



Created by the
ALA Public Programs Office and YALSA
with cooperation from YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Program Credits	4
Program, Theme, and Titles	5
Tips for Project Directors.....	6
Running a Great Stories CLUB Book Discussion for Teens.....	6
DOs and DON'TS for Running a Discussion Program.....	7
Establishing an Outreach Partnership	8
Sample Project Proposal Form.....	9
Working in Juvenile Facilities.....	10
Working with Troubled Teens	11
Sample Discussion Questions	13
<i>The Brothers Torres</i>	13
<i>Hate List</i>	14
<i>Dope Sick</i>	15
Related Reading for Participating Teens.....	16
Related Resources for Project Directors	22
Suggested Reading for Anyone Working with Incarcerated Teens	22
Web Sites about the Juvenile Justice System and Troubled Youth.....	23

Introduction

The Great Stories CLUB is a book club grant program organized by the American Library Association Public Programs Office (PPO) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), with a grant from Oprah's Angel Network, to provide troubled teens with the opportunity to discuss books relevant to the challenges in their lives. Complete information, including updates on future grant opportunities for libraries, is available online at www.ala.org/greatstories.

This resource guide was put together by the ALA Public Programs Office, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), and YALSA's Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee. The purpose of this guide is to provide a framework of tips, advice, and resources for librarians holding Great Stories CLUB book discussions in their communities.

We hope to learn and hear from you as project directors. Please let us know how your programs are going by e-mailing publicprograms@ala.org. We welcome all feedback.

Sincerely,

ALA Public Programs Office
Young Adult Library Services Association

Program Credits

American Library Association

The American Library Association promotes the highest quality library and information services and public access to information. The oldest and largest library association in the world, ALA has more than 65,000 members, representing all types of libraries and librarians as well as trustees, publishers, and other library supporters.

ALA Public Programs Office

The ALA Public Programs Office promotes cultural and community programming as an essential part of library service in all types and sizes of libraries. Successful library programming initiatives have included “Let’s Talk About It” reading and discussion series, traveling exhibitions, film discussion programs, the Great Stories CLUB, LIVE! @ your library and more. Recently, the Public Programs Office developed www.ProgrammingLibrarian.org, an online resource center bringing librarians timely and valuable information to support them in the creation of high-quality cultural programs for their communities.

Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of ALA

The mission of the Young Adult Library Services Association is to advocate, promote, and strengthen service to young adults as part of the continuum of total library service, and to support those who provide service to this population. YALSA is the fastest growing division of ALA.

YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee

The function of YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee is to address the needs of young adults who do not or cannot use the library because of socioeconomic, legal, educational, or physical factors; to serve as a liaison between these groups and their service providers; and to identify and promote library programs, resources, and services that meet the special needs of these populations.

Oprah’s Angel Network

Funding for the Great Stories CLUB was provided by a grant from Oprah’s Angel Network. The network is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring people to make a difference in the lives of others.

Program, Theme, and Titles

The theme for the Great Stories CLUB is “Second Chances.” We all wish we had a second chance to redo certain events or moments in our lives. While we cannot change our past, when we use our past as an opportunity to challenge ourselves to learn and grow in new ways, second chances often arise. These stories are about teens who find second chances in unlikely places and make the most of them.

The three titles selected for the “Second Chances” theme are:

Hate List by Jennifer Brown (2010 Best Books for Young Adults)

Valerie thought the list she and her boyfriend Nick kept of all the people who tormented and bullied them was just a way to deal with the stress of high school, but Nick had other ideas. Valerie survived his murderous rampage, but others did not. Now she has to find a way to try to understand what happened and make peace with what’s left behind in her life.

Dope Sick by Walter Dean Myers (2010 Top Ten Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers)

Lil J is hiding from the police after a drug bust gone bad when he meets a mysterious stranger who offers him a chance to revisit some moments in his past while also giving him possible glimpses at his future. It all leads up to Lil J facing one pivotal question: “If you could do it all over again and change something, what would it be?”

The Brothers Torres by Coert Voorhees (2009 Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults)

Frankie has always respected his older brother Steve, and he can’t quite understand why Steve craves the respect of the local tough-guy cholos. Once Steve takes Frankie under his wing, Frankie gets a first-hand look at how being loyal and trying to earn respect can have dangerous consequences.

