

Helping Libraries Meet the Needs of Diverse Teens 2013 - 2014 Final Report



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I. About the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is a national association of over 5,200 librarians, library workers and advocates whose mission is to expand and strengthen library services for teens and young adults. Through its member-driven advocacy, research, and professional development initiatives, YALSA builds the capacity of libraries and librarians to engage, serve, and empower teens and young adults. YALSA is a subspecialty of the American Library Association (ALA), a 501c3 organization that is the world's largest and oldest library organization.

II. Infographic/Overview

2014 Dollar General Literacy Foundation Grants

50 Grants

The grants helped
50 libraries
in
25 states



- Summer Reading Resources Grants - 20
- Summer Teen Intern Grants - 20
- Teen Read Week Grants - 10

Summer Reading Resources

Of the 65 applicants, 20 were chosen



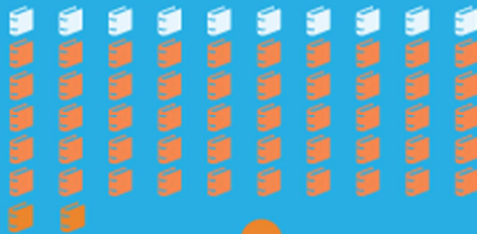
115 summer reading programs and activities funded

2,800 teen participants

1,000+ books and other reading materials purchased

Teen Read Week

Of the 62 applicants, 10 were chosen



545 teens participated in

52 Teen Read Week programs

Summer Teen Intern

Of the 89 applicants, 20 were chosen



100+ teens worked

4,100+ hours



III. Summary

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, only 34% of the nation's 8th graders are proficient in reading (compared to 29% in 2005); in addition, today's generation of teens is the most ethnically diverse ever. With the support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, YALSA provided needy libraries with mini grants to purchase up-to-date, age appropriate materials published in the community's predominant language and to provide programs and services to teens. YALSA capitalized on three well established initiatives, Teen Read Week™, summer reading and learning programs, and the Teens' Top Ten to implement the mini-grant program.

Summer Reading Resources mini-grants

Beginning in early 2014, YALSA opened up a round of applications for libraries to apply for one of 20 summer reading resources mini grants, worth \$1,000 each. A task force comprised of YALSA members with experience in planning and delivering summer reading programs vetted 65 applications and chose the 20 winners.

These twenty mini grants supported over 115 summer reading programs and activities for more than 2,800 teens. Altogether, over 1,000 books and other reading materials were purchased with the grant funds to help supplement libraries' summer reading programs.

Teen Intern Program mini-grants

Also in early 2014, YALSA opened up a round of applications for libraries to apply for one of 20 teen intern program mini grants, worth \$1,000 each, that librarians could use for the implementation of summer reading/learning programs while also providing teens a chance to build hand-on job skills. The teen interns would be employed to help the library implement its summer reading/learning program. A task force comprised of YALSA members with experience in planning and delivering summer reading programs vetted 89 applications and chose the 20 winners.

Over 100 teens worked over 4,100 hours in their local libraries' teen intern program, providing support to libraries' summer reading/learning programs during their busiest time of the year. The ability for libraries to provide employment to teens, when employment for this age group is at historic lows, made a huge impact in their communities and to the teen interns as it allowed them to develop real life interview and job experience.

All summer reading resources and teen intern grantees received training via a conference call and a webinar, and throughout the summer interacted with YALSA staff and each other via email and an interactive online space on YALSA's [Summer Reading & Learning social network](#). At the end of the summer, grantees submitted a final report that asked them to reflect on the successes and challenges they met while implementing their respective summer reading and teen intern programs.

Teen Read Week mini-grants

In the spring of 2014 YALSA also opened up a round of applications for libraries to apply for one of 10 Teen Read Week mini grants, worth \$1,000 each. A task force comprised of YALSA

members with experience in planning and delivering Teen Read Week programs vetted 62 applications and chose the 10 winners. Grantees received training via a conference call and a webinar, and interacted with YALSA staff and each other via an interactive online space on YALSA's [Teen Read Week™ social network](#).

