

UHLS Youth Services Advisory Council

June 10, 2024

2:00 – 3:00 pm, Virtual Meeting

Attendance (7): Sara Hopkins (BRUN), Shannon (BETH), Laurie Dreyer (TROY), Danielle (VAFL), Debbie Sternklar (VOOR), Mary Fellows (UHLS), Amy Jeansonne (UHLS)

Smithsonian Talk with Me Toolkits

<https://learninglab.si.edu/org/talk-with-me-toolkits>

Mary shared this resource that can be used by caregivers or library staff. The toolkits are designed to promote conversation that can improve thinking, vocabulary, and language development. Each toolkit features videos, photographs, paintings, and artworks along with questions to talk about with a child. At the end of each toolkit there are more activities to do and books to read together.

There are currently 6 available toolkits:

- [Air and Space: Can It Fly?](#)
- [Art: Color Shapes and Lines](#)
- [Art: Light and Shadow](#)
- [Me and My World: My Neighborhood](#)
- [Music: Animal Tracks](#)
- [Nature: Who Lives in the Soil?](#)

Let us know if you've had any experience with them or if you try them out in the future.

Welcoming Middle Schoolers

Mary shared an [“unscientific survey of middle schoolers who use the library a lot”](#). Here's what the author learned.

Middle Schoolers like:

- that they can find all kinds of reading materials, including books for adults and picture books
- that their public library is big and offers lots of places for them to read and work
- that the collections are large and they can explore and dig on their own
- book sales, free wifi, comfy seating, and computers for the public

Middle Schoolers suggested improvements:

- to be easier to find things (a few mentioned they would like series to be shelved in book order, with labeling)
- to be easier to find an adult when they need help
- more items that appeal to them, especially graphic novels, YA novels, comics, and even pop-up books

We discussed how several libraries are seeing a decrease in YA novel circulation. Graphic novel circulation is still high, but otherwise youth are heading to the adult section for books like those by Colleen Hoover. We wondered if some of the reasons for this might be that youth are so busy they find it easier to read graphic novels in the time they have, or that they may be getting more exposure to adult books through BookTok reviews.

We brainstormed some ideas for marketing the YA books, such as pairing some with graphic novels—if you like this graphic novel you might like this text-based novel. Placing relevant YA books near the Colleen Hoover and other popular books could engage youth and adults (we’ve already seen an increase in adults checking out YA books). Placing YA books near the checkout could also provide opportunities for conversation.

Since book sales are also something of interest to youth, we considered how we might make sure we’re also marketing them to youth. One example was advertising on Instagram in addition to Facebook, as it’s still more popular with youth.

Conga Line to Storytime: Fun + Advocacy – All in One!

Mary shared this [ALSC blog post](#) from librarian Katelyn Martens-Rodriguez, in which she described using a portable bluetooth speaker to parade through the whole library gathering anyone who might be interested in storytime. She shared that they get smiles from patrons working in other spaces, and that it’s a fun way to connect with more people about the programming. She uses songs with a good, medium tempo beat from the “Storytime Party” playlist on Spotify. Once back in the storytime room (this activity happens between books), she uses some breathwork to help the children calm back down.

Our group enjoyed hearing about this fun idea. However, for those of us in smaller libraries, it can feel like everyone there is aware of when storytime is happening! There may still be opportunities to encourage fun engagement.

Passive Programs and Self-Directed Activities

[See slideshow for ideas](#)

Also, check out these articles:

[Passive and Relaxed Programs: Things To Keep In Mind | Programming Librarian](#)
[Passive Library Programs for Tweens and Teens](#)

We discussed some of the advantages of self-directed programming and shared activities.

Advantages: Can accommodate children with different needs and preferences. Along with being self-paced, they can also be done privately, appealing to introverts and individuals who may be self-conscious about creating with peers.

Creative projects provide different strategies for reading. In order to complete a craft, kids and teens read directions, make decisions, and often use writing. Crafts are not only cute, but they provide educational opportunities.

Self-directed programs also provide opportunities to improve accessibility, appealing to individuals with different needs and learning styles. We also discussed how librarians are great at scaling programs for different ages. Some examples include:

- Puzzle program—offering puzzles of different sizes and numbers of pieces
- Maker programs—a theme like “paper” could include coloring sheets, origami, or advanced folding of boxes and other items
- Including descriptions for items displayed in an exhibition could encourage someone to read it to another person who doesn’t see as well

Ideas we shared:

- Take home kits can be more convenient schedule-wise, allowing busy families to participate when they can't make it at a certain time. If they have children of multiple ages that are busy with different activities, they're able to do the kits together at home at the same time.
 - Sara at BRUN recommended **saving yourself time** by packing up take home kits at the end of an in-person program when you already have everything out.
- BRUN recently used a free Audubon program. It had a variety of activities, and to appeal to kids at varying levels, included both detailed info sheets as well as checklists.
- Shannon at BETH has used apples as a theme. She had a range of activities so kids could choose appealing materials and level of difficulty: making an apple tree out of a paper towel roll, paper, pom poms; tracing your hand to make a tree trunk; and "sewing" two apple cutouts and stuffing them with newspaper to make them 3D.
- Laurie at TROY described a passive card making table put out for Valentine's Day. It was available for all ages. She said some just made one card, while others made 12 and it was a lot of fun to see what they came up with.

