

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Boston
January 15 – 19, 2010

Topic: Member Recognition Effort

Background: In the fall of 2009 the Board brainstormed ways for recognizing members for their contributions to YALSA. This grew out of the mega issue discussion at the 2009 Annual Conference where it was suggested that one way of assisting members, especially during tough economic times, was to make efforts to recognize them for their contributions as one way of helping members feel connected and supported by the association. Linda and Beth gathered the ideas that were posted on the Board wiki and have provided them with some commentary below. Staff also contributed ideas. The Board may want to discuss what, if any, of the ideas are the most feasible and the best fit for YALSA.

Action Required: Action

Proposal:

Increase member recognition efforts and formalize where possible in order to help YALSA achieve its goal of member recruitment and engagement.

Background Information:

Tips for Effective Volunteer Recognition & Appreciation

Associations shouldn't let volunteering be a thankless job. The number one method for retaining volunteers is to make sure they know that they are appreciated. Recognition and appreciation should come from different people in different ways.

Make it a priority. Recognizing the work of volunteers is crucial for any organization that wants to retain them and attract others. Designate someone in your organization to be responsible for ensuring that ongoing recognition of volunteers takes place.

Do it often. Recognition of volunteers should happen on a year-round, frequent and informal basis – begin with saying “Thank you” often.

Do it in different ways. Vary your recognition efforts from the informal thank you and spontaneous treats, to more formal events, such as receptions and awards.

Be sincere. Make each occasion you use to recognize your volunteers meaningful and an opportunity to truly reflect on his/her value to your organization.

Recognize the person, not the work. Phrase recognition to emphasize the contribution of the individual, not the end result. “You did a great job!” as opposed to “This is a great job!”

Make it appropriate to the achievement. For example, a paper certificate accompanied by a private thank you may be appropriate for a few months of service but a public dinner and engraved plaque may better suit 10 years of volunteerism.

Be consistent. Make sure whatever standards of recognition you establish can be consistently maintained by your organization in years to come. Holding a volunteer recognition dinner one year sets up expectation for future volunteers.

Be timely. Try to arrange recognition soon after achievement has been reached – delaying until weeks or months later diminishes the value of your gratitude.

Member Recognition: Board Ideas w/ commentary & suggested next steps from Linda & Beth

Idea	Comment	Next Steps
Chair of the Year Award	Recognizing members for their contribution to YALSA could help YALSA meet its member engagement & retention goals in the strategic plan. The award could be implemented with limited or no expenses involved.	Identify an individual or small group to develop a proposal.
Chairs/committee members get entered into drawing for YALSA swag at end of terms	This is easily feasible, but is it desirable? Because it is a drawing, the winner is someone chosen at random, not for his or her accomplishment, contribution, etc. A version of this already exists in give-aways at Midwinter and Conference at All Committee and Leadership Development. These give aways are often based on attendee knowledge of YALSA information/content.	Consider whether or not moving forward with this activity achieves goals of member recognition effort.
Reduced rate for YALSA ticketed conference events or purchasing YALSA publications and other products.	Members already get a discount on conference & symposium registration as well as on all YALSA & ALA products. If YALSA added a discounted rate for ticketed events, the Board would need to consider the impact on the Association’s finances and develop other methods to generate lost revenue. In FY09 ticketed events & registrations accounted for 30% of YALSA’s revenue.	Version of this activity already in place changes would have financial implications that the Board needs to consider before moving forward.
Sending thank you notes to members when they renew their membership.	Members get an email from YALSA thanking them for renewing & highlighting ways to get involved. This is more affordable than snail mail, which would cost about \$2,500 per year. If the Board wants to move to a snail mail format, then it would be beneficial to come up with viable solutions for covering this added	Version of this activity already in place. Changes would have financial implications that the Board needs to consider before moving forward.

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	expense.	
<p>Create special ribbons for members to wear at conferences (national & local)...YALSA 10+ years, 5 years, 2 years, etc.</p> <p>Highlight a member and their contribution to YALSA and/or their contribution in the teen field in a <i>YALS</i> column on a regular basis or the YALSA website.</p>	<p>In 2010 YALSA's Division & Membership Committee is going to begin sending anniversary cards to members who reach 5, 10, 15, 20 etc. year milestones in YALSA. This provides a personal touch and ensures that all members will be recognized, not just those who attend conferences.</p>	<p>Version of this activity already in place. The Board would want to consider if the return on investment with the ribbons is tangible enough to move forward with this idea.</p>

Staff Ideas

Idea	Comment	Next Steps
Revisit the best article of the year proposal that the Board considered for YALS a couple of years back	It's an easy way to recognize members who are good writers/contributors and it also shines a light on the journal	Assign someone to update the old proposal
Continue with the Great Ideas Contest	This is an easy way to recognize a member who may not be able to contribute to YALSA in a face-to-face setting. It's also an easy way for YALSA to identify new or innovative ideas.	Work to standardize the contest in terms of finding a funding source and making it a part of the SP Committee's charge. The current SP Committee is moving forward with this contest for 2010.
Birthday cards for Past Presidents	YALSA's Membership Coordinator will begin doing this in 2010	N/A
FOY E-Newsletter	YALSA's Membership Coordinator began doing this in late 2009 as a way to help FOY members feel more connected to YALSA, but also included a FOY member spotlight to highlight a particular FOY member. The goal is for this newsletter to be quarterly.	Staff will monitor feedback and make adjustments as needed. Work to include FAC in the planning and production of the newsletter
New members listed in <i>YAttitudes</i>	This began in late 2009.	N/A
Formalize and streamline the process for the President to send letters to out-going committee members	In the past, the President has put an all-call out on yalsacom after Midwinter & Annual and asked Chairs who wanted a letter to contact him/her	The President works with staff to improve the process overall and ensure member volunteers are aware of this opportunity.
Make a special effort to thank committee members, etc. each year during National Volunteer Week (the third week of April each year)	This could be a simple way to show members who volunteer their time that YALSA appreciates the work they do	The President could work with staff to send a message on yalsacom &/or individually to member volunteers during National Volunteer Week.
Anniversary cards for members celebrating an	YALSA's Membership Coordinator will begin doing this in 2010, hopefully with the	Staff will monitor the process and feedback and make adjustments as necessary

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anniversary year in YALSA (5, 10, 15, 20, etc. years of membership)	help of the Division & Membership Promotion Committee.	
Encourage member leaders and staff to send a special thanks to members who take on special tasks or who excel in their work.	Member recognition doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive to be effective. A simple message of 'thanks' or 'great job' is often appreciated.	President & Executive Director gather and provide resources on the Board and Chair wiki pages to help leaders find ways to recognize volunteers. One example: www.baudville.com/epraise/epgrp/1
Member group of the year award (committee, jury, taskforce, etc.)	YALSA relies on the work of different groups, such as committees, to do important work for the association. Recognizing a specific group or groups annually can be a good way to highlight the contribution of these groups as well as formally thank a group or groups for outstanding work	Board needs to determine if it is feasible and worth pursuing. If so, an ad-hoc Board committee or member taskforce can develop the award