Tips for Project Directors

Running a Great Stories CLUB Book Discussion for Teens

- Remember that the purpose of the Great Stories CLUB is to reach out to troubled teens by encouraging a love of reading and books. The discussion should be lively and engaging.
- Prior to meeting with the teens, read the book you are discussing carefully—often it requires two readings. Keep notes on characters and plot so that if there is a question or someone needs reminding you can fill in the gaps.
- If you get to choose the time when the discussion is taking place, try to pick a time of day when the teens will be alert and active. First thing in the morning and just after a meal are generally the most ideal times.
- Think of a fun way to have the teens introduce themselves and get to know you.
- Introduce simple rules and expectations that the group will follow (for example, read and finish the book, raise your hand to speak and wait to be recognized, respect each other's opinions). If working with a detention facility, make sure that your rules are in line with the institutional rules.
- Try to create a comfortable, open atmosphere. Remember, and remind the teens, that the discussion is not a test and they won't be judged or graded in any way.
- Food encourages informality and conversation. Check with the staff where you will be holding the group to see if food is allowed. If the food becomes a distraction, serve it at the end.
- Set up the room so that all participants can see each other (in a circle if possible).
- Use open-ended, personal questions (for example, How did it make you feel? What do you think about . . . ? What would you do if . . . ?). At the same time try to steer away from purely personal digressions. Avoid questions that can be answered with a yes or no.
- If discussion has completely stalled, or if students haven't read the book, try reading a passage or chapter out loud and discussing just that section.
- Use the Great Stories CLUB discussion questions provided in this guide or help the teens to create their own discussion questions and let group members each ask and facilitate a question. This will encourage participation and take the focus off you.

- Your role is one of facilitator: keep the discussion rolling and keep it on track. Don't let yourself become a "leader" or "teacher," remain a guide.
- Incorporate a writing exercise, activity, craft, or fun quiz that is related to the book. Sometimes busy hands help get the mind working. Check to see what is allowed in the setting where you are working.
- Continuing discussions: If you are able to continue the program with the same group of teens, be prepared with several read-a-likes for the book you discussed. See pages 17–20 for a related reading list, or consult the resource guide for other "best of" lists for teens. Also, you may provide the teens with the related reading brochure (in PDF format online) at the end of the series. This way teens may read more on their own afterwards, or you can choose the next discussion book together as a group.
- Explore the access the teens will have to related reading books and try to expedite that access through your library.

DOs and DON'TS for Running a Discussion Program

DO

- Maintain discipline and focus.
- Prepare more questions and activities than you need in case discussion stalls.
- Keep it fun.
- Keep the discussion rolling.
- Encourage everyone to contribute.
- Empower the teens as much as possible by soliciting their ideas and opinions for carrying out the program.

DO NOT

- Prod too much or lead answers in a certain direction.
- Contribute significantly to the discussion.
- Lecture on the book.
- Make it seem like school.
- Force anyone to talk.
- Allow one teen to dominate the discussion.

Establishing an Outreach Partnership

- If your library is not located within an organization that serves troubled teen populations, you will need to establish an outreach partnership with another organization in your community that does.
- Appropriate partner organizations include, but are not limited to, juvenile justice facilities, drug rehabilitation centers, nonprofits serving teen parents, alternative high schools, agencies serving teenaged foster children, shelters serving homeless and runaway youth, and other agencies. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a possible partner organization, please contact the ALA Public Programs Office at publicprograms@ala.org prior to completing your Great Stories CLUB application.
- Create a list of potential community partners, and decide which agency to approach. If you are not familiar with the agencies in your community that serve troubled teens, consult the yellow pages or the Internet. You may wish to search for local social service agencies, the department of juvenile justice, the department of children and family services, or any area alternative schools.
- Once you've selected a potential community partner, identify a contact person at the facility, keeping in mind who the players are and what the politics may be like. Possible contacts include directors, teachers, librarians, supervisors, counselors, and so on. There may be a Friends of the Juvenile Hall group that may be of help, a board member at your library who volunteers at a local shelter or social service agency, a reading teacher at an alternative school, or another person who can help make your case within the organization.
- Depending on what your research has yielded, speak with the director of juvenile hall, the principal of the school inside the hall, or the director of programs in the juvenile hall, for example. Potential partners may be interested to know that, by participating in the Great Stories CLUB, they will be part of a national teen services initiative of the American Library Association that is being supported by Oprah's Angel Network.
- Present your contact with a clear and simple proposal describing the program and activities you would like to implement. For a sample project proposal form, see page 9. You may also wish to use this form to gain your library director's support of the program and your participation in it.
- Work with your contact to create a workable program plan, taking into consideration such factors as institutional procedures (security clearance, authorization, and so on).

Sample Project Proposal Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Library: _____

Library Address: _____

Library City, State, Zip: _____

Project title: _____

Project description and justification: Include statement of importance of project to the community and beyond, and links to library mission and goals.

