

COMPETENCY AREA III

Communication, Marketing, and Outreach

THE LIBRARIAN will be able to:

1. Form appropriate professional relationships with young adults, providing them with the assets, inputs, and resiliency factors that they need to develop into caring, competent adults.
2. Develop relationships and partnerships with young adults, administrators, and other youth-serving professionals in the community by establishing regular communication and by taking advantage of opportunities to meet in person.
3. Be an advocate for young adults and effectively promote the role of the library in serving young adults, demonstrating that the provision of services to this group can help young adults build assets, achieve success, and, in turn, create a stronger community.
4. Design, implement, and evaluate a strategic marketing plan for promoting young adult services in the library, schools, youth-serving agencies, and the community at large.

5. Demonstrate the capacity to articulate relationships between young adult services and the parent institution's core goals and mission.
6. Establish an environment in the library wherein all staff serve young adults with courtesy and respect, and all staff are encouraged to promote programs and services for young adults.
7. Identify young adult interests and groups underserved or not yet served by the library, including at-risk teens, those with disabilities, non-English speakers, etc., as well as those with special or niche interests.
8. Promote young adult library services directly to young adults through school visits, library tours, etc., and through engaging their parents, educators, and other youth-serving community partners.

In chapter 2, we looked at the developmental needs of teens. By forming appropriate relationships with young adults, the YA librarian can provide them with some of the factors they need to develop into caring, competent adults. Review the forty Developmental Assets for Adolescents, focusing on the first twenty. Many of the support factors involve the teen's parents, but teens also need support from nonparent adults. The library can take a large part in empowerment, showing the teen that adults in the community (e.g., the YA librarian) value youth participation in the library and the community. The library may be a place where the teen can volunteer time to assist in a wide variety of programs and projects. Likewise, the librarian can model appropriate behavior for the teen.

As a young adult librarian, it is easy to focus only on the teens. After all, they are in front of you every day, with their needs, their wants, and their demands for attention. And teens are important, of course. But in order to serve teens really well, it is critical to build and maintain relationships with a variety of other groups, including other library or school staff, your supervisors, your community's leaders, and other youth-serving professionals in your area.

Start with your library, and your supervisor. Even if—especially if—your supervisor gives you a completely free hand with what you do in the YA department, be sure you keep him or her in the loop. Suggest regular meetings, if they don't already exist, and make sure your supervisor knows about your upcoming plans for programs, services, and collections. The children's department should also be kept apprised of what is going on in the teen area. In many libraries, there is overlap at the middle school age range ('tweens)

Project Payoff

When teens have fines on their accounts that prohibit them from using the library resources, we work with them to help them reduce those fines while they utilize the library. "Project Payoff" is a program that allows teens to reduce their fines by five dollars for every one hour that they read at the library or attend a program at the library. We understand that teens often accumulate fines on their accounts before they understand the way a library works, and often they note that their parents or siblings actually took out materials using their cards and that was the cause of the fines. When we talk to teens about "Project Payoff" we have the opportunity to educate them about library fines and how to avoid fines on their accounts. Teens are always glad when we tell them about the program because during the three-month period that they are in the "Project Payoff" program, they are able to check out a limited number of materials and use library computers. For example, recently a teen told me she couldn't use the computer because of fines. I told her about the program we have that will enable her to read down her fines. She was impressed and thought it was really "cool." "Project Payoff" allows us to help teens remain active, lifelong library patrons.

Michele Gorman
Teen Services Coordinator
Charlotte Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Library

between children's and YA. If there is a children's librarian who may be planning programs or services for middle schoolers, the two of you need to be talking.

Identify key staff members who are teen advocates. Is your director or assistant director a former YA librarian? Does your branch manager have teenage children? These people might be your supporters when you want to propose a new program or service. Don't forget about support staff. A circulation clerk with an interest in teens can be a great ally in getting the message across to other clerks. Pages, especially ones who are in high school and college, can be great sources of information about the community and what resources it already offers for teens. Make it your business to talk to all of these people and let them know what you are planning.

Provide library staff with the tools they need to promote programs and services for young adults. They may well be able to help you in some way

Creating a Safe and Inviting Space for Teens in Our Community

We understand that some of the teens who hang out at the Loft at ImaginOn may not always have an inviting place to go after school where they can feel safe. We strive to create that place for them here by asking all teens to adhere to three simple rules: “Respect Yourself, Respect Others, Respect the Space.” Below are two examples of the feedback we received from teens who enjoy the space. Upon seeing a teen who had not been to the Loft in a week, a Loft staff member said, “Where have you been, man?” in a friendly way. The teen said that he was sorry that he hadn’t shown up, and somewhere in the conversation he mentioned that ImaginOn was his second home and the staff here are his second family. Another time, a teen wrote a G.E.M. (an acknowledgment that a staff member has “Gone the Extra Mile” for a patron) for the staff of the Loft to say how grateful he is that the staff are always around to help him with library-related issues, as well as to talk to him about everyday issues in his life, such as his arguments with his mother.

