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## The Path to Empowerment for Young Adult Library Services

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"YOUTH CONSTITUTES A GLOBAL RESOURCE of the first magnitude. They have available a wealth of knowledge which, if wisely applied, can create a world of unprecedented well-being," declared then United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in 1985 ("United Nations Chronicle Perspective" 1986, p. 28). In contrast to this message of hope, young adult (YA) librarians and the services they provide are continuously endangered as are services to youth in the greater society. It is essential that YA librarians, both in school and public libraries, take a close look at the realities they face and the actions that must be taken if services that teenagers need and deserve are to not only be maintained, but also expanded to the large majority of libraries that do not have special services for young adults.

This article will explore the following areas: (1) coming to terms with the problem, the current standing of youth in our society, and the impact this has on all services for youth; (2) why the traditional approach, though important, cannot be the only focus for gaining power; and (3) what can be done locally, regionally, and nationally to empower youth, young adult librarians, and increase and improve young adult services and opportunities to gain power in the future.

### STATUS OF YOUNG ADULTS AND THE IMPACT ON SERVICES

Young adults are a minority in this country not merely in numbers but in their standing in society. They are the voters and decision-makers of the near future, an incredible national resource of creativity, energy, and intelligence. However, like the "beast" in "Beauty and the Beast," teenagers are often viewed narrowly and with revulsion and are seen only as noisy sarcastic creatures filled with an abundance of sexual energy.

Teenagers have little actual power. In the educational system some adults would like to control their minds by limiting what they can read

or learn through curriculum and texts or what ideas they might choose to be exposed to in the school or public library. Perusing any issue of the American Library Association's (ALA) *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* one can find at least a dozen examples of such restrictions from across the country from Judy Blume or Robert Cormier novels to textbooks with information on evolution (Office of Intellectual Freedom, p. 28). In the realm of personal decisions, there are those who would like to dictate morality to all young people. For instance, a number of states, including California, have attempted through legislation to force teenage young women seeking abortions to obtain parental consent ("Doctors Challenge Parental Consent Law" 1987, p. 1). Also, many school districts across the country are not allowing possibly life-saving information about AIDS to be distributed (Lesley 1987).

In the world of work, the idea periodically arises to pay youth a lower minimum wage than adults receive (Ruffin 1984, p. 19). This is purportedly so employers will increase job opportunities for youth and as a result decrease the high youth unemployment rate and also decrease the astronomically higher minority youth unemployment rates. In reality, a young person's work, though identical to an adult's, is considered to be worth less. This concept would be unacceptable to propose for any other societal minority.

As for leisure, in local communities adults often get upset when teenagers hang about on the street, yet few communities have city or county-sponsored youth centers, programs, or commissions. There is little recognition that this age group has a strong need to spend time with peers and away from adults and that they are on the streets for lack of any other place to be. Adults can get equally upset when youth do manage to find ways to amuse themselves. For example, skateboards are back in fashion as a form of fun and transportation; rather than figure out how skateboards can coexist with communities, some communities and condominium developments have banned or attempted to ban skateboards ("Skateboarder's Union" 1987, p. 15). Teenagers' status as a true minority can be witnessed in many convenience store windows. These stores, often frequented by youth, may have signs in the window, even in progressive communities like Berkeley, California, that say: "Only Two Students In Store at a Time." People accept this as normal, yet substitute the word "students" with the words "women," "blacks," or "latinos" and it would be considered outrageous. In many ways society tells young people that their ideas, needs, work, and skills are not valued until that magic day they turn eighteen.

Since youth are undervalued, their needs and problems are not being addressed adequately. A study by Peter Uhlenberg and David Eggebeen of the University of North Carolina concludes that there has been a serious decline in adolescent well-being between 1960 and 1980. Some disturbing trends include an 11 percent decline in SAT verbal

scores, more than doubled rates of teenage illegitimate birth, delinquency, and drug usage. In addition, teen suicide rates have tripled in the past thirty years ("The Unhappy Years" 1987, p. 60).