Intended audience and potential use: Whom will the project serve and how?

Collaborative partnerships: Describe the nature of the proposed collaboration and what major responsibilities would fall to each partner.

Budgetary contribution: Indicate whether budgetary support exists for this project and how the partner might contribute in terms of budget or staffing.

Timeline: Describe any preferred start and end dates or other deadlines.

Assessment: Indicate measures that might be used in evaluating the impact of the project.

Please provide any additional information that might be appropriate, including letters of support, links to any special event, thoughts on project organization.

Working in Juvenile Facilities

The following guidelines will help you to establish credibility and respect with the facility administrators, staff, and, most importantly, the teens. All are necessary components for a successful juvenile detention center partnership and program.

- Identify an internal contact: Possible contacts include directors, teachers, librarians, supervisors, and counselors. There may be a Friends of the Juvenile Hall group. Think about finding someone who has a role similar to yours in the way they interface with probation staff/youth, such as a teacher. This person can help to lead you through the process of starting the group and working with the teens. If you are unable to identify someone on staff at the institution, speak with one of the librarians already providing services to this population for support/feedback.
- Listen more than you talk. As Patrick Jones, nationally known young adult librarian and author of several critically acclaimed books for librarians and educators, says, “When partnering with correctional facilities, we must understand the need to support the goals of that institution even if they may conflict with our values” (“Reaching Out to Young Adults in Jail,” *Young Adult Library Services* [Fall 2004]:14–17). Remember that you are a guest in this institution and be respectful of that.
- Be aware of the issues that are likely to be prevalent in these institutions. They include:
 - Security: It may take time to get into the institution and set up the program. There are a lot of processes to go through, such as security clearances. The institution’s main concern is most likely security, and there are a great many things that fall under “security issues” that may surprise you.
 - Power and Control: Within the institution, you will need to be able to know what to stand up for and what to concede. It will be important to access that skill under pressure.
 - Change: The youth can be greatly affected by changes in things like staffing and routine. There can be a lot of change and turnover of youth. Youth may be removed in the middle of your program, in the middle of their most profound moment, or at other critical times. Learn to be more flexible and develop an even better sense of humor. Depending on what is happening that day with the staff and/or youth, your program may or may not happen. Some times there will be nothing you can do about it, and other times there may be something you can do. You will need to learn to tell the difference between those situations.

- Remember that your “new” ideas may have been tried or implemented before. Make sure you ask staff as well as administrators about any history. Staff may have been there longer than the administrators and know more about what has gone on in the past and also the actual daily operations.

Working with Troubled Teens

- Write up simple expectations and rules for the book discussion. Keep them short and simple (no more than five). Make sure it is something they have basic control over and that abides by the policies of the institution (for example, they may not be able to attend each session in some situations, due to a lockdown, court appearances, and so on). Ask the youth for input when developing these expectations.
- Familiarize yourself with the institution’s reward and penalty system and incorporate it into your program rules.
- One of the best ways to deal with disruptive youth is to walk toward them, maintaining eye contact, while you continue with the lesson plan. If a youth is needy (for example, acting out, asking a million questions, and in general making sure they are the center of attention), stand by them so that all eyes of the class are on them. Rather than have their unmet needs run the show, keep your focus and give them the attention they need by standing near them, walking among them, or looking them in the eye.
- Be sure to establish boundaries and to enforce them consistently. Ask the staff what the consequences are for inappropriate behavior. Often the youth get “room time,” then a write up. There will be different wording/levels in different institutions. It is likely that you will need to send a youth out of the room, give them room time, and otherwise show them that you understand and will enforce the rules. Often this population will test you until you follow through with the stated consequences. Once you do this, and don’t try to reason with them or give them multiple chances, but instead show that you mean business and will do what it takes to have a successful class, they will generally respect you, calm down, and your session will proceed.
- Some youth may possess personas that you find intimidating or scary. Although it is true that you are working with youth who have little impulse control and can be violent, for the most part, if you relate to them as a caring human being, they will respond in kind.
- If the youth are having a hard time relating to a book, help them build connections with simple activities such as a writing exercise where they write about themselves. Make sure you tell them not to worry about things like spelling and grammar.

