

# TEEN LIBRARY EVENTS



A Month-by-Month Guide

KIRSTEN EDWARDS

*Greenwood Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians*  
*C. Allen Nichols and Mary Anne Nichols, Series Editors*



GREENWOOD PRESS  
Westport, Connecticut • London

# TEEN LIBRARY EVENTS

This page intentionally left blank.

# TEEN LIBRARY EVENTS



A Month-by-Month Guide

*KIRSTEN EDWARDS*

Greenwood Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians  
*C. Allen Nichols and Mary Anne Nichols, Series Editors*



GREENWOOD PRESS

Westport, Connecticut • London

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Edwards, Kirsten, 1965–

Teen library events : a month-by-month guide / Kirsten Edwards.  
p. cm.—(Greenwood professional guides for young adult librarians,  
ISSN 1532–5571)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0–313–31482–9 (alk. paper)

1. Young adults' libraries—Activity programs—United States. 2. Public  
libraries—Services to teenagers—United States. I. Title. II. Series.

Z718.5.E35 2002

027.62'6—dc21 00–052430

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 2002 by Kirsten Edwards

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be  
reproduced, by any process or technique, without the  
express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 00–052430

ISBN: 0-313-31482-9

ISSN: 1532–5571

First published in 2002

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.  
[www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com)

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the  
Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National  
Information Standards Organization (Z39.48–1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

**Copyright Acknowledgments**

The author and publisher gratefully acknowledge permission for use of the following material:  
Figure 2.1, “Love Bites booklist,” used by permission of Lesley Knieriem.

This book is dedicated to  
Robyn L. (because we said we would)  
and to  
Lorraine Jackson Burdick,  
inspiration, friend, and partner in crime.

This page intentionally left blank.

# CONTENTS

	Series Foreword	ix
	Acknowledgments	xi
	Introduction	xiii
<b>1</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>1</b>
	Printz Award Display	3
	Question Board	3
	Booktalks	5
	Bookmaking	7
	Teen Book Discussion Group	7
	Community Resources	15
<b>2</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>19</b>
	Candy Raffle and Recruitment Drive	21
<b>3</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>25</b>
	Getting a Summer Job Program	25
<b>4</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>37</b>
	Young Writers' Coffeehouse Writing Contest	38
	Coffeehouse	45

<b>5</b>	May	51
	Card Design Project	53
	Library Trivia Program	53
<b>6</b>	June	69
	Library Lotto	70
	Animal Rescue Program	73
	Container Gardening	75
<b>7</b>	July	79
	New-Fashioned Ice Cream Social	79
	Spectacular T's	84
	Pen-Pal Program	89
<b>8</b>	August	99
	Comics & Cards Shop & Swap	99
<b>9</b>	September	107
	Internet Scavenger Hunt	107
	Book Discussion Group	113
	Teen Advisory Board	116
<b>10</b>	October	119
	Teen Read Week	119
	Urban Legends Program	122
<b>11</b>	November	127
	Mystery Night	128
	Humanities Programs	133
<b>12</b>	December	149
	Glass Ornament Craft Project	150
	Game Night	151
	Bibliography	155
	Index	161

## **SERIES FOREWORD**

We firmly believe in young adult library services and advocate for teens whenever we can. We are proud of our association with Greenwood Press and grateful for their acknowledgment of the need for additional resources for teen-serving librarians. We intend for this series to fill those needs, providing useful and practical handbooks for library staff. Readers will find some theory and philosophical musings, but for the most part, this series will focus on real-life library issues with answers and suggestions for front-line librarians.

Our passion for young adult librarian services continues to reach new peaks. As we travel to present workshops on the various facets of working with teens in public libraries, we are encouraged by the desire of librarians everywhere to learn what they can do in their libraries to make teens welcome. This is a positive sign since too often libraries choose to ignore this underserved group of patrons. We hope you find this series to be a useful tool in fostering your own enthusiasm for teens.