Altogether, over 545 teens participated in over 52 Teen Read Week grant funded programs at the ten grantee libraries located across the nation.

Through the summer reading/learning resources and Teen Read Week mini-grants, YALSA was able to give 30 libraries in need the chance to purchase literacy related resources and implement programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of their community's teens. These programs in turn helped make strides toward ensuring the teens develop key literacy skills and the opportunity to take advantage of the many resources libraries offer for personal and educational use. The expected outcome of this program was that more teens in the communities of participating libraries, especially those from diverse backgrounds, would have access to appropriate resources and visit their libraries regularly to borrow reading materials and expose themselves to the other many services the library has to offer.

Teen Book Finder App

In August of 2014, the highly anticipated Android version of the Teen Book Finder app was officially released. Since its release, it has received over 2,000 downloads.

Since its introduction in 2012, the iOS version of the app has received over 38,000 downloads. The app is currently being prepared to be updated with the 2015 titles of recommended reading.

Training for Library Staff

In June 2014, YALSA held a free pre-conference at the ALA's Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, titled, *21st Century Teens: Literacy in a Digital World*. Over 75 attendees participated in the pre-conference, which addressed literacies through an examination of resources such as the Common Core standards and their implication for the work of librarians and library workers serving teens as well as the multiple aspects of the teen digital experience. Using expert speakers, popular authors (Graham Salisbury), and interaction with other participants, attendees explored a range of topics, including: new methods of collaboration with schools, after school groups and other educational organizations; how to engage reluctant readers and improve service delivery to under-served populations; the impact of content creation, privacy, cyberbullying, and digital relationships will be considered in terms of library services. Relevant YA literature was also used as a prompt for discussion.

Through participation in the pre-conference, participants were able to benefit from the following learning outcomes:

- Build a deeper understanding of the multiple types of teen literacies and their application in a library setting
- Discover new ways to promote reading for pleasure among teen populations
- Identify new and practical approaches to engaging readers across the spectrum of interest and ability

- Develop a deeper understanding of the teen experience, especially with regard to digital identity and communication
- Gain a deeper understanding of philosophies relating to, and be able to create policies to promote, productive and responsible online behavior and content creation
- Build confidence in managing digital relationships with teens

IV. Results and Impact

Goals & Accomplishments:

Goal #1: Increase the ability of needy libraries to identify and provide age and language appropriate reading materials to the teens in their communities.

- Over 2,800 teens at 20 separate locations visited their library and read books and other materials as part of the grant-funded summer reading programs
- Over 1,000 new books and other reading materials were purchased with the grant funds to help supplement libraries' summer reading programs.
- The Teen Book Finder app was updated with the 2014 titles of recommended reading and the android version of the app was released in August of 2014.

Goal #2: Help ensure libraries have enough staff to provide needed services to children and teens during their busy summer reading/learning programs while providing select neighborhood teens with an opportunity to develop interview and job skills.

- Awarded 20 grants for teen summer interns (out of 89 applicants)
- Over 100 teens worked over 4,100 hours at their respective libraries and developed real-life interview and job experience
- Directly trained 20 library staff on best practices in working with teen interns

Goal #3 Provide reading resources to teens, parents, librarians and educators

Resources were disseminated to attendees at the following conferences via booths in the exhibit halls:

- Beyond School Hours Conference, Feb. 12 - 15, 2014 in Atlanta, GA
- National Afterschool Association Convention, Feb. 28 - March 3, 2014 in New York City
- Texas Library Association Conference, April 8 - 11, 2014 in San Antonio, TX
- Missouri Association of School Librarians Conference, April 13 - 15, 2014 in St. Louis, MO
- Oregon Library Association Conference, April 16 - 18, 2014, Salem, OR
- SELA / Georgia Council of Media Organizations conference, Oct. 1-3, 2014 in Augusta, GA
- Washington Library Media Association conference, Oct. 3 - 4, 2014 in Yakima, WA
- Iowa Library Association conference, Oct. 15 - 17, 2014 in Cedar Rapids, IA
- New England Library Association conference, Oct. 19 - 21, 2014 in Boxborough, MA
- California Library Association conference, Nov. 7 - 9, 2014 in Oakland, CA

Resources distributed included lists of recommended reading, information about Teen Read Week and summer reading programs and demos of the Teen Book Finder app were also given.

