

UHLS Youth Services Advisory Council

May 6, 2025

1:30 – 3:00 in person at UHLS

Attendance (12): Mary Fellows (UHLS), Amy Jeansonne (UHLS), Chloe Fisher (RENS), Lee Ricci (COLN), Lindsey Musielak (APLM), Carol Roberts (TROY), Lee Ackerman-Sawyer (WSTR), Meagan Salisbury (GRAF), Suzanne Cardinal (NASS), Melanie Sheldon (CAST), Hannah Rothman (APLP), Lisa Fesmire (VOOR)

Warm-up

After welcome and introductions, we warmed up with glitter-braining. Mary threw out a theme for each age group and we came up with new ideas and shared past successes!

Age Group	Theme	Our Ideas
Preschool	Balls	Crafts with various types of balls, movement
Early Elementary	Weird Pets	Share stories, like what's the weirdest thing our pets have ever done? Create new animals through collage or exquisite corpse type activities and come up with ideas about what these animals are like. Related book: <i>Strictly No Elephants</i>
Upper Elementary	Balloons	Use light up balloons for a glow party or even yoga (successful at NASS). Craft ideas included papier mache, chocolate bowls, diy stress balls. Water balloon games. Look for the new self-tying water balloon packs. Learn about hot air balloons.
Tweens	Miniature things	Endless craft activities. We shared successful programs related to mini books, plants made from beads, tiny dino terraria in jars, and making little scenes for bookshelves. Other ideas included shrinky dinks, mini food, needle felting, look-alikes, and tiny gingerbread houses.
Teens	Paint	Paint markers could be used for decorating fairy doors, clothes, skateboards or other items. APLM is planning a program on urban art that will use them. Glow paint and tie dye are also popular. CAST is repeating their library rock snake program and found it had a wider age appeal than they expected. Others shared successes with rock snakes as an engaging and low cost program.

Presentation: Mindset–How to incorporate it into library work

Mary shared findings from [Promising Practices: A Guide for Library Staff](#), which was published following a multi library pilot program, funded in part by the IMLS.

The importance of *mindset*

- Defined as an individual’s core beliefs about the nature of intelligence and intellectual growth
 - Can be fixed (this is where I am) or growth (open to trying and learning new things)
 - The idea that we are fixed in certain ways or as we get older has become outdated
 - Most adults are a mix of these
 - ex-may feel fixed in some areas, but open to learning in others
- We want to support a growth mindset in kids
 - “Kindergarten Confident”
 - The term “school readiness” has become a bit controversial

Key Findings: Mary shared 6 key findings and we discussed how we *can* support each of them in the library.

1. Quality adult-child interactions shape children’s thinking skills.
 - We can...
 - model by focusing on the positive.
 - treat kids as individuals. Unless preverbal, don’t just ask parent.
 - physically go down to their level.
 - introduce them to new ideas.
 - make expectations clear, which can help them feel safe, an important part of being able to thrive.
2. Children with stronger social skills do better in school, in the workplace and in life.
 - We can foster this by...
 - introducing kids to each other.
 - finding opportunities to develop empathy, like in addressing behaviors in a constructive way.
 - giving parents guidelines and expectations for programs. For example, it's often ok for kids to get up and move during story time, we don't expect toddlers to share, and parallel play is important.
3. Science learning is critical for the development of higher-order thinking, but is missing from most early school experiences.
 - We can...
 - add science and STEM activities to our programming (and acknowledge that it’s already in a lot of them).

- encourage exploration. Much of engineering is trial and error.
- 4. Demonstrating strong math skills at an early age is a strong indicator of developing conceptual thinking skills and predicts long term success in schools.
 - We can...
 - look for opportunities for counting, even in books that aren't about numbers.
 - use finger plays.
 - provide blocks and building activities.
 - Reminder–UHLS lends blue blocks and keva planks
 - highlight math in cooking programs.
 - share connections between art and math–symmetry, spirals, etc.
- 5. Planning, self-awareness, and self-control–what psychologists refer to as executive functions–predict positive school and life outcomes.
- 6. Higher-order thinking, retention of information, and creativity flourish when children experience minimized stress and when their basic needs are met.
 - We can help children feel comfortable by...
 - speaking to them at their level–literally, get lower.
 - creating a welcoming space.
 - recognizing that we may be a safe adult for them.

Best Practices: The report broke them down into three areas that reflect the key findings.

- Talk & Play
 - Use complex words freely with children. Nonfiction books are great for this.
 - Provide avenues for collaborative play. It helps build social skills.
 - Ask open ended questions and provide ample wait time for the response. It can take ~7 seconds for some kids to process.
 - Help children recognize emotions in themselves and others.
 - “How can you tell how this character is feeling?”
- Science & Math
 - Point out surprising things and strive to instill a sense of wonder.
 - Adopt a “love of mistakes” mentality and see failure as an opportunity for learning.
 - Support children in making predictions– “What’s next?” “What do you think might happen?”
 - Showcase math in everyday life.
 - Encourage children to use their fingers for counting.
- Body & Brain
 - Let children choose
 - Make expectations explicit.
 - Breath, stretch, and move. It’s good for parents too!