- Remember confidentiality. In general, use first names only when speaking about the youth.
- Before you give anything to the youth, check with a supportive staff person first. This includes items such as paper, envelopes, food—things you would never think you'd have to check with staff first about. Check with staff to see if bringing food is ok, and have that as a reward for after the program.
- Allow extra time to pass out paper and pencils. In most institutions you will have to count the pencils and make sure you have them all back in your possession before you leave.
- Staff may interrupt your program by participating in ways that are contrary to your goals, such as lecturing the youth or writing a youth up. Over time you will find a balance between respecting the staff actions and maintaining the integrity of the group session.
- Many youth in institutions have a history of abuse. Remember that these youth may not have a lot of family or other support and be mindful of that when guiding discussions.
- Plan for the future. After you are established in the institution (having worked to establish your credibility by your excellent programming and attitude), you will have unlimited choices and options of whom to work with and how your program runs.

The Tips for Project Directors section was prepared by YALSA's Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee and Amy Cheney (committee member, 2005–2007).

Sample Discussion Questions

***The Brothers Torres* by Coert Voorhees**

- Have you ever had to stand up in the face of peer pressure? Were you successful?
- Do you think it's possible to be rich, popular, nice, and likeable?
- Why is "respect" so important to Steve? Why does he hang with the cholos and do things that might endanger his chances of getting a soccer scholarship?
- What does "respect" mean to the characters in this book? What are some actions in this book that you think are worthy of respect?
- While talking about Julius Caesar in class, Frankie thinks "Ambition doesn't get you assassinated; it gets you respect" (p. 98–99). Do you think he's right? What do you think that has to do with the respect the characters in this book want?
- What do you think Frankie and Steve's parents could have done differently?
- How does Steve treat Carmenita? How does Frankie treat Rebecca? Is it with respect?
- Do you think Rebecca would have ever gone out with Frankie if not for the fight with Dalton? What does she see in Dalton? What does she see in Frankie?
- After his fight with Dalton, does Frankie like the attention he gets from Steve's friends?
- How does the relationship between Steve and Frankie change throughout the book?
- At first, Frankie wants to fight Dalton and get revenge. Why do you think he changes his mind?
- Do you think Frankie was right to stand up to Steve in the last fight?
- Frankie and Steve's last name is Towers. Why is this book called *The Brothers Torres*?
- What do you think is going to happen to Steve? To the other characters in the book?

The Brothers Torres *discussion questions* were compiled by YALSA's Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee. With questions about source material, contact yalsa@ala.org.

Hate List by Jennifer Brown

- If you were Valerie, would you have returned to the same school?
- Nick and Valerie both believed they understood each other without having to say a word. According to Dr. Hieler, people do this all the time—assume that they “know” what’s going on in someone else’s head. That’s impossible. And to think it’s possible is a mistake. A really big mistake. A life-ruining one if you’re not careful (p. 30). Have you ever been in a situation where you have assumed to know what someone else was thinking? Do you think Nick and Valerie’s relationship would have been the same if they had talked more openly?
- When Stacey visits the hospital, she feels it necessary to apologize to Christy Bruter. Why does she do this? What is she saying she’s sorry for?
- Why do all of Val’s friends ostracize her? Were they right in doing so? If Val and Nick had been in your group of friends, how do you think you would have reacted to the situation?
- Valerie is automatically deemed a suspect. Why don’t her parents advocate for her?
- Nick gave off many signs that he was planning on doing this, why didn’t Val or any of his friends notice?
- Have you ever been falsely accused of doing something? Were you able to clear your name?
- What do you think of Valerie’s parents reactions after the shooting? Are they reasonable?
- Why does Valerie feel so much guilt?
- Do you think Nick was intending a double suicide, like in *Romeo & Juliet*?
- What was Valerie’s reasoning for originally not wanting Nick’s name on the memorial?
- Why did Valerie call her dad after the incident at the barn party? Was his reaction realistic?
- Is Valerie a selfish person?
- Why does Jessica try so hard to be friend Valerie?
- Have you ever heard, seen, or suspected something and were afraid to tell anyone?

Hate List discussion questions were compiled by YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee. With questions about source material, contact yalsa@ala.org.

Dope Sick by Walter Dean Myers

- Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you felt closed in and had nowhere else to turn? If so, what did you do?
- Have you ever done something and wished you could rewind your life?
- Why is Kelly watching scenes from Lil J's life on the television?
- If you were in Lil J's place, how would you react to Kelly?
- Why do you think Lil J lies to Kelly about doing drugs at first?
- What are some other scenes from Lil J's life you would like to see on the television? How do you think they would go?
- Lil J tells Kelly that he decides to "stop pretending something good was waiting around the corner and be what everybody expected me to be, which was another throwaway dude" (p. 76). Do you think that was the right choice? What else could have Lil J done?
- Why do you think Lil J tells Kelly that sometimes he's "just scared to walk down the street" (p. 120)?
- What do you think Lauryn should do about her relationship with Lil J?
- Who is to blame for Lil J's situation . . . is it him, his circumstances, society, or something else?
- What are some things Lil J could do to change his situation?
- Lil J tells Kelly it doesn't matter who is "messaging him over" (p. 89), but Kelly says it does. What do you think?
- What do you think is "real" and "not real" in this book? Does that matter?
- What do you think of the ending of this book?

