About the Conference

Since 2000, the Young Adult Literature Conference (YAL) from Northeastern Illinois University’s Center for College Access and Success has demonstrated how the combination of compelling books with thoughtful pedagogy can turn adolescents (and their teachers!) into engaged readers. Teachers participate in two interactive Saturday workshops designed around the featured conference books and leave with teaching strategies they can use immediately in their classrooms. Friday night sessions include Teacher Unit Presentations of work done in classrooms on previous years’ YAL books. Come and enjoy a convivial, intellectually stimulating time away from everyday routines to reinvigorate your practice and rediscover the joy of reading for pleasure as well as learning.

“Excellent books. Wonderful presenters. I’m so glad I was able to participate.”

Conference Cost

$450.00 conference fee for teachers from non-partnership schools. This includes two books, three meals, and an overnight stay in a private room.

Teachers working with eligible grade levels in GEAR UP & Morton schools pay $50.00 conference fee, to cover cost of food. Remaining participation cost is paid for by grant.

Registration

Register at yal.c4cas.org

Register early to ensure your choice of workshops.

CPS Learning Hub: Course Code 33552, Class Code 65890

For more information, call Dan Laubacher at (312) 563-7134.

The Q Conference Center
1405 N 5th Ave. St.
Charles, IL 60174

October 21 - 22, 2016

Conference At-A-Glance

Friday 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm
Welcome, Workshops & Teacher Unit Presentations

Saturday 9:30 am - 4:00 pm
Featured Book Workshops & Closing Reflection

Full participation on both days is required to Earn 6 CPDUs
The 2016-17 YAL Conference Books

All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely

All American Boys is an extraordinary novel that takes on the issue of police brutality against people of color. The story is about two all-American boys—Rashad, who is black, and Quinn, who is white—high school classmates who don’t know each other well. But when Rashad is falsely accused of stealing from a convenience store and brutally beaten by a police officer, Quinn witnesses the event. As Rashad struggles to recover and understand why this has happened, Quinn struggles with the knowledge that the brutal officer is his best friend’s older brother. Rashad and Quinn tell their stories in alternating chapters written by two award-winning YA authors, one black and one white, whose inspired collaboration invites us all to join in the fight against tenacious American racism. Grade 7 and up.

Ashfall by Mike Mullin

In Ashfall, the supervolcano under Yellowstone erupts, blanketing much of the United States in a thick, deadly layer of ash. As society begins to break down under the strain of the disaster, one boy must make his way across Iowa to reunite with his family. This coming-of-age tale explores concepts of volcanology, physics, engineering, and food science, and also raises questions about the true cost of survival and the importance of holding on to humanity in the face of cataclysmic events. Grade 9 and up.

Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White by Lila Quintero Weaver

In Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White, Lila Quintero Weaver shares her story in a beautifully illustrated graphic format. In 1961, five-year-old Lila emigrates with her family from Buenos Aires, Argentina to Marion, Alabama. Middle class, educated Latino immigrants, the Quinteros were outsiders to the racially charged culture of small town Alabama during the Civil Rights movement. Neither white nor black, Lila and her family bear witness to the great inequalities of the Jim Crow South, and the brave citizens who stood up for justice. Weaver’s stunning black and white capture her memories of courageous civil rights activists, awkward moments at school, and cultural conflicts within an immigrant family. In the dark room with her father, she recalls being fascinated with watching the film develop: “before my eyes the latent image flowered.” Just so, the reader experiences Weaver’s story as she unfolds image after image to reveal her own young life flowering in a black and white world. Grade 7 and up.