Michele Gorman
Teen Services Coordinator
Charlotte Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Library

you haven’t even thought of. Circulation desk staff should have fliers and handouts about teen programs that they can share with teens and parents who are checking out materials. The more you work with staff and help them see how the YA program fits into the bigger picture of the library’s mission, the more helpful they will be. Acknowledge and thank staff when you see them interacting in positive ways with teens. Talk to your supervisor or director and find out if you can be part of the formal training or orientation program for all new staff members. This will give you an opportunity to share with new staff your vision of YA services and convey the message that teens deserve the same level of courtesy and respect that all other patrons do.

Next, think about the community at large. Start by making a list of teen-serving agencies and organizations in your community—schools, parks and recreation, YMCA, youth centers, Scouts. Find out actual names and contact information. Even if you do nothing about this right away, these names may come in handy in the future. Find out what kinds of programs for youth are offered in your community. Is there a citywide youth advisory board? Does the recreation center or YMCA have special programs for teens? Look for ways

The biggest partnership/collaboration project I do is TBF Live: The Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival, which I founded in 2006. Three counties, two library systems, and school and public librarians working together . . . and now we are hosted in a local college and supported by their education department. We have also begun to offer space at the festival for other teen-focused organizations, with this coming year featuring Melissa’s Living Legacy and their new Center for Teens Coping with Cancer.

Stephanie A. Squicciarini, MLS
Teen/Young Adult Services Librarian
Fairport (New York) Public Library

to integrate these programs with library services. Attend community meetings for organizations serving teens and brainstorm possible collaborations. Keep the developmental assets in mind when coming up with ideas. The Chapin Hall discussion paper *New on the Shelf: Teens in the Library* points out that “the language of youth development helps to connect public libraries to a larger network of youth organizations and policy discussions.”¹

Know who your local elected and appointed officials and staff are (mayor, city manager, city council, county board of supervisors, school board, etc.). Find out if any of them have teenagers at home. This can sometimes be a toe in the door for you to connect with them. Offer to meet with city staff and elected officials, either individually or at a formal meeting. Come prepared with a brief (one- or two-minute) speech about what is going on in teen services, and bring handouts. Most public bodies (city councils, school boards, library boards, etc.) begin their meetings with a time for public comment. Usually remarks in this time period are limited to three minutes. That can be a good time to get a brief message out to the community about what you are doing with and for teens in the library. Don’t use this time to ask for anything, just give a positive, upbeat message. If you do this a few times a year, it will put the idea of your program into their minds, which can be useful when it is time for budget allocations. When you do have something specific to ask for, whether it is a proclamation for Teen Read Week or a budget allocation, they will already be familiar with you and your program. As always, be sure your supervisor and your director are in the loop; they may have political reasons for you to wait a week or a month.

Proclamations and news releases are good ways to get positive information about teens and libraries out to the public and your local elected officials. YALSA provides valuable publicity tools such as sample proclamations, news releases, letters to the editor, and public service announcements for its

programs and initiatives, like the Youth Media Awards, Teen Read Week™, and Teen Tech Week™. These events, as well as others like the announcement of YALSA's book and media awards every January, the Teens' Top Ten in October, and Summer Reading Program in June or July, can be great opportunities for you to share positive information with your community about teens and how they use the library. When you have developed contacts both in and outside of the library, you can use them to add punch to your news releases: quoting the mayor in your news release may encourage the local newspaper to pick up the story.

If you have an opportunity to make a formal presentation to a library board, a city council, or a school board, concentrate on being concise and positive, and focus on how your programs achieve the goals that you and the library have set. Before you even begin planning your presentation, review your YA strategic plan, the parent institution's strategic plan, and the goals and objectives of the department, the library, and, if possible, the larger community (city, county, school district). Show how your programs and services align with the library's goals as well as how they move forward the goals of the community. (See chapter 4 for more information on strategic plans.)

Meet with school leaders (principals, librarians, school boards). Discuss how you and they can work together to achieve your goals. The YALSA Professional Development Center includes information on school-library partnerships online at www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/profdev/schoolpublic.htm. These are actual programs that real school and public libraries are cooperating on, complete with contact information to find out more details.