Dope Sick discussion questions were compiled by YALSA's Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee. With questions about source material, contact yalsa@ala.org.

Related Reading for Participating Teens (ages 16+)

Brande, Robin. *Evolution, Me & Other Freaks of Nature*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. \$7.99 (ISBN-10: 0440240301; ISBN-13: 978-0440240303). Imagine you're Mena. Everyone hates you: the whole school, your friends, the guy you like. You've been ousted out of the church group and your parents won't even speak to you. Only your lab partner, Casey, is still speaking to you, and you're fortunate that he does, because your school life will be taking a very dramatic turn—all because of evolution.

Chaltas, Thalia. *Because I Am Furniture*. Speak, 2010. \$8.99 (ISBN-10: 0142415103; ISBN-13: 978-0142415108). Anke's father abuses her brother and sister, but he never lays a hand on her. This should make her life easier, but to Anke all it means is that her father doesn't even know she exists, that to him, she is worth no more notice than a piece of furniture. When she joins the volleyball team at school, Anke begins to learn she has a voice and a chance to change her family forever.

Cushman, Karen. *The Midwife's Apprentice*. HarperCollins, 1996. \$5.99 (ISBN-10: 006440630X; ISBN-13: 9780064406307). A girl named Brat is sleeping on a dung heap when the local midwife kicks her awake and bids her to start working. Slowly, Brat becomes Beetle, learning how to be a midwife. With new-found belief in herself, Beetle renames herself Alyce. When she fails during a difficult delivery, Alyce suffers a blow to her fragile confidence. Through time and introspection, she will regain her strength and become more than the midwife's apprentice.

Cypess, Leah. *Mistwood*. Greenwillow, 2010. \$11.55 (ISBN-10: 0061956996; ISBN-13: 978-0061956997). The Shifter has always protected the Kings of Samorna, it is her sworn magical duty. Now, The Shifter has been called back to the court from the magical forest of Mistwood, and she takes the shape of a young woman named Isabel. She begins to try to solve the mystery of her past. Why did she leave the court, and where does her duty lie now that she's back? Will she have a second chance to set things right?

Dowd, Siobhan. *Solace of the Road*. David Fickling Books, 2010. \$13.49 (ISBN-10: 0375849718; ISBN-13: 978-0375849718). Holly knows that someday, she'll escape the group home in England she is currently living in and make it back to Ireland, where she will find her mother. Once Holly finds a blonde wig, she decides it is time to start her journey. She changes her name to Solace and sets off for Ireland. On the road, Solace will meet friends and dangers and will discover the truth about her mother and herself.

Efaw, Amy. *After*. Viking, 2009. \$7.20 (ISBN-10: 0670011835). This is the story of what happens after. After Devon puts the baby in the dumpster, after the police come to her apartment, after she is charged with attempted murder, after she has to face up to how she got into this situation. This is the story of not just how Devon deals with her actions but how she has a chance to work toward redemption in the new “after” of her life.

Elkeles, Simone. *Perfect Chemistry*. Walker Books, 2008. \$9.99 (ISBN-10: 0802798225; ISBN-13: 978-0802798220). Brittany is the perfect, popular girl. Alex is a member of the Latino Bloods gang. Now Alex and Brittany are lab partners, and neither one is happy about it. When Alex accepts a bet that he can get Brittany to sleep with him, their relationship starts to change in ways that surprise even Alex. Now their chemistry is throwing off sparks neither expected, but do they really have a chance to make their relationship work?

Forman, Gayle. *If I Stay*. Speak, 2010. \$8.99 (ISBN-10: 014241543X; ISBN-13: 978-0142415436). Should she stay or should she go? For Mia, caught somewhere between this world and the next after a terrible car accident that kills her parents, this question will determine if she lives or dies. As Mia’s body lays in a coma, she looks back at her life and tries to decide what her next choice should be. Does she still have a chance to live? If she does, is trying to live worth the pain and struggle?

