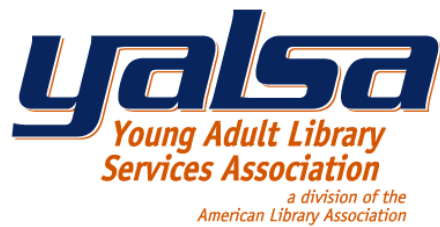


# **Helping Libraries Meet the Needs of Diverse Teens 2012 – 2013 Final Report**





**Table of Contents**

- I. About YALSA.....2**
- II. Summary.....2**
- III. Results and Impact.....4**
- IV. Lessons Learned.....7**
- V. Financial Statement.....8**
- VI. Sustainability Plans.....9**
- VII. Infographic: Mini Grants Overview.....10**

## **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. Summary**

Multiple studies show that teens are reading less often and fewer of them are obtaining critical literacy skills; 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 (<http://summerreading.ning.com>)**

#### ***Resources mini-grants***

Beginning in early 2013, 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 27 applications and chose the 20 winners.

For the summer reading resources grant, over 175 summer reading programs and activities were funded by the grant funds and over 5,500 teens participated in these programs and activities. Altogether, over 780 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 2013, 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 program. A task force comprised of YALSA members with experience in planning and delivering summer reading programs vetted 29 applications and chose the 20 winners.

71 teens worked over 2,700 hours in their local libraries' teen intern program, providing support to libraries' summer reading 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 in ALA Connect. 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™ ([www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread))**

In the spring of 2013 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 16 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 in ALA Connect.

Altogether, over 1,300 teens participated in their libraries' grant funded Teen Read Week programs at ten libraries located all across the nation.

Through the summer reading 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.

### **Teens' Top Ten ([www.ala.org/yalsa/teenstopten](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/teenstopten))**

Fifty libraries across the nation were awarded a set of the Teens' Top Ten nominee titles in efforts to help the libraries provide their teen patrons with more up-to-date teen literature and to foster more interest in literacy. With the new reading materials, the libraries were able to attract and encourage new readers.

Recipients of the nominee titles also encouraged their teen patrons to read the nominees over the summer as a means of combating the 'summer slide.' At the end of the summer, teens voted for their favorites via an online Teens' Top Ten vote. [Voting](#) took place from August 15-Teen Read Week™ (October 13-19). Over 32,000 votes were cast by teens all over the world.

A free toolkit featuring lists of the Teens' Top Ten since its introduction in 2003, as well as read-a-likes was created in celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Teens' Top Ten. Physical copies, as well as a downloadable version of the toolkit was distributed and made available online, respectively.

### **Teen Book Finder App ([www.ala.org/yalsa/products/teenbookfinder](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/products/teenbookfinder))**

All of YALSA's recommended reading are put into the app, so teens, educators, library staff and others can use it to find quality reading materials as well as locate the nearest library with the book in their collection. The app averages over 200 downloads per day on the Apple platform. The app is updated yearly with the latest lists of recommended reading and book award winners.

### **III. 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 5,500 teens at 20 separate locations visited their library and read books and other materials as part of the grant-funded summer reading programs
- Over 780 new books and other reading materials were purchased with the grant funds to help supplement libraries' summer reading programs.
- The Teens' Top Ten mini-grants received an overwhelming amount of interest from libraries. Over 160 applications were submitted and altogether, 1,400 new young adult literature titles were allocated to 50 recipients.
- Began the process for updating the Teen Book Finder app with the 2013 titles of recommended reading

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

- Awarded 20 grants for teen summer interns (out of 29 applicants)
- 71 teens worked over 2,700 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:

- January 25 - 29, 2013: ALA Midwinter Meeting
- April 8 – 10, 2013: National Afterschool Association Conference
- June 28 – July 2, 2013: ALA Annual Conference
- August 7 – 9, 2013: National Conference of African American Librarians
- September 25 – 27, 2013: Virginia Library Association
- October 9 – 11, 2013: Ohio Library Council Convention

Resources included lists of recommended reading including a 2013 Teens' Top Ten toolkit, demos of the free Teen Book Finder app, information about Teen Read Week and summer reading programs and more.

#### **Method**

YALSA utilized its existing communication channels, including its web site, blogs, email listservs, Twitter feed, and Facebook page to promote the mini grant opportunities and free

resources such as the Teens' Top Ten Toolkit. 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 **46 libraries in 22 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.

