

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Philadelphia  
January 11-16, 2008**

**Topic: Reverse Mentoring Proposal**

**Background: In late 2004 YALSA launched a one-year mentoring program through the Division and Membership Promotion Committee. When the program concluded, the Board directed the committee to conduct an evaluation of the program before moving forward with the next round. A survey of participants received few responses. In the interim, an Emerging Leader group investigated mentoring programs and produced a report. Additionally, the Research Committee was charged with researching best practices in association mentoring programs. In the spring of 2007 the YALSA Student Interest Group conducted a survey of student members and found that 64% of respondents would avail themselves of a mentoring program if YALSA offered one. At the fall meeting of the Executive Committee, the group discussed this topic and came to the consensus that a reverse mentoring program should be pursued.**

**Action Required:**

up to date on technologies and trends, the older colleagues impart critical information about the profession as well as career advice. Reverse mentoring may be an especially good fit for librarians who work with teens, as older librarians may not only learn about cutting edge technologies to integrate into their work with teens, but about new trends in popular culture that resound with teens.

**Additional Information:**

YALSA’s Original Mentoring Program Proposal:

*Revised 1/11/04*

By Dora Ho (Revised by Sarajo Wentling, Division & Membership Promotion Committee)

**BACKGROUND**

YALSA has grown substantially in its membership over the past few years. Many new members are unfamiliar with YALSA and may have unanswered questions. In addition, these new members are often library school students, librarians that have recently joined the field of Young Adult Services or are general reference librarians that are also required to serve young adults as part of their job duties. Mentors can play an important role in guiding new members in the field of librarianship that serves Young Adults and in the Young Adult Library Services Association.

**GOALS**

The goals of this Mentoring Program is to retain, increase membership and develop future leaders for YALSA and the field of Young Adult Librarianship.

**ELIGIBILITY**

- Members of YALSA
- Mentors with 3 years YALSA membership and 5 years of work experience preferred
- Librarians and professionals that serve young adults.

**BENEFITS**

This Mentoring Program focuses on providing:

- National level mentoring opportunities
- Introduction to YALSA
- Career guidance and development
- Networking
- A one-on-one relationship mentoring opportunity
- Mutual learning experience from both the mentor and the mentee.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is essential in any kind of relationship. In this mentoring program, mentors and mentees will mainly communicate through e-mail or telephone. Therefore, it is important that both parties are responsible and can communicate effectively. Mentors and mentees may schedule to meet during the Midwinter or the Annual American Library Association Conference so that a face-to-face meeting can draw the relationship closer.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF MENTORS**

- Required to make the initial contact
- Willing to commit to a one-year term
- Willing to learn from the mentees as well as sharing their own experiences
- Able to listen and give advice
- Required to fill out an evaluation at the end of the one-year term

## **EXPECTATIONS OF MENTEES**

- Mentees are required to respond in a timely manner on all communication from the mentor.
- Willing to commit to one-year term
- Required to fill out an evaluation at the end of the one-year term

## **PUBLICITY**

- Postings on the YALSA website
- Postings on YALSA-L and various other listservs that have subscribers who work with Young Adults/or whose work relates to Young Adults.
- Informational flyers will also be made available at the YALSA Booth at Annual Conference & included in new member packets sent from the YALSA office.

## **HOW TO PARTICIPATE**

Application form will be available on the YALSA Members Only website. Anyone who is interested in participating in this program can fill out the online application.

## **2003 – 2004 TIMELINE**

- July to October – call for mentor volunteers
- August to October – recruitment of mentees
- November – match up mentors and mentees
- December – send notification to both mentors and mentees
- December / January – Mentor begins initial contact with mentees and may make arrangement to meet at Midwinter or Annual meeting
- Length of program is one-year of initial contact, unless mentor and mentee have mutually agreed to continue beyond the designated period.

- December/January- complete evaluation form

## **MATCH UP PROCESS**

The Membership Committee or an Ad Hoc Mentoring Committee will be in charge of the process. Applications will be inputted into a database so that lists of mentors and mentees are generated by interests, location, and type of institution for matching purposes. Mentors and mentees are then matched up based on area of interest and geographic location so that they will be able to develop a functional and healthy mentor-mentee relationship.

## **EVALUATION OF PROGRAM**

At the end of the one-year program, mentors and mentees are required to fill out an evaluation form so that YALSA can study the effectiveness of this program and make further improvement for the future. If for any reasons the relationship between the mentor and mentees did not work, either party may inform the committee so that the relationship can be officially terminated. A new mentor or mentee may or may not be assigned depending on the situation.

## **Recommendations from the Division & Membership Promotion Committee (submitted to the Executive Committee in fall 2006)**

### General Observations:

The majority of the participants felt the program was worthwhile, but most felt that their mentees did not really need much assistance from them. In general the time frame seemed to work for most of the participants. Most of the participants felt that more guidance and structure from YALSA (or an appointed liaison) would have been helpful.

### Recommendations:

**1. YALSA DMP – or perhaps a new/separate taskforce – should provide more guidelines, tools for fostering a good relationship, and in general be more involved to “push” and encourage communication between the participants.** Many participants admitted that they lost touch over time and would have benefited from periodic emails, ice breaking activities, questions or assignments from a third party to keep the communications going. Some participants suggested a checklist, or a set schedule to make communicating more directed and on target.

**2. Match mentors and mentees by geography.** Most participants felt that having the opportunity to meet face-to-face would have enhanced the experience. Those that were close together geographically had a more fruitful experience.

**3. Match mentors and mentees by specific interests.** Some participants felt that if they had matched up based on a mutual interest in graphic novel collections, anime/manga, art/crafts programming, management track etc. that the relationship would have been more directed and productive.

**4. Target and promote the program to Library Science/Information School students.** Many of the mentors felt that their help wasn't necessarily needed. Several commented that their mentee didn't really seem to need any assistance. Those that sought the mentor were actually more accomplished than they realized. Survey results showed that many participants thought starting this relationship while still in school would have been a good step. Targeting graduate students might also identify those with an interest in teen services earlier on. Having a relationship with a practicing teen librarian might lead more graduate students into the teen services fold.

**5. Turn to YALSA SUS trainers to assist in locating potential mentors from their state.** Since SUS trainers know their region they could also assist in involving the ALA accredited graduate schools in their state. SUS trainers would be an important tool if the geographical consideration were accepted.