Giles, Gail. *Right Behind You*. Little Brown, 2009. \$7.99 (ISBN-10: 0316166375; ISBN-13: 978-0316166379). Setting a child on fire sends Kip to a juvenile facility for four years. When he’s released he, his father, and his stepmom move to Indiana to start a new life. Once the townspeople find out about Kip’s past, the family needs to find another place to live. They finally find one in Texas, and it is there that Kip meets Samantha, a mysterious next-door neighbor who also has a story of her own. Can he tell her about his past? Will she reject him? If so, will they have to move again?

Herlong, M.H. *The Great Wide Sea*. Puffin, 2010. \$6.99 (ISBN-10: 0142416703; ISBN-13: 978-0142416709). The last thing Ben expected after his mother died was for his father to sell everything they owned and move him and his two brothers onto a sailboat to live for a year while cruising in the Bahamas. Just when things can’t get any worse, their father disappears during a storm and now survival is in Ben’s hands. He and his brothers have only a damaged boat and their own skills to keep them alive.

Hijuelos, Oscar. *Dark Dude*. Atheneum, 2009. \$9.99 (ISBN-10: 1416949453; ISBN-13: 9781416949459). Rico gets called “dark dude” a lot—and it’s not a compliment. Thanks to his light skin and hair, everyone thinks he’s white, not Cuban. Rico dreams of creating comic books with his friend Jimmy, and he misses Gilberto, the friend who took his lottery winnings and left Harlem for Wisconsin. Rico runs away with Jimmy, hitchhiking to Gilberto’s farm. There, Rico will figure out whether he’s just a dark dude or something more.

Johnson, LouAnne. *Muchacho*. Knopf, 2009. \$10.87 (ISBN-10: 0375861173; ISBN-13: 978-0375861178). Ever since he was eight years old, Eddie has known that his life is going to be full of drug-running and gang life. Now he is in an alternative high school and has one last chance to change his life. Once he meets Lupe, a girl with big dreams, and connects with some teachers at his school, Eddie starts to believe that life may have more to offer him than he always thought.

Katcher, Brian. *Playing with Matches*. Laurel Leaf, 2009. \$7.99 (ISBN-10: 0385735456; ISBN-13: 978-0385735452). High school junior Leon Sanders doesn’t normally have girls lining up to go out with him, but suddenly there are two: Melody Hennon, burn victim and school outcast with a great sense of humor, and Amy Green, the popular cheerleader Leon’s been crushing on for years. Although he enjoys a strong friendship and genuine attraction to Melody, Leon can’t resist the temptation to date Amy instead. When he realizes it’s Melody he cares about, will he have a second chance to win the heart of the girl he betrayed?

Keat, Nawuth. *Alive in the Killing Fields: Surviving the Khmer Rouge Genocide*. National Geographic Children’s Books, 2009. \$15.95 (ISBN-10: 142630515X; ISBN-13: 978-1426305153). In this gripping true story, readers first meet Mop at age nine, when he witnesses the savage murder of his mother and family members by soldiers of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. His life is spared only because he is thought to be dead. As the brutal regime enslaves his people, Mop must do whatever necessary to fight for survival.

Kuklin, Susan. *No Choirboy: Murder, Violence & Teenagers on Death Row*. Henry Holt, 2008. \$17.99 (ISBN-10: 0805079505; ISBN-13: 978-0805079500). Roy, Mark, LA, and Mary all have something in common: their lives have been shattered by violent acts that have forever changed them. In this book, you will hear the first-person stories of men sentenced to death row for crimes committed as teenagers and hear from the families affected by their crimes. Their stories prompt the question: is anyone deserving of forgiveness and mercy when a life has been taken? You decide.

Larson, Hope. *Mercury*. Atheneum, 2010. \$9.99 (ISBN-10: 1416935886; ISBN-13: 978-1416935889). After Tara's house burned down, her mother had to move away to try to support them. Tara wants to rebuild, but her mother says they will never have enough money. Meanwhile, more than a hundred years in the past, Tara's ancestor Josey falls for the wrong man, a decision that will change both girls' lives. In this graphic novel, Tara and Josey's stories are about to unite in a mesmerizing intersection.

Mah, Adeline Yen. *Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter*. Laurel Leaf, 2001. \$6.99 (ISBN-10: 0440228654; ISBN-13: 978-0440228653). Wu Mei must live like a real-life Cinderella in her cruel stepmother's home. She works hard in school and has great success, but that just makes her stepmother angrier. Yet even that can't stop Wu Mei's dreams and determination to change her life and do something great. This absorbing memoir tells the true story of how Wu Mei never gave up and became a doctor and writer.