#### ***Summer Reading Programs funded by the Summer Reading Resources mini-grant***

Erin Downey Howerton from the Wichita (KS) Public Library stated that their library's biggest success from their summer reading program was "definitely the increase in programming attendance. Our attendance doubled and then tripled rapidly in the first month. Due to the grant, we were able to offer a much higher caliber of programming than previously available due to limited budgets." Francine Canfield from the Baright Public Library in Ralston, NE also saw huge success in teen registrants compared to the prior year, stating that their greatest accomplishment was "the nearly 100% increase in the number of teen registrants from the prior year!"

Additionally, libraries also used the grant funds to purchase much needed reading materials as well as provide hands-on programs, such as creating book trailers. Tammy Mulhearn from the Livingston (LA) Parish Library created a program called, "Lights, Camera, Read." It provided teens with a one of a kind experience to create and film their own book trailer. Tammy stated that, "through this experience they not only practiced acting and writing, but they discovered the work that it takes to film a book trailer from beginning to end. The teens involved learned a great deal." Julia Simpson from the Auburn (GA) Public Library held a reading challenge at her library that challenged teen patrons to read 5,000 pages over the summer. The reading challenge saw a "42% completion rate and even attracted new teen patrons."

Other successful outcomes were also reported by other grantees:

- Stacy Lienemann from the Watonwan County Library in St. James, MN stated that their greatest accomplishment was being able to attract new teens into their library. With the funding from the grant, Stacy's library's programming "had great diversity and thus had a greater reach to teens with a variety of interests. It was great to see teens who I talked to

at my school visits show up at the events. I had never met these teens before but now they call me by my first name and seek me out in the library.”

- “The biggest success of the grant program was the creative writing camp. Twelve students ended up submitting a short story each, which was then printed in book format so that both they and the library could keep copies of the book. They truly felt a sense of creative ownership through this process. Also, many of the volunteer programs brought the teens and the community together, and their presence in the library was regular and lively,” stated grantee Flora Kim from the Bound Brook (NJ) Memorial Library.

### ***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. Samantha Marker from the Mount Laurel (NJ) Library noted that their teen intern “played the role of volunteer coordinator beautifully. She updated our training guides, kept track of volunteer attendance, managed weekly statistics for passive programs, re-stocked prizes and paperwork, assisted with programs for kids, and compiled our volunteer statistics at the conclusion of the program.”

Cole Zrostlik from the St. Croix Falls (WI) Public Library stated that “with the enthusiasm that the three paid interns brought to the library, many other kids became very interested in volunteering, too (an unexpected outcome). Our summer became very service-oriented, with many other kids not only using the library, but making a big difference at THEIR library. Programs were more fun, and ran more smoothly than ever. We had a lot of returning participants, and higher summer reading program numbers than ever before -- something we can definitely owe the success of to our great interns.”

There were several key unintended consequences that resulted from the teen intern grant:

- Lynette Pitrak from the Downers Grove (IL) Public Library noted that “due to the interns’ hard work at promoting the Teen Summer Reading Club program off-site at popular local hang-outs, our participation increased by almost 45%!” According to Lynette, the increase was a huge jump and completely not expected since compared to the previous years, participation had been “basically stagnant for the last four years.”
- Rachee Fagg from the Lansdowne (PA) Public Library stated that “one unexpected success was the sense of empowerment our teens had when they were leading the sessions. Having the teens run our Bookworm program allowed for a larger audience, more exposure of STEAM to our library community, and more interest in science related materials at the library. Another success was preparing teens for real-life job search, interviewing skills and actual work responsibilities.”
- Melissa Rader from the Delafield (WI) Public Library shared that one of the biggest accomplishments in her opinion was the creation of a [promotional video](#) her teen intern created for the library, titled “[Meet Your Library](#)”. It was a project that the library had wanted to start for a long time, but did not have enough time or staff to actually implement it. Melissa stated that the intern was involved in the implementation of the project from state to finish and was “so enthusiastic and willing to learn a new skill since she had never done video editing before.”