Meanwhile, the status of youth-serving agencies and organizations is a direct reflection of the status of those they serve. In the past fifteen to twenty years youth organizations have found it more and more difficult to survive because of funding cutbacks. Many groups spend much of their time doing creative fund-raising. Two key national youth organizations that went out of existence in the past five years are the National Youth Work Alliance and the National Commission on Resources for Youth.

Youth have not been a national priority. Funding that used to exist has been eliminated during the Reagan administration. In the U.S. Congress, there is only one committee that deals with youth issues—the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families—formed in the ninety-eighth Congress (*Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 1987, p. 386). In the Senate there is only a Children's Caucus and a Subcommittee on Children and Families ("From Washington D.C." 1987, p. 15). And yet, in a dramatization of their needs, youth at a national conference of the Child Welfare League of America emphasized the need for government and organization support. They noted that if present trends continue, in a forty member class graduating from high school in the year 2000, two will give birth, eight will drop out of school, eleven will be unemployed, fifteen will be living in poverty, thirty-six will use alcohol, seventeen will use marijuana, eight will use cocaine, six will run away from home, and one will commit suicide ("Youth Empowerment" 1987, p. 2).

The low status of youth and youth work organizations was exemplified by the nearly invisible celebration in the United States of the United Nation's International Youth Year (IYY) in 1985. As opposed to International Year of the Child, which was given wide coverage in the media and was visible to the general public, International Youth Year had very little media attention and visibility. Although forty-four of the fifty states had an IYY Commission at least in name, many had little or no funding. The national IYY Commission generated no significant youth legislation, and the official commission became a very political partisan organization at odds with the traditional youth-serving organizations (Flum 1985). Why the difference between Youth Year and Year of the Child in terms of visibility? Although children also have a minority status in our society and are also in great need of empowerment and services, they have a lovable image and are seen as needing protection, whereas youth, as mentioned earlier, are often viewed as uncouth "beasts" and do not gain empathy easily from many in society.

In summary, young adults, teenagers, and adolescents, while being on the verge of adulthood and needing much role modeling, support, and assistance, are a minority in society and treated as such. They are

given low priority as are their needs, many of which are at crisis levels. This basic issue must be addressed by youth, youth workers, and society as a whole if we expect to produce healthy whole adults who can deal with the complex issues facing the world and it is hoped move our culture toward a saner world of the future.

### CURRENT STANDING OF YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

Many public libraries do not have special services, collections, or staff for teenagers. According to Gerald Hodges: "In those libraries in which 'young adult services' are part of a job description, the combination is frequently with adult reference, audiovisual services, technical services, children's services, etc. (Hodges 1987, p. 169)." YA services are not very visible in the library world and are often a low priority service in libraries that have them. Because of the disappearance of YA coordinator positions in different parts of the country and changes in others, two articles have appeared in the past several years addressing the issue (Isaaco 1985; Holmes 1987). Even library graduate schools have limited, if any, course offerings related to YA services. This struggle to keep YA services alive is not just on the local or regional front. Even within ALA the Young Adult Services Division (YASD) has had to struggle for its existence. Over the years proposed division rule changes that determine division income and what share of ALA expenses each division must bear has almost caused YASD to disappear (Regina Menudri to Flum, personal communication, 29 Dec. 1987).

YA services, then, are a low priority within the library profession with little funding, support, status, or clout as is true of the young adults it is attempting to serve in society. The problem then is much greater than one of just young adult library services. The solution requires a different strategy than young adult librarians have taken in the past. Rather than focusing almost entirely on one's own library and the teenagers that use it, it is essential to focus outward. A YA librarian must understand the value of what quality YA services can do for teenagers; promote the value of the service; document quantitatively and qualitatively what YA services are accomplishing; be a youth advocate in the library, in the community, regionally, and at the state and national levels; work together with youth and other youth workers to advocate for more programs and funds for youth; make youth's issues known; and help youth gain more visibility and credibility in the community with those who make the laws.