Monninger, Joseph. *Baby*. Front Street Press, 2007. \$15.34 (ISBN-10: 1590785029; ISBN-13: 978-1590785027). Baby has one last chance to make it work in a foster home. The last place she wants to be is in the foster home with Mary and Fred, a couple who raise sled dogs, but she find that she loves being with the dogs. When her old boyfriend shows up and brings trouble with him, it's time for Baby to make some big choices about the kind of life she wants to have.

Oliver, Lauren. *Before I Fall*. Harper, 2010. \$17.99 (ISBN-10 006172680x, ISBN-139780061726804). Popular Samantha has recently died in a car crash. You would think that would be the end of her story, but, instead, she finds that she is reliving the same day over and over again. So she starts off on her journey as a mean, snobbish, obnoxious Samantha. But day by day, Samantha learns more about her life *and* her death. Can any of that change who she is or what happens to her?

Peña, Matt de la. *We Were Here*. Delecorte Press, 2010. \$8.99 (ISBN-10: 0385736703; ISBN-13: 978-0385736701) Something really terrible happened in Miguel's life. Now Miguel has to spend a year in juvie, and he's sent to a group home. Once there, he meets Mong and Rondell. Mong is planning an escape, and, before you know it, the three of them are on the lam in southern California, trying to keep from being recaptured and headed for the border while Miguel tries to figure out his future. Does he have a future?

Pratchett, Terry. *Nation*. HarperCollins, 2009. \$8.99 (ISBN-10: 0061433039; ISBN-13: 978-0061433030). A tsunami wipes out an entire island village, leaving Mau the only survivor of his people, called the Nation. Meanwhile, a lone survivor from a shipwreck, Daphne, is washed up on the island's shore, where they both meet and learn to survive. Refugees from the other islands start to arrive, and it will take all of Daphne's and Mau's practical sense and wit to help them survive as well. Just when everyone feels safe and secure, their world turns upside down yet again. Can they survive this time?

Rabin, Staton. *Black Powder*. Margaret K. McElderry, 2005. \$16.95 (ISBN-10: 0689868766; ISBN-13: 9780689868764). Langston's best friend Neely has just died in a gang shooting. Langston is upset and wishes he could change what happened. Then he gets his chance, thanks to the time machine his science teacher has invented. It's not just about saving Neely—he's going back to 1278, when Sir Francis Bacon has created the first gunpowder in the West. If Langston can destroy the formula for gunpowder, he could save many people. But can Langston stop progress?

Rapp, Adam. *Punkzilla*. Candlewick, 2009. \$16.99 (ISBN-10: 0763630314; ISBN-13: 978-0763630317). When fourteen-year-old Jaime, aka Punkzilla, a juvie runaway, discovers his long-estranged gay brother is dying of cancer, he leaves his street gang hideout and sets off cross-country on a Greyhound bus. His most valuable possession is a notebook, where he writes graphic letters to his brother as an eclectic array of characters pick him up and carry him closer to his destination. Will he get there in time? Who will he find?

Reinhardt, Dana. *How to Build a House*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2009. \$7.99 (ISBN-10: 0375844546; ISBN-13: 978-0375844546). Seventeen-year-old Harper needs answers and has no one to talk to. Why are her beloved stepmother and stepsisters moving out? Does her longtime guy friend Gabriel just want a casual thing with her, or does he really care? For the summer, she is sent to a volunteer camp in Tennessee where she and a group of teens will help rebuild a house destroyed by a hurricane. She easily makes new friends, but will she learn to deal with her real life that is causing her so much pain?

Ryan, Carrie. *The Forest of Hands and Teeth*. Delacorte Press, 2010 \$9.99 (ISBN-10: 0385736827; # ISBN-13: 978-0385736824). In a town surrounded by fences meant to keep out the Unconsecrated, the undead who crave human flesh, Mary often wonders what lies beyond the fences. Her mother has told her stories of what lies beyond their border, but they are so hard to believe, given she has lived her whole life in this town. The Guardians protect them, the Sisters guide them, but is that enough to stop the oncoming terror of the Unconsecrated?

Sachar, Louis. *Small Steps*. Delecorte Press, 2008. \$9.99 (ISBN-10: 0385733151; ISBN-13: 978-0385733151). Armpit is returning to his home town after two years at a juvenile facility. To make the transition, his counselor advises him to “take small steps and keep moving forward.” The only person who seems to have faith in him is his next door neighbor Ginny, who is disabled. His life starts to spin out of control when he meets up with his friend from camp, X-Ray. Can he get his life back under control?

