

**YALSA Board of Directors Midwinter 2011
Issue**

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Issue Paper on Teens & the Whole Library Draft**

negative effect on the library as they have lost the support of future tax payers Or, they may fight back in a much more obvious way by behaving badly themselves.

Adolescence is a confusing time for many teens and as a result it is also turbulent for those around them. Young adults are grown but not fully grown. Teenagers can act like adults one

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Anyone spending time in a public library will quickly see how frequently young adults use all aspects of library services. For example, teens:

- Repeatedly require assistance and support from reference staff in order to locate homework materials and materials that support personal information needs.
- Need to discuss borrowing records with circulation staff.
- Use computers and other technologies for reading, writing, communicating, collaborating, and creating and often need the support of information technology staff as they work on projects in these areas.
- Take part in events and programs sponsored by agencies with which library outreach staff collaborates.
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safe and smart when communicating and collaborating in virtual environments.

Programming for Parents Regarding Adolescence and Adolescent Trends

educating parents, teachers, and others about the role technology plays in the lives of teens. Many adults that live and work with teens do not have a firm understanding of the why and how of teen technology use, particularly use related to social media and interactive technologies (currently often referred to as web 2.0). Education by librarians on this topic helps adults better understand young adult interests and behaviors within the social media arena.

Similarly, parents are not always secure in their understanding of the changes that take place as their children move from childhood to adulthood. Parents may feel comfortable with

can help a parent with learning how to live with a teen. Adult staff may have a rapport with parents who talk with this staff about fiction and non-fiction materials checked-out of the library. Due to this rapport these staff members may prove to be the best qualified to help parents find resources that help them to understand the changes a teenage son or daughter is experiencing.

Cross Generational Mentoring Opportunities

initiatives that provide teens with opportunities to mentor children and tutor seniors play a significant role in helping young adults gain important developmental assets. The Search
-up successfully includes assets of empowerment, support, and social competencies. Programs in which teens share skills and knowledge with those younger and older are essential in helping teens to gain these assets
-term growth and development.

Future Directions

Success in the whole library approach to young adult services will occur with complete support from library administration. Administrators that move forward in this framework will:

- Model for all staff members high-quality librarian and young adult customer service interactions. Not only will these interactions serve as models for staff, they will also needs.
- Regularly provide opportunities for all library staff to take part in professional development focusing on techniques for working with adolescents. Continuing education will also be made available on topics related teen trends in areas including technology, popular culture, information, and social experiences and behaviors.
- Regularly evaluate library services looking specifically at the quality of teen services across all library departments and communicate with staff to inform them when instances of inadequate service to young adults occur. The administrator will also inform staff that such service is not acceptable in the library.

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- Hire only staff that is able to demonstrate the ability to work with young adults no matter what library department is designated as his or her main service area.
- Speak out to community and government agencies, parents, and staff on the value of young adults in the library and in the community as a whole.

Recommendations

The Young Adult Library Services Association asserts that young adult services must be integrated into public libraries as a part of a full continuum of library service. Because adolescents require library services that support unique developmental needs both at the upper and lower ends of the age spectrum, it is crucial that libraries and library staff embrace a whole library approach and integrate teen services into the entire library program including