At this point one may wonder why bother? Society doesn't value these clients. As a result, YA librarians and library services are given little or no priority in the library world.

Change is always possible. It is a process that can be slow. The work YA people do today may not bear much fruit tomorrow, but it can lay down roots and foundation for those who come after: for young adult librarians, for youth workers in society, and most importantly for future

young adults or teenagers. To begin, it is important to understand why it is worth advocating special services for young adults.

### THE VALUE OF YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

Young adults (for the purpose of this article, junior high and high school age youth) are at a key time in their life. They experience physical changes in their bodies, emotional turmoil, peer pressure greater than in the past, a need to try on different behaviors, to try out ideas and values, to explore who they are and what they want to do right now and with the rest of their life. It is an exciting, difficult, and challenging time for young adults. If they are lucky, they will have a variety of adult role models to learn about, interact with, and observe. They will be given the chance in school, at home, and in the community to try out various areas of interest. They will be taught critical thinking skills to prepare them for life, and they will be exposed to a variety of safe and perhaps enriching activities for relaxation or recreation. Unfortunately, because it is a time of experimentation, there are many ways a young person can get hurt or hurt others—this is inevitable. As previously noted, this society does not put a high priority on facilitating the difficulty of adolescence through services for any aspect of their lives.

What role does or can a library play? A school library or media center can be foremost a place a young person can more fully explore information and ideas related to the school experience. The environment that a young person finds there is also important. A friendly helpful staff that make it clear that their primary role is to expand access to the collection rather than a behavior monitor can make a big difference. If school libraries had enough funds they could also focus on recreational materials. After all, this may be the only library experience a young person may get.

A public library can offer the young adult a welcoming environment to be alone and think or to be with his/her friends. It can offer a young adult librarian who serves as a youth advocate the opportunity to develop a collection of materials that is of a recreational, personal, or curiosity stimulating nature, and allow the YA librarian to get to know the young adults in the library and in the community and thereby making young adults aware of services available to them. The library can offer book talks to stimulate reading to an age group that may associate reading as negative. It can offer programs on topics of interest to young adults and in this way draw them into the library. It can offer volunteer opportunities for young adults that can allow them to try out skills and develop self-confidence and enhance their self-esteem. It can develop a teen advisory group to provide the library with feedback on how best to serve them. Overall it can be one institution that treats young adults with respect, gives them opportunities to be themselves, and find out who they want to be. It can do this through books and other resources and be a real help to kids with personal issues that perhaps are

too difficult to ask an adult about. Through novels and biographies they can learn about the world and themselves. A key function of YA services is to show young adults before they enter the adult world the value the library and its facilities can have in their life and get them into a library habit before they graduate from high school.

In summary then, YA services assist young adults during their formative years and can be a catalyst in their development—i.e., to be diverse, curious, and responsible adults. It ensures a base of future adult library users who will support and value the library. It requires having young adult librarians who are not only knowledgeable about YA literature and materials but are attuned to young adults, are advocates for their rights and needs, and are willing to invest considerable energy in outreach and networking.

### WHY TRADITIONAL STRATEGIES ARE NOT ENOUGH

Lobbying for general library issues at the state and national level is a traditional strategy recommended to YA librarians. The ALA and its youth services divisions, through their legislation committees, sponsor lobbying workshops for youth librarians at their annual conference. The programs usually have excellent speakers and handouts and usually encourage youth-serving librarians to lobby on library issues at state and national legislative days, to write letters supporting library issues of concern, to work on political campaigns to make state, national, and local leaders more focused on libraries and library issues, and to form legislative networks across the state or across the country to inform like-minded YA librarians of issues.