Method

YALSA utilized its existing communication channels, including its web site, blog, email listservs, Twitter feed, and Facebook page to promote the mini grant opportunities. Press releases about the funding opportunities were distributed widely to the library community through ALA's Public Information Office. Fliers promoting the mini grants as well as resources, including demos of the Teen Book Finder app, were disseminated to attendees at the various conferences.

Grant applications were forwarded to specially appointed YALSA member taskforces, who vetted the applications and chose the winners based on an established set of criteria. All grantees went through two initial training sessions: one via conference call and another via webinar. For the duration of the project, grantees communicated with one another and with YALSA, as well as exchanged ideas and resources, through email and a specially created online forum space.

Results/Outcomes

In a time when many library budgets have been cut, YALSA, through the support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, was able to help 50 libraries in 25 states maintain or even expand their services and resources to youth patrons. YALSA members expressed repeatedly that they appreciated the opportunity to apply for the mini-grants, and those who received the grants commented that the reading and literacy activities they carried out with the teens would not have been possible otherwise. The \$1,000 grants were significant enough to have a sizable impact on the libraries that received them. The mini grants expanded the libraries' capacity so that they could reach more of the community than they had previously.

Kim McCallister from the Liberty Middle School library in Ashland, VA stated that her school library's greatest success from their summer reading program was "the more than 200% increase in our attendance, and family participation reading the book. We had never had the support of a "family read" for a summer program before and I believe that by offering a full day of free events related to the book we were able to increase overall attendance."

Additionally, libraries also used the grant funds to purchase much needed reading materials for English language learners (ELL) as well as provide hands-on programs. Karen Lambert of the Schlow Centre Region Library in State College, PA used her grant funds to purchase reading materials for her teen ELL patrons. She found her efforts successful as a parent of an ELL teen patron stated that "My daughter can't get enough of them. They are awesome."

Other successful outcomes were also reported by other grantees:

- Jannette LaRoche from the Moline (IL) Public Library stated that their overall goal was "met in that recent immigrants or ELL students became more frequent users of the library. This was observed through an increase in library card holders in this population, attendance at teen programs during the summer, and overall use of the library's resources."
- Cindy Shutts from the White Oak Library District in Romeoville, IL also extremely pleased with the outcome of their summer reading program, stating that they had "a record of 326 teens in the summer reading program at the Romeoville Branch. We had 197 teens attending our 10 teen programs. Our circulation for young adult fiction for June

was 1,003 and our July young action fiction circulation 920. Our joint teen/adult graphic novel circulation for June was 692 and circulation for July was 652.”

