Friday and Saturday
November 13 & 14, 2015

Q Center, St. Charles, IL
Conference is free for teachers in GEAR UP schools except for $50 dining fee (grant cannot pay for food).

Optional Pre-Conference Institute
led by Dr. Jeffrey Wilhelm
Friday 12:30 - 4:30 pm
(Includes lunch; $20 additional fee for GEAR UP teachers)

REGISTRATION OPENS SEPTEMBER 3rd!

Contact Christine Johnson
c-johnson15@neiu.edu
or visit the YAL website for registration and more information
yal.c4cas.org
**Young Adult Literature Conference**

Funded in part by grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education.

Since 2000, Northeastern Illinois University’s Young Adult Literature Conference has demonstrated how compelling books and engaging learning strategies provide powerful learning experiences. Teachers will participate in interactive workshops featuring exciting books and immediately useful teaching strategies. Teachers from our partnership schools may apply to our Unit for Books Mini-Grant Program in which they can receive a classroom set of books in exchange for writing a unit featuring young adult literature and best practice literacy strategies.

**Dr. Jeffrey Wilhelm-Featured Presenter**

We are proud to have nationally recognized author/educator and long-time Chicago Teachers’ Center collaborator Jeff Wilhelm as keynote speaker Friday and workshop presenter Saturday afternoon.

Educators are also invited to a Pre-Conference Institute with Jeff Friday 11/13 from 12:30 to 4:30 pm. $550 for Institute and YAL (additional $20 dining fee from grant participants required).

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**November 13th and 14th, 2015**

Friday 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm & Saturday 8:00 am – 3:30 pm

**Q Conference Center**

1405 North Fifth Avenue, St. Charles, IL

**Free** to teachers in GEAR UP schools (except **$50 dining fee required**).

$**450.00** for teachers from non-partnership schools.

Price includes two books, three meals, and an overnight stay in a private room.

Registration opens 9/3/15 at yal.c4cas.org

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**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13**

12:30- 4:30  Wilhelm Pre-Conference Institute
5:30- 6:45  Dinner
7:00- 8:30  Opening and Keynote
8:40- 9:30  Teacher Unit Presentations

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14**

8:00- 9:50  YAL Book Concurrent Session 1
10:10- 12:00 YAL Book Concurrent Session 2
12:00- 1:00  Lunch
1:15- 3:30 Wilhelm Workshop on Action Strategies

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**Center for College Access and Success**

**NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY**

GEAR UP is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education
This year, we are offering an additional Pre-Conference Institute!
Friday, November 13, 2015
12:30- 4:30 pm (lunch included)

Uncommon Core: Unit Plans and Lessons to Meet and Exceed the Common Core
with Dr. Jeffrey Wilhelm

Learn how to cultivate student engagement and performance to exceed the Common Core in an interactive institute including . . .

- Dr. Wilhelm will take participants through highlights of a model civil rights unit.
- Participants create elements for a lesson or unit they want to strengthen or build, based on principles demonstrated by the model unit.
- Participants share some of what they create.

Can’t leave school for the Friday pre-conference institute?
You have two exciting learning opportunities with Jeff Wilhelm at the YAL conference itself.

Let Them Read Trash!
- An inspiring keynote address Friday evening based on Reading Unbound, co-authored by Dr. Wilhelm.

Classrooms in Action
- Learn activities to engage students more deeply in texts with action-packed fun Saturday afternoon.
- Leave with strategies useful in any content area.
- Grab a copy of Jeff’s book Deepening Comprehension with Action Strategies at the end of this session!
Building an Academic Mindset (and VEX Robots too!)

Presenter: Osiris Alday

The NEIU GEAR UP Robotics Summer Academy worked to develop academic mindsets by asking participating students to reflect on 4 statements: “I belong in this academic community.”, “This work has value for me.”, “I can succeed at this.”, and “My ability grows with effort.” Participants at this session will engage in a hands-on activity, followed by a reflection activity related to the academic mindsets. The goal will be to encourage ideas on classroom application of academic mindset work, while having a bit of fun!

Osiris Alday is an 8th grade Language Arts teacher at Eberhart Elementary, and master's graduate of the University of Chicago’s Urban Teacher Education Program. Mr. Alday is currently working on his Reading Endorsement through the GEAR UP program at NEIU. Osiris consistently seeks new opportunities to engage students for success, most recently working with the NEIU GEAR UP Robotics Summer Academy in 2015.

