Teen Interest Group

February 18, 2-4 at Owings Mills Branch (BCPL)

Book share

- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft: middle grade graphic novel discussing race and microaggressions.
- *Frankly in Love* by David Yoon: teen romance hijinks with a first generation Korean main.
- *Deposing Nathan* by Zack Smedley: unreliable bisexual narrator during depositions.
- *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* by Tomi Adeyemi: Fantasy coming of age novel.
- *Legend* by Maire Lu: Dystopian story told in a dual perspective.
- *Vinland Saga* by Makoto Yukimura: an older Viking manga title with new anime appeal.
- *Bloody Seoul* by Sonia Patel: A story of trauma written towards healing.
- *Nyxia* by Scott Reintgen: A 2030 space exploration competition.
- *Stars Beneath our Feet* by David Barclay Moore: Middle grade novel about processing grief.
- *Dark and Deepest Red* by Anna-Marie McLemore: Magical based on the dancing plague.
- *Sadie* by Courtney Summers: Search for a sister’s murder (try the audio version).
- *Hey Kiddo* by Jarret Krosoczka: Graphic novel about addiction and meaning of family.
- *Grace Year* by Kim Liggett: A dark survival story where women live out a grace year in the woods.

Announcements

MLA Conference is May 6-8 at the Hyatt in Cambridge. Some presentations of note include:

- A preconference on T3 will be led by Kelsey and Carrie Sanders. This will focus on connected learning, computational thinking and growth / development of teens.
- A preconference on Dungeons and Dragons (DND) will be led by Jake. This will include why to play DND, how to get it started and time to play a tutorial.
- A preconference on Build a Better Book workshop will be led by LBPH.
- A session on organizing a Prom Clothing Giveaway will occur on Thursday from 9am-10am.
- A session on Next Level Teen Programming will occur on Friday from 11am-12pm.

Discussion

We looked at YALSA Teen Space Guidelines and A Place of their Own to discuss teen spaces.

- Soliciting teen feedback: There is a roadblock with getting teen input because of the library timeline, budget and management decisions.
  - If we include teens we could set boundaries or direct the conversation into what is possible.
  - We could also make the conversation about their interests or what they want to feel in the space and create ideas from that.
  - Getting teen feedback on policies might be helpful to get buy-in on things like gaming or noise.
If we involve teens, we should try to be transparent and give them updates as decisions points happen.

- Balancing the space: how do we make a teen space something for everyone?
  - There has been a challenge balancing teens that want to hang out and teens that want to read – sometimes the latter group won’t venture into the space.
  - If possible, pulling out some of the collection might make it accessible for readers – or having readers pick out books and make their own displays to give ownership.
  - Meeting rooms could be an alternative, if possible, to spread out groups.
  - Having staff present is important to build relationships and be a welcoming face.
  - Signage might be helpful to give customers an idea of what to expect.
  - There is a challenge creating a space where tweens or teens can co-exist if they have different needs.
    - There can be an element of mentorship by having older teens teach younger teens about high school, program elements, skill sets or offering volunteer opportunities.
  - Adults might want to use the space as well if the furniture is more attractive - some places have created boundaries that a space is for teens during a certain set of hours. Be sure to give adults a warning that teens are coming.

- Space alternatives: How can we rethink a teen space?
  - We shouldn’t limit teens just to the teen space.
  - Using artwork or displays to give teens ownership of their space.
  - Thinking of any place that a librarian sets up for teens as a teen space – whether it is outreach or not.
  - For libraries that are not immediately next to a school, libraries might consider whether the space is a destination or a hangout.
  - Bulletin boards can be considered a teen space and used to encourage engagement. A teen operated cart could also be a space.
  - The bookmobile is a challenge because it might not be appealing to teens, but they offer things like iPads or Nintendo Switches which could be incentives.
  - There is a library potentially in New Jersey that has added a branch as a bus stop. There are laws that regulate this so we might not be able to do it – cool idea though. The school spearheaded it and gave students permission slips to get off at the stop parents had to sign.
  - Inclusion is important. We can have diverse book displays, marketing for Spanish-speaking customers, considering high holidays when planning programs.
  - A charging area might have a lot of appeal but keeping the cords from walking is challenging.
  - Library virtual spaces are challenging as well – it’s hard to keep current and know what teens are using. This also creates a conversation of privacy for teen information and posting guidelines.

- Guidelines: How to get staff on board and create a fair space?
  - Noise is a concern, but it is a natural consequence of many bodies in the space at once.
Policing noise is challenging too because it can relate to cultural backgrounds, different abilities, etc. The quiet library is antiquated.

Maintaining some guidelines with the teens is easier when there are established relationships. It is also easier when it is a branch culture – not just reliant on one or two staff.

Maybe incorporate that the library is for everyone with different needs during library card registration – this will establish a customer culture that noise level might be louder.

We need to think about how we police food. Most kids are hungry after school and a lot of libraries are in areas with restaurants they are not allowed to stay in, so they bring the food to the library.

How we define teen is blurry – some use grades 6 through 12; some define it as 12 to 18 year old; some start at 14.

Next meeting will be mid-April. We will aim for a library in Cecil County.