- Create a welcoming environment for all.
 - It can be stressful to be part of an underrepresented group, so do things like look for opportunities to add additional holidays in displays. Asking “Where’s your grownup?” is inclusive to all caregiver dynamics.
- Acknowledge a child’s needs even if you’re busy. Example–“I hear you, and I’ll get back to you when I’m done with this task”.

Some of our follow up discussion related to sensory storytimes and how hosting programs at different times of the day or week have worked for different libraries. For more information on inclusive storytimes, check back on our [YSAC notes for March 2025](#).

Summer Reading Program 2025!

Mary shared some ideas for teens and tweens:

- Idea: Youth mental health – program series - <https://jedfoundation.org/unraveling-the-stigma-report/>
- Teen programs
 - Pawject Runway: <https://programminglibrarian.org/programs/pawject-runway>
 - Dress your pet! A great way to use fabric scraps.
 - Stuffie Runway–great alternative if you don’t want to invite live animals
 - BETH has pics of pets reading on their website.
 - TROY currently has circ desk decorated with pics of patrons' pets.
 - Fix-It Workshop: <https://programminglibrarian.org/programs/fix-it-workshop>
 - Faux charcuterie board - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/823173638150831646/>
 - Could inspire a contest of other faux foods.

What we’re excited about this summer:

- COLN–Mini art show, in which the canvases are hard covers from withdrawn books
- APLP–“Bookmark your summer!” –creating bookmarks, which could highlight favorite things they read over the summer
- APLM–Collaborating with Barbara Lucas from WMHT and with Honest Weight Food Coop for a food program (for free!)
- CAST–Design contest for their new library cards
- VOOR–Mess-tival featuring 6 art stations run by teen volunteers
- NASS–rainbow themed bake-off, Jurassic World interactive movie night, bringing back jigsaw puzzle challenge, which was more popular than expected last year
- WSTR–weekly makerspace activities combined with their coffee connect hour

Review Books: Highlights of the list

- *Very Bad at Math*—Features dyscalculia
- *Banned Together*—Essays by authors who've been banned
- *The Bletchley Riddle*—About code breaking, could make for good discussion, written by a local author, and also a great audiobook
- *Popcorn*—Interesting graphics, about anxiety disorder
- *Kareem Between*—Timely book about Syrian immigrants, written in free verse
- *Wait a Minotaur*—An *I like to read comics* book for kids who like chaos
- *I'm Sorry You Got Mad*—About nuances of apologies
 - Related suggestion—*How to Tantrum Like a Champion*
- *Sari Sisters*—sister growing up
- *The Interpreter*—Kid gets burnt out helping parents, learns to speak up and get help
- *To Walk the Sky*—Nonfiction about the remarkable legacy of native people who've helped build bridges and high rises
 - Related suggestion—*Sky Boys*

Resource and Idea Sharing

Programs, displays, great reads/listens/views for programs or readers advisory

- *Puppet* by David Almond, J Fic, a great celebration of life
- *The Tea Dragon Society* trilogy by Katie O'Neill. J Graphic Novel, recommended for middle grades, gentle fantasy, Eisner winner, inclusive
- *Dungeons and Drama*, & *Dating and Dragons*, YA rom-coms by Kristy Boyce, fluffy, popular, and relevant themes for teens, recommended for 8th-12th grade
- *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins, did not disappoint
- DK's [What's the Point of Art?](#), described as “everything you ever wanted to know about art.”--colorful, captures attention but not overwhelming, recommended for ages 8-12, but adults would like it as well
- In April, to contrast a very gray month, Hannah chose a green theme for the face out books at APLP!

UHLS Updates

- Staffing Changes
 - Chris Sagaas begins work as our new executive director on 6/2.
 - Amy Jeansonne is leaving UHLS at the end of May. The vacancy will be posted soon, and we encourage you to share it with anyone you think may be interested.

- The UHLS Annual Celebration is Wednesday June 11. Invitations will be out soon.
- New Kits Available!
 - Send us your summer reservations! Our new **blue blocks** and **glow party kit** are already popular. We also have new **dino bones** and an **exploratory art kit!**
 - Here is the [updated kit flyer](#), and you can find item descriptions and the borrowing calendar at <https://www.uhls.org/loanable-items/>

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: Tuesday, June 10, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

In person at UHLS!

Pack a lunch and join us after the meeting—we'll picnic outside as weather permits!

Find More Events, Trainings, & Resources

<https://www.uhls.org/youth-and-family-services/>

Upper Hudson Youth Services

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