Connected Learning Units Workshop

Presenters: LaTiffanie Jackson and Janet Cameron

Hear from GEAR UP teachers who participated in a collaboration, funded by the Hive Chicago Fund for Connected Learning, between Harold Washington Library’s YOUmedia and The Center for College Access and Success around Connected Learning, digital making and the principles of HOMAGO. Teachers wrote Connected Learning Units that incorporated a hands-on digital project in music. Students participated in a working field trip to YOUmedia where they worked on recordings and music videos.

LaTiffanie Jackson is a high school English teacher at Team High School in Englewood. She has a B.A. in English Education and an M.Ed. in Reading Education. Janet Cameron is a Music teacher at Roosevelt High School. She has a BA from the University of Chicago; M.Mus. from the University of Illinois; Teaching Certificate Post Baccalaureate from NEIU.

Empathy and Outreach with Elie Wiesel’s, Night

Presenters: Andrea Studier, Joe Gondolfi and Jennifer Westfallen
How do we deal with injustice? This is the essential question -- a question of human condition -- around which this unit is built. We aimed to create emotional experiences for our high school students that would foster empathy despite a lack of personal connection to the content. A variety of reading and discussion strategies moved students through the text with limited teacher-lead instruction, and the summative project encouraged activism through research, writing, and presentation. In this session, you will gain an overview of the unit and participate in a few of the reading/discussion strategies we built for our students. Whether you plan to teach Night or you are looking to increase engagement and teach empathy to young people, we feel confident this session will inspire you.

Andrea Studier is a 4th year English teacher at Eric Solorio Academy High School on the Southwest side of Chicago. She has a BA in English Ed from Illinois State University, an MEd in Urban Ed and a Special Ed endorsement from National Louis University, and is working toward a Master's in Literacy at Northeastern with the GEAR UP cohort. Andrea is passionate about reading, service learning, her husband and dog, and all things Harry Potter. Joe Gondolfi is a 4th year English teacher at Eric Solorio Academy High School on the Southwest side of Chicago. He has a BA in Secondary Education with a concentration in English from DePaul University, an M.Ed. in Urban Teaching and a Special Education endorsement from National Louis University, and is working toward a Master's in Literacy at Northeastern with the GEAR UP cohort. Joe loves horror movies, dogs, pizza, and is currently reading The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander. Jennifer Westfallen has taught for fifteen years in Chicago Public Schools, currently at Eric Solorio Academy High School. She has a MEd in Secondary Education from DePaul University and recently renewed her National Board Certification in Adolescence and Young Adulthood English Language Arts. Jennifer swirls service learning, technology, creative writing, and yoga into her classes.

Even More Digital Tools to Enhance Student Learning and Creativity!

Presenter: Mary Burke

Explore a variety of digital creation tools to support and enhance any curriculum unit. Tech-hesitant or tech-confident, discover a new creation tool to incorporate this year such as Storyboard That, GoAnimate, Buncee, Comic Life, and Bitstrips! Learn how to easily share your students’ work with a wider audience and/or export in a variety of file formats. Test out these digital storytelling, presentation, video and animation tools and save money by taking advantage of generous free educator product trials. The session will consist of a brief overview of each tool, a classroom application, plus access to online resources, tutorials, and product trial information. NOTE: This presentation includes new tools not covered in last year’s session.

Mary Burke, as the library media specialist at the Morton Freshman Center, collaborates with teachers to create meaningful and engaging projects that tap into students' creativity and demonstrate learning. Mary has Master’s degrees in both Journalism and Library & Information Science, and in her “prior” life (pre-five children), she worked in advertising and public relations. Her Freshman Center Library is a hub of

Center for College Access and Success
Northeastern Illinois University

GEAR UP is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education
creative chaos and a source of opportunity and learning for her students, providing a wide range of experiences and resources not available in the classroom or at home. Selected to attend the American Library Association Leadership Institute 2015 this past summer, Mary developed leadership skills and strategies to help narrow the opportunity gap experienced by her students and meet the evolving needs of these 21st-century learners.