Ideas for making passive programs interactive

See images in [slideshow](#)

- Disguise activity: Help the Gingerbread Man Escape, or seasonally with pumpkins, turkey, snowmen, bunnies, etc.
 - Fun for display and social media
 - Connect the craft to a backstory
 - Could teens come up with the backstory?
- Book Character Hunt: hide 10 pictures of common book characters! In easy spots like on the shelf endcaps and in hard spots like under a table.
 - Include the location/call number of each character, so kids could go and look up the character's name if they didn't know it already.
 - Kids turn in forms to librarian and choose a prize
- Post-it Art
 - Could do one in teen section and one in children and compare, or do a full library version in which everyone can contribute
- Interactive displays–Kids' or Teens' Choice: Bracket style bulletin board starting with 16 characters or items. Voting happens each week and the winners then face off against each other in subsequent weeks, until a final winner emerges.
 - Could offer incentives such as inviting in or dressing up as the winning character, or hosting a screening of a relevant movie or show.
 - Could be done with characters, books, ice cream flavors, Taylor Swift eras, Pokemon characters, etc.
 - BETH used this recently to discover the community's favorite book (*The Hobbit*) and will be doing one for horror movies in the fall
- Other Voting: ex–Judge the book by its first line, book vs movie, OR which cover is better?
- Ninja Challenges (quiet minute-to-win-it challenges): Post the instructions in an area dedicated to the challenge. It can be back in a corner.
 - Card houses, have them snap pics and email, then feature on social media
 - Balance three books on their head and walk across the teen area
 - One-handed bracelets with cheerios on a pipe cleaner
 - <https://www.thebudgetdiet.com/top-30-minute-to-win-it-games>
 - <https://www.weareteachers.com/minute-to-win-it-games-for-kids/>

- Reader's Advisory – Flipped
 - Example of librarian who invited kids to recommend books for her to read with her cat. She then took a photo of her cat with each book and posted the cat's reviews. As she shared the photos and reviews, more kids got excited to give their recommendations.
 - While the cat reviews would have been time consuming, you could simplify with just pictures or posting recs. Instead of a pet, you could adapt this for use with a stuffed animal, school or local athletics mascot, or a curmudgeonly family member
- Eyebombing contest: put googly eyes out on things in the world, or even on books
- Mini book talks
 - #3wordbooktalk: Have teens come up with 3 compelling words that could make someone else read a book. We came up with:
 - Spooky, queer, summer camp (*The Honeys*)
 - Murder, Austen, Funny (*A Most Agreeable Murder*)
 - <https://teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2013/10/13/selling-a-book-in-just-3-words-lets-the-3wordbooktalk-fun-begin/>
 - 6 second book talk: RIP Vine app, but could be adapted for TikTok/#BookTok
 - <http://elockhartbooks.tumblr.com/post/93306712319/6-second-book-talk-for-we-were-liars-by-e>
- Games for small or large groups:
 - Parsely Games: by Memento Mori are live action games based on the text adventure computer games of the past. As the parser, you'll take on the role of a computer game with a limited vocabulary. One by one, the players will give you commands like GO NORTH, LIGHT LAMP or GET SWORD, which you'll follow to the best of your ability. The games can be played out with just two people (passive program!) or in groups anywhere. Purchase the collection as a downloadable PDF for \$20.00. about 12 games in it
 - <https://www.technicalgrimoire.com/david/2019/11/parselyreview>
 - <https://memento-mori.com/pdf/parsely-pdf>
 - 1000 year old vampire, in which everyone works together to tell the story of a vampire. Can be played solo.
 - Note–It was suggested that we should have librarian game nights 😊

Current Displays and Upcoming Events at UHLS Libraries:

We shared about current displays, including for Pride, Juneteenth, New Books, and RIF. Some libraries are featuring multi-age group Pride displays. For the summer, VOOR has created a large “Color Your World” rainbow bulletin board, using book jackets organized by color (we loved being able to see this display over Zoom!).

Upcoming events we're looking forward to included a Bridgerton program at BETH, which includes trivia, wordgames, discussion, tea and scones. While this event was for adults, we had the recommendation to check out *The Davenport* as a YA alternative to Bridgerton. TROY is looking forward to hosting graphic novelist Lucy Knisley is visiting TROY in July!

There are lots of other plans for Summer Reading Program events. Mary will be at COLN for their SRP kickoff. Please reach out if you'd like her to join in or help with anything at your library's events.

UHLS Updates

Mary recently sent out information for getting started with the SAIYL grant. [The document is linked here](#). It includes details, resources, and links to the Perspective Discovery Tool, which will help you get a better understanding of your library's policies and how you might apply them through various scenarios.

The UHLS Annual Celebration is on Wednesday 6/12/24. We'll be glad to catch up with some of you then.

Reminder that StoryWalks® are available. Here is an [updated info doc](#) with links to resources and Storywalks® available for borrowing.

ARCs Available!

<http://reports.uhls.org/cgi-bin/staff/arc.pl>

(These ARCs cannot be added to your collection in any way.

By requesting ARCs, you are agreeing to give them to your kid, tween, or teen readers.)

Next Meeting: TBD

Upper Hudson Youth Services

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