Sheth, Kashmira. *Keeping Corner*. Hyperion, 2009. \$5.99 (ISBN-10: 0786838604; ISBN-13: 9780786838608). Leela has been engaged since she was two years old and will soon start living with her husband. She cares more about bangles and ribbons than school—but when Leela’s husband dies, she’s a widow at the age of twelve. Tradition says that she must spend the next year in her home. Leela might go crazy until her old schoolteacher offers to tutor her. Education allows Leela to blossom, but there are many barriers to Leela’s dreams.

Shiraz, Yasmin. *Retaliation*. Rolling Hills Press, 2008. \$11.66 (ISBN-10: 097181743X; ISBN-13: 978-0971817432). Teshera is a good girl. That’s why it doesn’t make any sense when she is attacked and beaten by three girls at school. Who attacked her and why? Teshera’s brother and mother vow revenge, but is that really the best solution? As Teshera begins to heal with the help of her boyfriend, Ahmed, she and her family must deal with the consequences not only of her attack but with the impact and costs of retaliation.

Wilson, Diane Lee. *Black Storm Comin’*. Margaret K. McElderry, 2006. \$6.99 (ISBN-10: 0689871384; ISBN-13: 9780689871382). After his father accidentally shoots Colton in the leg, he abandons his family. Colton’s mother is sick, and it’s up to him to find a doctor and get the family to California. The only way he can get the money he needs is to pass for white and join the Pony Express. Hiding his mixed race is a difficult task in 1860, but Colton will face any challenge to save his family.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotion*. Speak, 2010. \$7.99 (ISBN-10: 0142415529; ISBN-13: 978-0142415528). Lonnie Collins Motion, an eleven-year-old foster child, can still smell the honeysuckle talc powder that his mama used. Losing his family at the age of seven, he learns through the power of writing and the guidance of a new teacher that his own words keep his parents alive and give him strength and comfort.

The Great Stories Club related reading list was compiled by YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee.

Related Resources for Project Directors

Suggested Reading for Anyone Working with Incarcerated Teens

Allen, Bud. *Games Criminals Play: How You Can Profit by Knowing Them*. Rae John Publishers, 1981

Anderson, Elijah. *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2000.

Anderson, Shelia. *Extreme Teens: Library Services to Nontraditional Young Adults*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Baca, Jimmy Santiago. *A Place to Stand: the Making of a Poet*. Grove, 2002.

Bernstein, Nel. *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated*. New Press, 2005.

Gruwell, Erin. *Freedom Writer's Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them*. Main Street Books, 1999. (Also released as a motion picture in 2006.)

Hubner, John. *Last Chance in Texas: the Redemption of Criminal Youth*. Random House, 2005.

Lerner, Jimmy. *You Got Nothing Coming: Notes from a Prison Fish*. Broadway, 2003.

Louise, Regina. *Somebody's Someone: a Memoir*. Warner, 2003.

Mondowney, Jo Ann G. *Hold Them in Your Heart: Successful Strategies for Library Services to At-Risk Teens*. Neal-Shuman publishers, 2001.

Prothrow-Stith, Deborah. *Deadly Consequences: How Violence Is Destroying Our Teenage Population and a Plan to Begin Solving the Problem*. HarperCollins, 1991.

Saltzman, Mark. *True Notebooks: A Writer's Year at Juvenile Hall*. Knopf, 2003.

Web Sites about the Juvenile Justice System and Troubled Youth

The Beat Within, www.thebeatwithin.org

An excellent program that provides writing and publishing for incarcerated youth. Check out the Write to Read Section, for lists of books written by a Juvenile Hall librarian.

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, www.cjcj.org

CJCJ is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to reduce society's reliance on the use of incarceration as a solution to social problems. In 1997, CJCJ formed the Justice Policy Institute (JPI), a policy development and research body which promotes effective and sensible approaches to America's justice system. This website offers reliable information on juvenile justice statistics, study reports, and several policy reports.

National Council on Crime and Delinquency, www.nccd-crc.org

NCCD is a non-profit devoted to reducing delinquency and improving the lives of young people. The group also includes the Children's Research Center. There are several resources listed on this website, including studies, policy papers, and other related agencies and how to access their resources.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov

OJJDP, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, accomplishes its mission by supporting states, local communities, and tribal jurisdictions in their efforts to develop and implement effective programs for juveniles. The website provides information on grant opportunities, state level programs, links to relevant statistical information, and more.

Tolerance.org, www.tolerance.org

A web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Their mission is to "Fight Hate and Promote Tolerance." The website provides information on tolerance teaching resources for teachers, parents, teens and children.

Compiled by YALSA's Outreach for Young Adults with Special Needs Committee.