For Real Reflect and Learn as We Go: using student interviews, observation and strategies to reflect on learning and teaching in your classroom

Presenter: Melissa Hughes

Melissa acted as a researcher in the GEAR UP Young Author Studio, a summer 2015 writing academy for teens. She made the most of this extraordinary opportunity to pull back from teaching to observe peers, reflect, provoke, question, and consider implications to her own practice and the culture of teaching at her school. This session will begin with a brief overview of GEAR UP summer writing programs as context. Then participants will learn about the implementation and possible implications of applying Reggio Emilia’s role of an atelierista to a junior high-high school English classroom. Session will also include a brief overview of findings during GEAR UP’s two week writing program, two strategies using both storytelling workshop and restorative justice practices, and time to reflect on challenges/possibilities at own schools.

Missy Hughes is a sixteen year veteran educator who is starting her ninth year at Team Englewood Community Academy. She is a founding and current coach of their award-winning spoken word poetry team. She graduated from the University of Northern Iowa and is currently pursuing her Master’s Degree in Youth Development at UIC.

Memoirs of America featuring Of Beetles and Angels

Presenter: Sarah Enloe

It is often difficult to identify a great text to motivate and encourage English Language Learners and struggling readers in high school. Of Beetles and Angels is a memoir of a Harvard graduate’s journey from an Ethiopian refugee camp as a small child in Sudan to Wheaton, IL. This was the focal text for my unit on memoirs for my EL students. Students read his memoirs, then wrote their own. This workshop will feature how creating a character map from a T-chart was used to support students’ comprehension of the text.

Sarah Enloe is a seasoned ESL educator with degrees from DePaul University (BA, Italian), Pace University (MST in TESOL), and National-Louis University (Certificate in Admin and Supervision). She is currently pursuing a Masters in Reading from Northeastern Illinois University.
Read On: How to Start an After-School Book Club and Live to Tell about It!

Presenters: Allison Morales, Tina Peano and Noe Castro

Have you ever wandered the book store, finding a million great books that you would love to incorporate into your curriculum, but you just didn’t know how? Have you started a Must Read list of books for yourself, but you never get to it? Then we have the solution for you! We will walk you through how we started our Book Club, how we ran our monthly meetings, and send you on your way with a list of ready-made discussion questions, small group activities, and suggested titles that were a big hit for us at Roosevelt High School. Get those bookmarks ready—your teen readers are waiting for you!

Allison Morales was born and raised in Chicago. After attending CPS schools from kindergarten through high school, she earned her Bachelor's Degree from Northeastern Illinois University and recently earned her Master's Degree from DePaul University. Currently she is the Reading I Lead Teacher and Yearbook Advisor at Roosevelt High School, in her 6th year at RHS. In her free time, Allison loves to read and she can never get enough bacon. Allison was married this past summer in Delaware and is looking forward to many happy, healthy years of marriage with her husband, Adam. Tina Peano has taught at a number of schools, including Lindblom Math and Science Academy, and Roosevelt High School. She has worked as a consultant for National-Louis University, The Chicago Metro History Fair, and the Chicago Teachers’ Center. She has two girls, a husband, five and a half cats, and must replace her vacuum cleaner yearly. Noe Castro came to Chicago from Guadalajara, Jalisco and grew up in Humboldt Park. A product of CPS, he went on to study at DePaul University and has been teaching English at Roosevelt High School for five years. His favorite book is The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. He buys books almost compulsively and hopes to one day teach at Professor Xavier’s School for Gifted Youngsters.

A Summer Inquiry Project: Looking for Justice

Presenters: Sylvia Baime, Jennifer Crall and Leslie Powell

What does it take to create a more fair and just world? Whose stories need to be told to create more justice? What role can I play? These are just some of the essential questions our incoming 7th and 8th graders grappled with over the summer during a 4-week GEAR UP Summer Academy. Our GEAR UP students spent their summer at National Louis University or at Loyola University digging deeper into the Civil Rights Movement and considering what connections can be made to living in today’s world. Through the lens of Congressman John Lewis’ graphic novels March Book One and March Book Two, students asked questions and gathered data to further investigate the struggle for justice that took place in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. This hands-on workshop will provide an overview of the social justice unit and take you through a frontloading activity, which sets the stage for inquiry.