Hannah Arendt’s Little Theater by Marion Muller-Colard and Clémence Pollet

Hannah Arendt’s Little Theater, a slim, elegantly illustrated book, is at first read a simple and straightforward allegory arguing for critical thinking and personal responsibility in dark times. It invites us to learn more about German philosopher Hannah Arendt’s signature ideas as they apply to past events (in particular the Holocaust) and begs us to question how we must think and act in response to current social and political conditions. Grade 7 and up.
El libro salvaje por Juan Villoro

En una edad digital, El libro salvaje nos invita a perdernos en el laberinto de libros de una casa antigua y mágica en la Ciudad de México. El joven protagonista descubre por medio de su tío bibliófilo, que nosotros no escogemos a los libros, sino que los libros escogen a sus lectores, se cambian de lugar y hasta pueden reescribirse según el lector, como ocurre cuando Juan trata de impresionar a una joven con su selección de novelas. El libro salvaje nos abre la puerta de una manera contemporánea y accesible, a la gran tradición literaria latinoamericana y el estilo del realismo mágico. Con este título, podemos explorar el rol del libro en la vida de los jóvenes y el potencial del bilingüismo en el éxito académico. Grade 7 and up.

Rationale: This title is a Spanish language selection featured as a vehicle for developing and maintaining Spanish literacy, and for preparing students to earn the State of Illinois Seal of Biliteracy. The workshop will be conducted in Spanish. This book and workshop will be of interest to Spanish and Bilingual teachers, librarians, family educators, club sponsors, teachers and administrators interested in advancing Biliteracy for all, and folks like us who for years have been searching for non-translated yet accessible young adult reading material in Spanish! NOTE: Workshop will be presented only in Spanish.

The Martian by Andy Weir

The Martian follows astronaut Mark Watney’s struggle for survival as the sole human on Mars after his crew is forced to evacuate the planet and leave him behind, presumed dead. Faced with the overwhelming task of staying alive on Mars long enough for a rescue mission to retrieve him, Watney must leverage his botany and mechanical engineering skills to overcome obstacles never before faced by a human being, from procuring enough food and water to survive on a barren, lifeless planet to communicating with Earth hundreds of millions of miles away without functioning radio equipment. Author Andy Weir not only describes Watney’s struggles and inventive problem-solving tactics, but invites readers to discover the underlying science behind them through Watney’s understandable and humor-infused explanations. Amidst challenges that draw upon many topics and experiments covered in the high school sciences, Watney’s journey provides a template for the critical thinking problem-solver: decomposing major issues into manageable pieces, brainstorming and analyzing several (seemingly) possible solutions, and making plenty of mistakes while learning critical lessons from them. Grade 9 and up.
Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal by Margarita Engle

Who built the Panama Canal? Our history books present one perspective, but is the entire truth to be found in those history books? In Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal, Margarita Engle uses free verse to present the perspective of the thousands of black and brown people who performed the difficult, and often deadly, tasks of building the canal. This is the story of the people, and endangered rainforest inhabitants, who sacrificed to ensure American and European industries could easily move goods from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Ms. Engle created this verse novel to tell the story of the forgotten and unrecognized who made this canal possible. As readers, we witness the apartheid system where people of color performed the most dangerous tasks for pieces of silver, while the white workers were paid in gold. We are able to witness a different perspective on this historic event. Grade 7 and up.

Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass by Meg Medina

Award-winning Cuban-American author Meg Medina creates a richly textured portrait of a young Latina facing a world of trouble after moving to a new school. Piddy (Piedad) Sanchez is bewildered when told Yaqui Delgado wants to kick her ass. She can’t figure out how she offended the gloriously wicked school bully. At first, Piddy focuses on juggling honors courses with her weekend job at a hair salon, sadly missing her old friends. But as Yaqui and her crew gang up on Piddy, she is soon trapped in a bullying dynamic, increasingly distressed and isolated by threats and physical violence. Constant fear changes Piddy’s behavior and keeps her from explaining why her grades have dropped and she is acting tough. This novel provides a window on how bullying may alter its victims and what teachers and parents can do to support young people who may be too frightened to seek help.

PAIRED WITH Dear Bully: 70 Authors Tell Their Stories edited by Megan Kelly Hall and Carrie Jones

Top authors for teens share their personal stories about bullying in a powerful collection that illustrates the many faces of this insidiously popular menace. In just a few pages, each selection has the potential to comfort, reassure and strengthen students who must grapple with the damage bullying can do. Grade 8 and up.

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