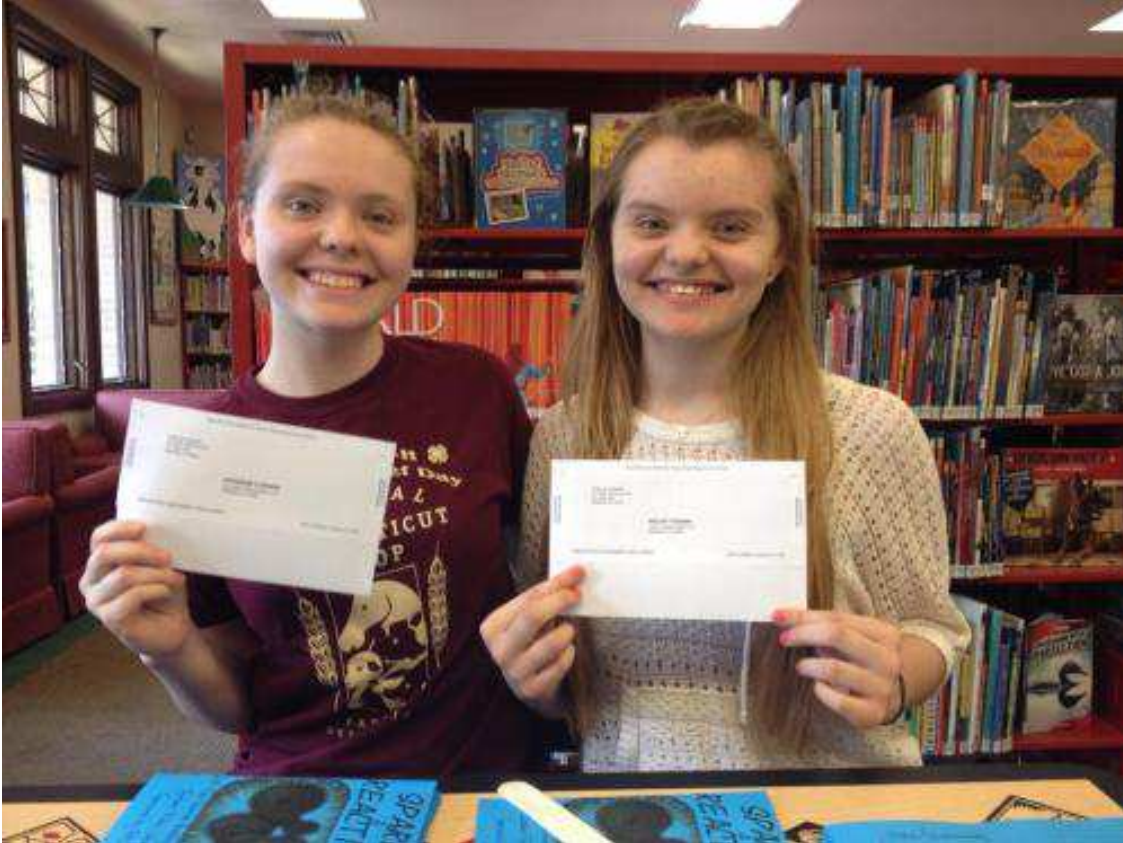
Teen Summer Intern Program

The teen summer intern program succeeded in helping libraries provide better and expanded service to the youth and their families in their community by expanding their staff’s capacity, as well as allowed teens to develop professional skills. Patricia VanArsdale from the Hussey-Mayfield Memorial Public Library in Zionsville, IN, stated that she felt the greatest accomplishment of the teen intern program was “the confidence instilled in the participants. These teens far exceeded my expectations with their customer service skills as well as their ability to write and create highly detailed instructions for their peers.”

Angela Pilkington. Burlington (IA) Public Library also saw great success from their intern program. She stated that her interns “energized the staff with their great ideas for programs and their abilities to jump right in and take the initiative to implement their ideas”

Other successful outcomes were also reported by other grantees:

- Amanda Barnhart from the Kansas City Public Library Trails West Branch in Independence, MO stated that their greatest success was that the teen interns were able to develop their leadership skills, as well as learned how to work and collaborate with others. Furthermore, Barnhart stated that the teen interns “also became more outspoken and involved in the teen advisory group and are now core members who are planning our next big event.”
- Silence Bourn from the Seminole County Public Library shared that her intern had a great experience and enjoyed it so much that she even created a [video \(http://ow.ly/LydGw\)](http://ow.ly/LydGw) to talk about her experience.
- Karyn Gardiner from the Durham (Conn.) Public Library stated that she saw extremely positive outcomes from the intern program. Gardiner said, “The biggest success of our Summer Internship program was witnessing the growth of our teen interns. Both began the program with some amount of nerves, but throughout the summer developed confidence and know-how, and demonstrated hardworking and service-oriented values.”



Karyn Gardiner's two interns, Fallon and Catherine Dignan holding up their very first check

Through the aforementioned initiatives, YALSA was able to position itself as being receptive to libraries who've voiced their need of financial aid during a time of economic difficulty. In turn, YALSA also experienced financial repercussions as its revenue is in large part generated from the library community. With the grant funds provided by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, YALSA was able to offer mini-grants to libraries in need to help fund their literacy based programs for teens; a feat that would not have been possible otherwise.