The young adult librarian who attempts to follow the advice of the standard or traditional approach faces many barriers. First, the youth librarian in that official role can only lobby if the library director approves that activity. From this writer's own experience with California's state legislative day, only 1 or 2 percent of the attendees are children or young adult librarians or coordinators. The reality is that if only a handful of people are able to attend from a library it will likely be the library director and managers who attend. Second, the issues at the state or federal level that generate legislation most likely are general and often do not have a youth emphasis. Youth services often do benefit from some general legislation such as the Library Service and Construction Act (LSCA) for public libraries and Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) Chapter 2 for school libraries. Third, there is usually little or no youth-interest representation on most state level library committees that recommend what legislation will be introduced or promoted.

The young adult librarian needs more than this. The YA librarian needs information on how to use lobbying skills within one's own organization to prevent cutbacks on YA positions or YA funds; or working with administrators on how best to face a challenge to a YA

book or record; how to build strength on the regional, state, and national level; and how to empower youth and youth services.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE ON THE HOME FRONT?

The local library is the most basic place to begin. YA librarians can view themselves as youth advocates and observe how their library as a whole presents itself to young adults, what it is saying through the ways they treat young adults and through the policies that exist within the library. They can work to eliminate any double standards which may exist between teenagers and other age groups concerning access to services. If there are negative or unfair messages received by teenagers, YA librarians can use lobbying skills to effect change. The staff members responsible for YA services can select and prioritize problem areas. Problems or consequences of the current situation can be documented and presented at staff meetings. Teenagers can be interviewed, current practices examined, and new policies proposed.

As new policies are being developed, it is essential that YA staff examine these carefully and make his/her viewpoint known. Does the new policy include young adults, does it treat them on an equal basis with other patrons or are they excluded from using a new service? Examples of policies that can affect teenagers in a less than optimal way are policies about public access computers (will certain types of software such as games be taboo?); videocassettes (who can check them out? will motion picture rating codes be used as a way of restricting access?); patron registration policies (is it more difficult for teenagers to get library cards than others because of a lack of proper identification?); access policies (do teenagers have access to the entire collection and can they check out all items and use all services adults do?); telephone reference (are questions believed to be homework questions treated differently than if the same question was asked by an adult?); and behavior and conduct policies (are adults and kids treated the same way if identical behavior is exhibited?).

Other areas that need to be monitored are YA staffing levels, YA materials budget, the YA materials selection process, and handling of intellectual freedom challenges. In addition, YA services must be a part of any plans that are being developed by the library such as the Public Library Development Program. Also, the YA person can document the success of the YA service by using output measures and other devices to capture qualitative and quantitative information to justify the value of the service.

What skills are necessary to play this local and very key advocacy role? Establishing *credibility* within the organization means doing one's job well, serving the teenagers who use the library, bringing in more young adults, and making YA services visible and valued in the community. Being viewed as a team player is very important.

Participating in and caring about the organization as a whole is essential. Those only seen as caring about teenagers at the expense of

others or other services will not be listened to. It is indeed a tightrope—being an advocate for youth and balancing their needs with the needs of other patrons and the library's resources. Being an educator is an important part of being an advocate. It includes tactfully educating coworkers, clerks, supervisors, and administrators about YA services; how policies impact on youth; alternative ways to handle problems with teenagers; and getting staff to remember their own youth so as to empathize with teenagers instead of being negative about them.

Being tactful or diplomatic is an essential key to success. Approaching a supervisor or administrator in an adversarial way is less effective than approaching the problem in a positive way. Being assertive is also important. One can be clear and assertive while at the same time being tactful and diplomatic. Building a case means having facts, incidents, and statistics to document a point of view. Offering solutions or alternatively worded policies that would not only work for YA but for all others concerned will be accepted most favorably because they offer viable alternatives for the administration.

