

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Denver  
January 23-28, 2009**

**Topic:** Confirmation of White Paper Adoption

**Background:** In October of this year, the Board worked by email to refine the



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Youth development principles were credited with changing the general culture of the library by providing an “important new language” for library administrators that helped the library to establish a new leadership role, in the area of youth development, in the community. In an era when libraries must clearly articulate their importance to the larger community, the role of youth development agency increases the public library’s value as an institution and also makes good economic sense for the community.

**Because that’s what teens want and need.** A 2007 survey conducted by the Harris Poll for YALSA asked young people what needed to happen in their local library in order for them to use it more often. One in five respondents said they would use their library more if “there was a librarian just for teens.” One third of respondents said that they would use the library more if the library had more interesting materials to borrow and events to attend.

The Young Adult Librarian acts as a significant adult in the lives of many young people, thereby meeting one of the seven developmental needs of teens: positive social interaction with peers *and adults* (Search Institute).

### **Conclusion**

Why employ Young Adult Librarians? The practical reasons are listed above. On a fundamental level the goal is to provide excellent service to a large but unique segment of the population, teenagers. Young Adult Librarians are essential to providing the best service to young adults in libraries and they are essential to keeping libraries viable and up to date by translating knowledge about cultural trends into programs, collections, staff engagement with youth and collaborative efforts in the broader community. So the answer is simple – employing Young Adult Librarians is the smart thing to do.

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*--Written with Audra Caplan on behalf of the Young Adult Library Services Association*