop the kind of focused presentation that would allow me to develop into a strong and effective advocate for this area of service.

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PROGRAM SHOWCASE

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Rancho Verde Day Care Center. The teen volunteers are students in the Occupation Day Care Class and Pegasus who receive training by the YA Librarian and the high school teacher. Volunteer grandparents receive training through the library's Grandparents and Books program. The combination of the varied voices, ages, and faces works to further create a rewarding experience for the more than 80 members of the Teen Friends program.

For more information, contact: June Hayashi, Young Adult Librarian, Educational Park Library, 1770 Educational Park Dr., San Jose, CA, 95133; (408) 272-3663 or (408) 277-5261.

If you have a successful program for young adults that you wish to share with the YALSA membership, please send a program description to Jana Fine, Editor, Voices Newsletter, c/o Clearwater Public Library System, 100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater, FL 34615 or e-mail at finej@mail.firn.edu



YALSA

Young Adult Library Services Association

The goal of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is to advocate, promote and strengthen service to young adults as part of the continuum of total library services. YALSA is a division of the American Library Association (ALA).

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1 9 9 6 C A L E N D A R

 **January 19-25**
ALA Midwinter Meeting
San Antonio

 **April**
School Library Media Month

 **April 14-20**
National Library Week

 **April 16**
Log on @ the Library Day

 **July 4-10**
ALA Annual Conference
New York

 **September**
Library Card Sign-Up Month

 **September 28-October 5**
Banned Books Week

FEATURE

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During our actual training period—as we bounced around the room with our handy set of colored markers, “carousel” brainstorming our ideas, or as we played the young adult version of Family Feud, or as we explored the parallel universes of common stereotypes librarians have about teenagers and those teenagers have about librarians (all in our mutual quest to learn the best practical, hands-on tools and exercises to communicate our own joy in this work)—we did what I believe young adult librarians do best, and most of all, we laughed. We laughed long, we laughed loud, and we laughed A LOT, because we know, and those who come to our workshops learn, that a healthy sense of humor will get you through almost any situation that comes up with young adult patrons.

Now, when I offer workshops—and I am always so inspired by the numbers of people who come, who have been waiting for a program like this (sometimes for years), and who sometimes drive HUNDREDS of miles to get this information—I, like Mary Poppins, pull out my wonderful bag of delights containing the creative exercises and games of discovery I’ve learned (the kind that create ENDURING memories), and I get to hear roomfuls of laughter in response. At a time when we are only a few years into what will ultimately become the largest demographic pool of young adults in recorded U.S. census history—and therefore ultimately the largest pool of new tax-paying ADULTS in the decades following—we have the opportunity before us to impact these lives more profoundly than ever before. If it is true—as some models suggest—that each individual is a point of communication for at least six other people, then by using our skills as trainers to demystify and defuse the common misperceptions about the nature of our work, we are—one person at a time—ultimately transforming the nature of young adult service for generations to come.

For more information about how to schedule a YALSA trainer for your library, contact YALSA at 800-545-2433, ext. 4390; e-mail: YALSA@ala.org.