Another major role for the young adult librarian as youth advocate is working to empower youth themselves to express library needs and wants. Starting youth advisory groups to get direct feedback on the direction of the YA collection and service and to comment on the overall library policies and services that affect them can be especially valuable (Tuccillo 1986, pp. 15-16). Working to get a young adult to be a voting library commission or board of trustees member can be a significant step in representing young adults' needs and interests (Snider 1985, p. 10). Having youth participate in volunteer activities that support the library can be a tremendous opportunity and can also give all staff levels more intimate contact with teenagers that can help diffuse or break down negative stereotypes.

School librarians can adapt the earlier discussed information to fit school situations. They need to examine library and school policies and educate superiors especially the school principal and school board. School librarians can be familiar with the school environment, sell teachers on the value of the school library's programs and services, get young adults involved in youth participation projects, and be active in local parents groups. It is especially important to be prepared for intellectual freedom challenges and to develop allies—especially teachers and parents—who support the school's position and policies.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE COMMUNITY?

To be optimally effective as a young adult librarian one needs to understand fully the environment young people experience in the local community—at school, at play, on the streets, or in the home—and make the library an essential part of it. This requires an active rather than passive role. Young adult librarians need to make connections with other young adult librarians serving the same clients. If in a public library, contact the local secondary school librarians and share informa-

tion about each others services and what each knows about the local environment, needs, and interests of teenagers. The librarian needs to learn as much as possible about the school environment including the school calendar, population, special programs, school newspaper, year-books, and extracurricular activities. In the process of discovery it is essential that the YA librarian purposefully educate these contacts about the library clearly giving examples along the way. The drama coach may not be aware of the extent of the library's play collection, the school counselor may have no idea of the library's collection of YA oriented personal information books or that the library has a community information file. The YA librarian also needs to inform school staff about available YA library services and how to obtain them.

The same applies in the community at large. The young adult librarian can explore what services and organizations are for and by youth; introduce the library to them; meet the youth workers and share common information, problems, and goals; and identify youth issues in the community and work on collective solutions. The YA librarian can inform other youth workers how the library can be of use to community groups—e.g., letting these groups know about free meeting room space, display cases, the opportunities to post flyers, and the uses of reference services. The goal is to build professional relationships with school personnel and community youth workers so that there will be cooperation in youth empowerment activities.

Similar outreach efforts can be effective for the school librarian. Two entire issues of the *Emergency Librarian* focus on school library coalition building (*Emergency Librarian* 1980; *Emergency Librarian* 1984).

### WHAT CAN BE DONE BY NETWORKING?

Building a base of strength for YA services locally and regionally depends on strong links not only in the local community but also in the regional professional community. Staff members of a school district or public library system are usually linked to other organizations with broader circles of influence. Staff members can see to it that the interests of young adults and young adult services are visible in these larger circles. Participating in regional committees that are established to deal with young adult services is a primary level of support. If there are no such committees, working to create these can be a first step. Book selection, joint booklists for the public, and cooperatively planned programs can be products of regional activity.

Book review groups are a common type of regional cooperative activity which includes school and public librarians. In California, for example, there are two such groups—the Bay Area Young Adult Librarians and the YA Book Reviewers of Southern California. Although the primary activity is book reviewing, some groups do have business meetings, continuing education programs, and newsletters. Book

review groups could play an effective advocacy role in making YA services more visible and powerful in the region. Activities could include youth advocacy, public relations, lobbying, and networking. A networking committee could meet with nonlibrary youth service groups in the region to create a more effective power base. The key is to share common concerns, to educate each other about what services each organization is providing for youth, and how the groups can mutually support each other and gain strength by working together to improve youth services.