Mary Anne Nichols  
C. Allen Nichols  
*Series Editors*

This page intentionally left blank.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Nearly all of these programs were created for the King County Library System in Washington State. This quantity and quality of young adult programming would not be possible without an administration that also believes in the importance of good programs for teens and a Library Board's unwavering support of the same.

I would also like to acknowledge the debt of gratitude I owe to youth services librarians throughout the years for advice and clever ideas and to my good fortune in being able to work with so many of them at the King County Library System and as part of the Washington Library Association.

This page intentionally left blank.

## INTRODUCTION

In the United States and in other parts of the world, we are witnessing a new phenomenon: a teen subculture. Once the teen years were simply part of the transitional time from childhood to adulthood. Now, however, teens—or young adults (YA), as librarians like to call them—are a separate entity. They are almost, as Patricia Hersch titled her seminal book, *A Tribe Apart*. Ms. Hersch provides compelling evidence that teenagers in the United States do present us with a distinct service community. All youth are persons in transition, and all adults who work with them want primarily to help bring them safely to adulthood. Librarians today have more resources than ever to understand, approach, and work with this new tribe. I hope this small book will be a useful tool for the children's services librarian, the young adults' librarian, or the adult services librarian who wishes to initiate YA programming in his or her library.

This book contains a month-by-month description of programs an individual librarian can create for teens. In each case the librarian who wants to should be able to copy a program exactly, but with plenty of flexibility to tailor it to local needs. As much as possible, especially with craft programs, I have provided detailed instructions, lists of materials needed, and the like.

All the programs in this book have been “teen tested” in the sense that they’ve been used in the small northwestern community libraries where I work. Although it is true that teens have many developmental features in common, I am unwilling to concede that there is a “typical teen” any more than there is a typical 7 or 38 year old. People are diverse—not only in race, gender, or sexual preference but also in interests, goals, habits, and world views. Therefore, rather than give examples of rave reviews from individual teens for certain programs, in this book I show how a particular program meets the developmental needs or desires common to teenagers, or how it can be useful in forging a link between the local librarian and the community of teens she serves. No book, certainly not this handbook, can be a substitute for talking to and being involved with the individual teenagers in the reader’s own community.

One popular notion that continued exposure to children—and to the children on the verge of adulthood we call teenagers—will dispell is that of the desire for novelty. Indeed, the common preference of most individuals is for familiarity. The popularity of series titles is a clue. Repetition and variation are useful tools in creating a series of Young Adult programs. This book, designed as a starter kit, includes ways of expanding on the fledgling Young Adult program it will help to create.

Nearly every book carries assumptions about the reader and about how the book will be used. This one is no exception. The first is that the reader wants—in fact, *likes*—to learn. One of the programs mentioned in an upcoming chapter had its inception when a group of teens with whom I was working said that they thought a bookmaking class would be fun. I’m not an expert in bookmaking, but my local library contained helpful books and videos on the topic. When I’d finished reviewing these resources, I taught the young people, providing not only the materials and the opportunity to learn something useful and fun but also the living proof of what a library has to offer. To quote Lois Bujold’s mad Miles Vorkosigan, “If I can do it, *you* can do it.”

I was concerned that a “getting started” handbook might convey too many assumptions about the reader in terms of expertise, talent, or financial resources. Included in *Teen Library Events* are not only simple starter programs that anyone can do, but more complex ones that require self-training or the hiring or recruiting of an “expert.” These appear both set off throughout the text and at the end of certain chapters. Bibliographic aids—both print and electronic—are summarized at the end of the book for the reader’s convenience, but they are also mentioned as expert help within the chapters to which they apply. As to the program

costs, most can be done inexpensively but very few are free. Where it's possible, I have recommended the creation of a "craft box." The initial outlay for the basic supplies pays off down the road.