Selected Media Coverage:

- [YALSA awards 20 libraries 2014 Teen Intern Grant](#)
- [YALSA awards 20 libraries with 2014 Summer Reading Resources Grant](#)
- [Schlow Library receives grant for summer reading program](#)
- [Romeoville Library Receives Summer Reading Grant](#)
- [Our Little Library Gains National Attention](#)
- [Teen Summer Internships Available at the Library](#)
- [2014 Teen Read Week™ grant recipients announced](#)
- [Johnsburg library receives grant for Teen Read Week programs](#)

V. Lessons Learned

- **For YALSA:**
 - **Training:**

- The online community on the respective initiative’s social network was shown to be efficient means for YALSA to communicate with grantees. Compared to the ALA Connect space that was used before, the discussion forums on the social networks were easy to use and access.
 - The summer reading program grantees indicated that supplemental resources to aid them in successfully carrying out and promoting their programs would be helpful. As a result, more ready-to-use promotional materials such as [fliers and sample press releases](#) (<http://summerreading.ning.com/page/marketing-promotion>) were created.
 - The teen intern grantees indicated they needed assistance and resources with the details and logistics of how to carry out the interview and hiring process, how to successfully work with teens on a daily basis, and basic tips and advice on what to expect from teens when it comes to work ethic and behavior. A [toolkit](#) (<http://ow.ly/LyhCY>) featuring tips, advice, and sample materials such as interview forms and questions, from past teen intern grantees was created to help future grantees in the teen intern program process.
- **For Grantees:**
 - Several teen intern program grantees reported that the teen interns found the experience to be extremely rewarding since they were able to develop interview and professional skills that would help them in the future. Grantees also reported that they were glad they received funding for the program because they were able to see the teens grow and develop in their leadership and teamwork skills. In order to help more libraries be better positioned to offer career readiness services and resources to the teens in their community, YALSA compiled and shared out resources: http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/College_%26_Career_Readiness
 - Many grantees reported that they would not have been able to offer as many elaborate and diverse programs, or even have a summer reading program/teen intern program at all if it weren’t for the grant funds.

VI. Financial Statement

Activity	Description	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
10 mini grants for Teen Read Week	At \$1,000 each	\$10,000	\$10,000
20 mini grants for summer reading programs	At \$1,000 each	\$20,000	\$20,000
Training and stipends for libraries to hire teen interns to help with summer reading programs	Grants to 20 libraries at \$1,000 each, plus \$5,000 for training & training coordinator	\$21,000	\$20,748.33
Mobile Android application expansion	Develop the Teen Book Finder app for android devices	\$20,000	\$20,399

Update iOS mobile app with 2014 titles & bug fixes	The app was updated with the 2014 titles of recommended reading Fixed bug and technical issues for iOS app	\$1,000	\$2,688
Full day institute on libraries' role in building teen literacy skills (to be held in conjunction w/ ALA's conference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speakers • A/V • develop training materials & print resource kits for 50 attendees (then posted online for all to access) 	\$10,000	\$5,856.01
Media Outreach and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement of print public service announcements in library and literacy focused publications • Attendance at targeted conferences, such as TLA, to promote summer reading opportunities 	\$12,230	\$14,538.66
Grant Management	Oversight of all aspects of grant implementation	\$13,777	\$13,777
Administrative costs	Staff time for formatting materials, processing applications, creating virtual work spaces, implementing virtual trainings, etc.	\$29,767	\$29,767
TOTAL:		\$137,774	\$137,774

VII. Sustainability Plans

- **Resources:** many of the resources created during this project will live on and have already been made available to the library community and/or public, including:
 - Webinars
 - iPhone/android app
 - Downloadable pamphlet of recommended reading
 - Downloadable 2014 Teen Intern toolkit
 - Downloadable marketing/publicity materials such as fliers, sample press releases, presentations, etc.
- **Funding:** to further the program and YALSA's reach, there are options to explore for obtaining funds to support this effort, including:
 - Seeking foundation support
 - Seeking corporate support
 - Setting aside a portion of existing YALSA funds, such as interest from the William C. Morris Endowment, to help fund the effort