At the state level the library community can link with the youth lobbying organization that represents the traditional youth-serving organizations—e.g., Campfire Girls, Scouts, YMCA, girls and boys clubs, etc. In addition, regional connections can be made with the member organizations. The Young Adult Services Division of ALA has linked up with sixteen youth-serving organizations with the assistance of its National Organizations Serving the Young Adult Liaison (NOSYAL) committee. Regional partnerships can be made with these organizations as well. Linking the library community directly with the youth worker community will not only increase and improve visibility and credibility within the community but will be a way that the state association or regional group can be aware of what issues are coming up legislatively for youth which may impact libraries. Regional or state organizations have the capacity to create an effective legislative letter-writing network to support library and other youth-related legislation. This connection could be a powerful step not only in fighting repressive legislation that removes the rights and privileges of youth but also to develop the legislation needed to empower youth. Building strong coalitions on the state and regional levels with all types of youth workers and involving youth in the process are key steps in making this change.

Also at the state level, YA librarians can ensure that there is youth librarian representation on the government relations committees of the state library associations. New York Library Association is the only state library association this author is aware of that structurally includes at least one youth librarian on its government relations committee.

The state intellectual freedom committee is another state library association committee that needs youth service representation. Since most of the challenges involve children's or young adult materials, experts in dealing with these matters would be valuable members on these committees.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE WITHIN ALA?

ALA's structure and organization currently gives Young Adult Services Division the opportunity to participate and to be represented on many different fronts. The youth services divisions, through their board of directors and elected division councilors, provide input and

participate in policy-making within ALA. A good example of how these ties can be effectively used to strengthen the youth services divisions happened in 1981 when the Interpretations for the Library Bill of Rights were being updated. Because there is value in caucusing, the youth services divisions' intellectual freedom committees worked together to make sure their divisions' concerns were addressed by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC). They raised these issues and offered to prepare draft statements. They worked through layers of the revision process and went back and forth between the ALA, IFC, and the division boards. The result was a victory. Youth interests were better represented in at least three revised interpretations and also in a completely new interpretation on library programming. All passed in the council vote.

Structurally, the youth services divisions have the potential to meet their objectives—politically—within ALA. Currently all committees are encouraged to find their counterparts in the other youth divisions, to meet and share information and ideas, and to cosponsor programs with other divisions. Recently the three youth divisions have been working more closely together and have met at conferences to plan, to apply for grants, to sponsor the youth division presidents' programs, and more.

The youth services divisions need to take opportunities when they arise to advocate the rights of youth and youth services. This means using opportunities such as International Youth Year (1985), Year of the Reader (1986), the next White House Conference on Library and Information Science, and the Young Americans Act.

In light of the low status of YA services, YASD needs to play a significant leadership role in advocating the importance of young adult library services and to work not only to maintain YA services where they exist but to encourage all public libraries to have YA services. It can launch an education and visibility campaign within ALA and the library community to sell library administrators, library school deans, and state librarians on its worth. It can also deepen its liaisons with the youth work community so that YA services librarians are aware of legislation and issues of concern to the youth work community and YA services are recognized nationally as a valuable youth service.

## LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Moving toward a place of power is hard work and a slow process. Youth advocates today build upon the steps of those who came before them. Henry Bergh established the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1874 to give children at least the rights of animals eight years after he established the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In 1903, Mother Jones, at age seventy-three, launched a march of injured children on President Roosevelt's house to call attention to the child labor situation. National child labor laws were not established until 1941 (Isabel 1978).

What is needed to empower youth and all those serving them—including young adult librarians—is a comprehensive national youth policy, one that not only addresses problems of youth but values youth and utilizes their talents (Pearl 1978). In February 1987 a bill was introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate that would strongly move in that direction. The bill is called the Young Americans Act (Senate Bill 476 and House Resolution 1003). It is designed to do for youth what the Older Americans Act did for senior citizens. The Child Welfare League of America and the National Network of Runaway and Homeless Youth have supported the legislation. In Senator Dodd's introduction of Senate Bill 476 he states:

The Young American's Act of 1987 is a first step toward a concrete, systematic plan to build an optimum future for all young Americans. We do strategic planning for every other area of critical importance. We have long term plans for the military, with the joint Chiefs of Staff advising the President at every turn....We have long-term plans for our Nation's Highways, bridges, and tunnels, because they provide the infrastructure for our cities. Well, children are the future security for this country and the future infrastructure for our democracy (*Congressional Record* 1987, p. S 1807).