One key to communicating with a wide range of people in the community is to have a clear idea of what it is you do and what you are trying to achieve. Come up with a series of "elevator speeches." These are brief (thirty seconds or so) statements about what you do and why it matters. It's the sort of thing you could say if you met a mover and shaker in an elevator and only had the time of the elevator ride to get your point across. You can make up elevator speeches about any aspect of teen services, but it is always useful to be clear about how teen services mesh with the goals and mission of the library and the community. Tell a story that shows something positive about the teenagers in your library. Here is an example:

My passion is working with teenagers to help them become caring, responsible adults. We do that here at the library not just by having activities for teens, but by getting teens involved in the planning process. We've got a great group of teens who are really becoming leaders. Have you seen the YouTube video they made to promote the library? When I look

I often advocate for teen involvement in the library and community by partnering with other local governmental and nonprofit organizations. This both supports teen involvement in the broader community and helps make the library visible as a space that seeks and welcomes teen involvement. Both the city of Portland, Oregon, and Multnomah County are models for effective, progressive youth involvement. The City/County Youth Engagement Team has representation from the joint City/County policy advisory body, the Multnomah Youth Commission, the Youth Planner Program in the City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Multnomah County's School-Based Health Center program, the City of Portland Parks and Recreation, and Multnomah County Libraries Teen Programs. Our work is guided by "Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth," the nation's first Bill of Rights written by and for young people and adopted by a local government. (Visit <http://bit.ly/7BOjsb> for background on the bill of rights.)

As a concrete example of how this partnering works, this week I'm serving on a hiring panel for the position of Youth Development Coordinator, the county staff member whose role is to advise (but not direct!) the Youth Commission in their work. The panel includes youth commissioners as well as adults from other city and county departments that support strong youth involvement. The youth commissioners are taking the lead in interviewing the candidates, and it's inspiring to see the passion, intelligence, and commitment the youth commissioners are bringing to the task.

Sara Ryan
Teen Services Specialist
Multnomah County Library, Portland, Oregon, and board of directors, YALSA

Advocating for teens can take many different forms. In chapter 1, we discussed ways to ensure that teens have their fair share of the budget. In chapter 4, we will look at how library policies and procedures can support young adults. In considering taking your message about teen services to the public, look at some of the resources that YALSA offers for advocacy. A good place to start is "Speaking Up for Library Services to Teens: A Guide to Advocacy" (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/advocacy_final.pdf). It contains tips on how to start advocating, and tools to make it easier. It includes information on marketing and media relations, and detailed information on legislative advocacy. The tools will help you prepare an action plan and create a message. Explore these resources and determine what you can do in the next month, six months, year, or two years. YALSA's wiki has many more resources for advocacy, including the "YA Advocacy Action Plan Workbook," to help you get started advocating for teens in libraries.²

Again, don't forget to involve teens in your advocacy messages. They can be some of your most potent resources. An example of this is Oakland (California) Public Library's Youth Leadership Council. The YLC is comprised of "active teens (thirteen through nineteen) determined to improve the libraries of Oakland." What they do is "gain communication skills, public speaking skills, self-confidence, leadership experience, ins and outs of event planning and friends! Directly interact with high level community leaders and participate in local and national functions."³ At the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim in 2008, the teens appeared on a panel and shared how they had gone to Sacramento to participate in Library Legislative Day and met with state senators and assembly members to advocate for libraries. (See boxed text, page 35.) They have also presented issues and concerns to the city's library board and represented the library at community events.

Consider creating a YA e-mail newsletter or blog to share information. You could include information on upcoming programs, reviews of new books, information about volunteer opportunities, and so on. If you push it out as an e-mail newsletter, be sure to include teens, parents, library staff, and your community partners. If you create a blog, send out occasional e-mail teasers to draw people to the site. Twitter and Facebook are other good ways to let people know when you are updating.

Explore social networking sites as a means of outreach to teens, including those who are not current library users. Look at YALSA's "Teens and Social Networking in School and Public Libraries Toolkit" for some ideas; it contains examples of thirty positive uses of social networking.⁴ Find out what other libraries are doing with Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, among other sites, and make a plan for how you can use these tools to communicate with your teens, with their parents, and with the community at large.

There are many unserved and underserved groups of teens in your community. At-risk teens, foster teens, teens with disabilities, teens in juvenile detention facilities, and non-English speakers are some of these. Look at your community and identify some of these groups, and then brainstorm what you might do to provide them with library services. You may not be able to accomplish everything, but you may find that there are ways to improve service that fit into your library's plan and budget.

Communication and outreach are critical to your success in serving teens. The relationships you build with teens, with library staff members, and with the community will make your program stronger and help you build your case for improved funding and more services. Promoting the role of the library in the lives of teens and the role of teens in the life of the library and the community will help make your program an integral part of the community,

Fostering Youth Advocacy: How Libraries Can Help

As future-driven librarians it is our responsibility to build positive, life-enriching practices that better serve our youth populations. Within ten years, these marvelous teens here in front of us will be our doctors, our lawyers, and our library stakeholders. Acting as guides and mentors, it is imperative that librarians and educators empower and engage our youth to be well-informed, self-determined citizens through providing them with a platform and a voice. That is the purpose of starting a youth leadership council at your library. I am proud to say that Oakland Public Library was in the forefront of prioritizing the need to partner with teens while engaging them in civic responsibility. Within the scope of mentor, educator, and youth advocate, teen librarians can arm our youth with the skill-set they require to participate fully, articulately, and intelligently in their government at the local, state, and national level so as to ensure the satisfaction of their and our needs within a healthy society. Starting at the library level teens can be on the library board, they can advocate and educate around library bond measures, and they can act as ambassadors for the library. Oakland's teens have provided input on facility master plans, they have attended and spoken at city council meetings, they annually attend Library Legislation Day at the state capitol where they speak with state representatives and the State Librarian.