This book's biggest assumption is about you, the reader, wanting to serve youth. You've decided you want to plan, promote, and provide regular programming for teens. You know how to create a booklist and how to do readers' advisory and reference service for all your patrons, including teens. You can cope with the professional ethical requirements regarding freedom of information and the conflicts that often arise as people who are sometimes kids and sometimes adults (and sometimes both at the same time) deal with issues of sexuality, independence, and the consequences of adult choices. Perhaps you're a children's librarian or a reference librarian or a library school student who has decided that a Young Adult Services specialty in public libraries is for you. If, on the other hand, you're coming at this job from out in left field—perhaps you're a volunteer who has been asked to administer a new YA program—set this book down and order (either through Inter-Library Loan or from a bookstore) some of the many excellent basic titles on serving young adults in public libraries and read those first.

I hope that this book will be especially useful for the librarian just starting a Young Adult program. The motivation for writing it came from a friend who wanted to start a YA program at her small, independent library but didn't know where to begin. I hope this book will be a help to her and other librarians like her. It may also, however, be useful to the experienced Young Adult Services librarian who can use it as a handy reference tool for ideas when time and staff are limited.

This page intentionally left blank.

# 1 JANUARY

Traditionally the New Year begins with new resolutions and a chance for a new beginning. In many school systems, students come back from winter break and end the school term sometime in January or early February. This chapter discusses using the Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature (which is awarded in January at the midwinter ALA conference) to connect with teens and their teachers. Booktalks are briefly discussed as well. Two display ideas—one designed to market the Printz Award and the other to spark teen ideas and opinions—are offered. Optional programs include a simple bookmaking project and getting a book discussion club started. Keep in mind that when it comes to advertising or preparing for any given program, you'll want to give yourself plenty of advance time. Be prepared to read January's instructions in December, and February's in January.

As most of us are aware, there are three essential parts to any program, only one of which is the presentation. The first two are the advertising and the set-up. When you start Young Adult programming from scratch, you'll need to be patient—attendance is often poor at the beginning—and flexible. You'll want to generate interest and involvement on the part of teens. For this reason I include the Book Discussion Club as an optional program. It's moderately time consuming and expensive. If you're starting from scratch, you may want to lay the groundwork with

**Figure 1.1**  
**Michael Printz Award letter**

[Name of Teacher]  
 [School Name & Address]  
 [Date]

Dear Sir [or Ma'am]

Once again the American Library Association will choose a book that exemplifies literary excellence in young adult literature and give it the Michael L. Printz Award. [Use the [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa) Printz Award site to briefly describe last year's winner.]

I've enclosed a flyer highlighting the award that I hope you'll display in your classroom. I've sent a copy to the other English teachers, the school librarian, and the principal. We're very excited about showcasing the best in teen literature at [Name of your library] and hope you'll encourage your students to visit us and check out what we have to offer. [If you're offering the Make Your Own Best Book program in January, mention it here and include flyers.]

[Conclude by describing what services your local library has to offer teachers and their teenage students: help with class projects, booklists, booktalks, special teacher library cards, and library visits.] As the school year progresses, I'll be in touch with flyers and information about other library programs that may be of interest to you and your students.

According to the American Library Association's website, "A NEW AWARD FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM: The Michael L. Printz Award is an award for a book that exemplifies literary excellence in Young Adult literature. It is named for a Topeka, Kansas, school librarian who was a long-time active member of the Young Adult Library Services Association." For more information about the award, visit <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/printz/>.

Many schoolteachers think Young Adult novels are merely series romances or packaged teen thrillers and movie tie-ins. But librarians know that Young Adult literature can also exemplify excellent writing and unforgettable stories. The annual Michael Printz Award winner can be a helpful introduction of good YA literature to high school and upper middle school English teachers.

If you're expanding an existing Young Adult program, you could tie in the award with offers to teachers to booktalk past (and possible) Printz winners. Or you could use it as the starting point for a book discussion club in which students "Pick the Printz" and discuss which book really is the best Young Adult novel.

You can print out the website information to create a catchy bulletin board display, adding copies of the Printz Award winner, runners up, and past winners. See Figure 1.1 for a sample letter that can be used for announcing this type of program to teachers, the school librarian, and the principal.