The bill, if passed, would have the president appoint the commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families; would set up a federal council to advise the president and the Congress; would provide for a White House Conference on Young Americans to be held in 1990; and would give grants to states to prevent young people from being ignored.

For this to become a reality and receive funding in the next few years may seem far from possible, but interestingly a Harris Poll reveals that adults believe children to be under duress and that their problems are increasing and not declining.

90 percent want the government to provide health care coverage for children who cannot get health insurance. 70 percent want the government to provide birth control services for teenagers....Seventy-six percent...are willing to increase their taxes to give more money to the public schools; 83 percent would pay higher taxes for drug prevention programs...("The Plight of Children" 1987, p. 1).

Looking toward the year 2000, it is more important than ever to work toward getting more visibility and value placed on youth and their needs. Although between 1987 and 1990 the number of youth between the ages of thirteen and nineteen will actually drop slightly, between 1990 and the year 2000 the youth population will increase its overall share of the population by 6.4 percent to become 10 percent of the overall population for a projected total of 26,849,000 thirteen-to-nineteen-year olds. This is 2 million more youths than in 1987 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce 1984).

Other hopeful signs for youth empowerment are:

1. Committees in the U.S. House and Senate—In the past two years both the House and Senate have created committees to deal with

children and youth. The House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families is chaired by Chairman George Miller of California (*Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 1987, p. 386). A senate subcommittee on Children and Families plus a Senate Children's Caucus are chaired by Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut ("From Washington, D.C." 1987, p. 15).

2. National Youth Network—A national network of youth formed by youth attending leadership training sessions at a national conference in 1987 sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America. They have lobbied for the Young Americans Act, intend to take responsibility in their communities for preventing teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and other issues affecting youth, and to involve youth in improving their schools and communities ("Youth Empowerment" 1987, pp. 2-3).
3. Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development—Created in fall 1986 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to generate public and private support for measures that can prevent seriously damaging problems in adolescence and to find better ways of promoting healthier adolescent development. It will study the issues for three to five years and will have leaders in the fields of science, law, communications, education, media, government, and business recommend solutions.
4. Youth 2000—The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in collaboration with the Department of Labor have launched a national campaign to form partnership between federal, state, and local governments and business, labor, school, and nonprofit groups. The goal is to motivate thousands of American youth who are at risk of becoming "disconnected" from society. The initiative hopes to reduce teen pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse, reduce deaths due to vehicle accidents and suicide, increase reading and literacy levels of youth, and decrease the number of high school drop-outs (Elder 1987, pp. 32-33).
5. Second White House Conference on Library and Information Science—Legislation has been introduced and preliminary planning has been done for a second White House Conference on Libraries. The first in 1979 was preceded by town meetings and regional and state conferences. It is unknown how many young adult librarians and youth advocates attended these and the national conference as delegates but there were twenty-seven delegates under the age of twenty (6 percent of the lay delegates and 4 percent of the total delegates). Over sixty youth-related resolutions were introduced. Five of the sixty-four resolutions that came out of the conference were youth related (White House Conference 1979). YA librarians need to start planning now. Common goals and an educational process could be developed for library services for youth.

## CONCLUSIONS

The path to empowerment for young adult library services is not an easy road and not one to be tread alone. It takes substantial numbers of people who care. Young adult librarians, trained in people skills and outreach skills, have all the raw material needed. Progress is possible with determination, energy, and a passionate belief in youth as well as patience and guts. YA librarians must be advocates, must keep their vision broad, and must believe that youth's day will come. If today's youth are empowered by being helped to understand their rights, by having their concerns listened to, and by giving them opportunities to express themselves and participate, perhaps as adults they will help create a country in which youth are appreciated, respected, and given the support and opportunities they need.

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