I learned when I started a group at my prior job in North Carolina that teens are very eager to get involved and have a chance to speak up. It's easy to start your own group. Just invite some kids, bring the pizza, present a few guidelines, and step out of their way. The teens will shine.

Jodi Mitchell
Teen Outreach Librarian and YLC Coordinator
Oakland (California) Public Library

will help teens grow into successful adults, and will help your community grow stronger.

SUGGESTED READING

ALA Advocacy Resource Center. www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy.
ALA Legislative Action Center. <http://capwiz.com/ala/home>.
ALA Office for Library Advocacy. www.ala.org/ola.

- Braun, Linda W. "I Wish I'd Said." www.voya.com/2010/03/30/tag-team-tech/#section17.
- Brehm-Heeger, Paula. "Better Late Than Never." *School Library Journal* 53, no. 2:30.
- Brehm-Heeger, Paula. "What's Going On?" *School Library Journal* 54, no. 2:27.
- Gilman, Isaac. "Beyond Books: Restorative Librarianship in Juvenile Detention Centers." *Public Libraries* 47, no. 1:59–66.
- Ratledge, Alyssa. "One Teen among Adults on the Library Board." *Voice of Youth Advocates* 30, no. 4:313.
- Rockefeller, Elsworth. "Striving to Serve Diverse Youth: Mainstreaming Teens with Special Needs through Public Library Programming." *Public Libraries* 47, no. 1:50–55.
- Spielberger, Julie, Carol Horton, Lisa Michels, and Robert Halpern. *New on the Shelf: Teens in the Library—Findings from the Evaluation of Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development*. www.chapinhall.org/research/report/new-shelf.
- Suellentrop, Tricia. "Letting Go." *School Library Journal* 52 no. 5:39.
- Suellentrop, Tricia. "Moving on Up." *School Library Journal* 53 no. 4:32.
- Suellentrop, Tricia. "The Party Poopers." *School Library Journal* 54 no. 12:23.
- Tuccillo, Diane P. "Standing Room Only: Want to Get Teens Excited about the Library? Just Surrender Some Control." *School Library Journal* 53, no. 3:46.
- Valenza, Joyce. "High School Seniors and Social Networking." www.voya.com/2010/03/30/tag-team-tech/#section8.
- Wendt, Ma'Lis, and Ian Rosenoir. "YALSA @ Your Library®." *Young Adult Library Services* 6, no. 3:10–12.
- YALSA. "Advocacy Toolkit." http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Advocating_for_Teen_Services_in_Libraries.
- YALSA. "A Legislative Advocacy Guide for Members." www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/profdev/LegAdvocacyGuide.pdf.
- YALSA. "Speaking Up for Library Services to Teens." www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/advocacy_final.pdf.
- YALSA. "Teens and Social Networking in School and Public Libraries." www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/profdev/socialnetworkingtool.pdf.

NOTES

1. Julie Spielberger, Carol Horton, Lisa Michels, and Robert Halpern, *New on the Shelf: Teens in the Library—Findings from the Evaluation of Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development*. www.chapinhall.org/research/report/new-shelf:7.
2. YALSA, "The YA Advocacy Action Plan Workbook." <http://yalsa.ala.org/presentations/AdvocacyWorkbook.pdf>; YALSA, "Advocating for Teen Services in Libraries." http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Advocating_for_Teen_Services_in_Libraries.
3. Oakland Public Library, "Youth Leadership Council." www.oaklandlibrary.org/links/teens/ylc.html.
4. YALSA. "Teens and Social Networking in School and Public Libraries." www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/profdev/socialnetworkingtool.pdf.

COMPETENCY AREA IV

Administration

THE LIBRARIAN will be able to:

1. Develop a strategic plan for library service with young adults based on their unique needs.
 - a. Design and conduct a community analysis and needs assessment.
 - b. Apply research findings toward the development and improvement of young adult library services.
 - c. Design activities to involve young adults in planning and decision making.
2. Develop, justify, administer, and evaluate a budget for young adult services.
3. Develop physical facilities dedicated to the achievement of young adult service goals.
4. Develop written policies that mandate the rights of young adults to equitable library service.