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 loss. Libraries across the nation have suffered budget cuts as a result of the economic crisis and many times, the budget for programs and activities for youth is the first to be cut or downsized. 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:**

- Dollar General Literacy Foundation awards Youth Literacy grant to ALSC, YALSA <http://bit.ly/1s30WBj>
- YPSILANTI: Library receives grant for teen summer reading program <http://bit.ly/ZyrrVI>
- Pinson library qualifies for 4 grants totaling \$13,000 <http://bit.ly/1vc8XYt>
- Author Ellen Hopkins to discuss books and writing June 24 at CMU <http://bit.ly/1rlq9mE>
- 2013 Teens' Top Ten Book Giveaway recipients announced <http://bit.ly/1vUGTFS>
- YALSA and Dollar General Literacy Foundation Award Grants to 20 Libraries <http://bit.ly/1wcZdMF> (Intern); <http://bit.ly/1rAxxLf> (Resources)
- YALSA announces 2013 Teen Read Week™ Grant recipients <http://bit.ly/1sMD5rg>

## **IV. Lessons Learned**

- **For YALSA:**
  - **Training:**
    - The online community in ALA Connect was a moderately efficient means for YALSA to communicate with grantees. Grantee feedback showed levels of dissatisfaction with the resource, so an alternative one will be found for next year.
    - The webinars have proved to be a cost effective training method. Additionally, they can be archived and accessed by anyone, extending this training opportunity beyond the grantees to the entire library community.
    - The summer reading program grantees and teen intern grantees indicated that supplemental resources to aid them in successfully carrying out and promoting their programs would be helpful. In the future, more ready-to-use promotional materials, as well as a guidance handbook for the teen intern grantees will be created for future grantees to use.
    - 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 handbook featuring tips, advice, and sample materials such as interview forms and questions, from past teen intern grantees will be created to help future grantees in the teen intern program process.
- **For Grantees:**
  - Several teen intern program grantees reported that they were extremely surprised and pleased with the amount of commitment and professionalism their teen

interns demonstrated throughout the internship program. As a result of this, the grantees delegated more tasks to the interns and entrusted them with more responsibility. The grantees' previous misconception of teens being characterized as irresponsible was nullified. It is important to note that the previous mentioned instance is based on a case by case basis, but more often than not, it was proven that teens do hold a surprising level of commitment, responsibility, and professionalism and should not be discriminated against due to stereotypes or misconceptions.

- As a result of a successful teen intern program, several grantees decided to expand the teen intern program by adapting it into a teen intern volunteer program that would be implemented throughout the school year.
- Many grantees reported that the grant funds were a significant reason behind their successful programs and activities. Many stated that the funds allowed their library to offer more diverse, elaborate programs to appeal to a wide range of teens and their interests. As a result, the programs were extremely well received by the teens and increased not only their summer reading program's attendance rate but also foot traffic into their library and new teen patrons.

## V. 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
Grant oversight	Online grant application management system	\$5,000	\$240
Mobile application update	Update app with new content	\$5,000	\$4,757
Online database of recommended reading	Adapt back end from mobile app for use on the web site. Build a user friendly interface – project deferred until following year due to budget and staff capacity issues	\$5,000	N/A
Training and stipends for libraries to hire teen interns to help with summer reading programs	Grants to 20 libraries @ \$1,000 plus \$5,000 for training and training coordinator	\$25,000	\$25,000
Summer reading challenge for teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build out Teens' Top Ten (TTT) web space w/ content aimed at teens</li> <li>• Create TTT pamphlet of recommended reading for distribution through libraries</li> </ul>	\$25,000	\$16,248

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to teen book groups at 50 libraries</li> </ul>		
Media Outreach and marketing	Placement of print public service announcements in library and literacy focused publications Attendance at targeted conferences to promote programs	\$8,175	\$8,848
Grant oversight	Staff time for formatting materials, processing applications, creating and managing virtual work spaces for grantees, interacting with trainers and developers, etc.	\$7,910	\$25,992
Administrative costs	Support to ALA for financial oversight and reporting	\$8,791	\$8,791
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$119,876</b>	<b>\$119,876</b>

## VI. Sustainability Plans

- **Resources:** many of the resources created during this project will live on and have already been made freely available to the library community and/or public, including:
  - Webinars (<http://connectpro87048468.adobeconnect.com/p9ek9vi4mnj/>)
  - iPhone app
  - Downloadable pamphlet of recommended reading
  - Downloadable 2013 Teens' Top Ten toolkit
- **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