Sylvia Baime has been teaching at Swift School for 25 years. She has taught grades 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Currently she is teaching fourth grade. Her passion is teaching middle school Language Arts. Sylvia has taught two GEAR UP Summer Academies and been to several YAL conferences and participated in
other GEAR UP professional development opportunities. Sylvia enjoys being in a pool or on the beach reading a novel soaking up the sun. Jennifer Crall recently left the classroom after ten years in upper grade Language Arts to pursue school leadership at Mark Twain Elementary School. As a result of participating in several GEAR UP Summer Academies, YAL Conferences, and other GEAR UP professional development opportunities, Jenny and her former students benefited from all GEAR UP has to offer including the Unit-for-Books Program. When she’s not at school she loves to discover great music, escape the winters (at least part of them) in Mexico, and spend time with her dog, Marge, as well as family and friends. Leslie Powell is a dedicated, resourceful, and goal driven professional educator and leader with over 10 years experience that has lead to a solid commitment to the social awareness, academic growth and development of individuals. Participating in her first GEAR UP Summer Academy and professional developments helped to enhance her ability to develop many ideas of Social Injustices that need to be addressed inside and outside of the classroom. When she is not in school and working with children she loves to spend time reading and writing, traveling to visit distant relatives, and preparing authentic home cooked meals.

William Shakespeare: Young Adult Author

Presenter: Dr. Tim Duggan, Northeastern Illinois University

What is a Shakespeare session doing at a Young Adult Literature conference? Did you know that more teens read Shakespeare than almost any other author? Why? – Because his works continue to be required in nearly every high school in the nation, and he is the only author singled out for mention in the Common Core State Standards for Reading Literature. This session will teach explicit methods for bringing Shakespeare’s work to life in your classroom. This session is appropriate for both middle and high school teachers.

Tim Duggan is an associate professor at NEIU, where he teaches courses in English education and coordinates a partnership between NEIU and Amundsen High School. Dr. Duggan also works with CCAS on an NCLB-ITQ professional development program in J. S. Morton District 201 and regularly presents teacher workshops for the Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He is the author of several books for teachers and has recorded his adaptations of Shakespeare sonnets and other musical works.

What’s Hot in Young Adult Literature?

Presenter: Kimberly Luthin, Barnes and Noble

Want to know the books kids are eager to read—even willing to part with money to own? Our conference bookseller shares the titles that will make terrific additions to your classroom library.

Kimberly Luthin is Community Relations Manager for Barnes & Noble in Geneva. She provides a wide variety of services including fundraising for schools, storybook character visits, author events and book sale support for conferences. Kimberly has an M.S. in Art Education, an M.A. in Art History and an MFA in Visual Communication from Northern Illinois University.
Rare Minerals, Technology, Global Social Justice, and You

Blue Gold by Elizabeth Stewart

Presenter: Beverly Rowls

You possess a dynamic piece of technology, right in your pocket, purse, or hand. Most of us feel we couldn’t live without our Smart phones, cell phones, or computers. But our ability to have this technology comes at a cost that few in the Western world are aware even exists.

Blue Gold by Elizabeth Stewart takes the reader into three separate, very distinct modern worlds: Fiona of middle-class Canada, Sylvie of the Nyarugusu Refugee Camp in Tanzania, and Laiping of industrial China. All three girls are linked by a rare mineral called coltan, a required component in all the electronic gadgets we value so highly. This novel intertwines their lives and experiences into a mosaic that could also include you. Our demand for the latest piece of technology comes at a high cost to the lives of people throughout the world.

This workshop will combine content from Geology, Geography, Current Events, and English/Language Arts to form a cross-disciplinary unit to examine how the use of everyday technology (to us) has a great impact on the lives of our brothers and sisters with whom we share this Big, Blue Marble. We will examine the point-of-view of each character and how coltan impacts their lives. We will gain knowledge of rare minerals and their impact on the lives of others from around the world. We will inquire into the concept of being our brother’s keeper, and whether we should care that our comfort comes at a tremendous expense to others. Join us as we explore the complex world of our increasing need for and use of technology in our daily lives.

Beverly Rowls enjoys reading fiction and nonfiction written for both young adults and adults. She has provided professional development support for literacy instruction to Chicago and Illinois area teachers for nearly twenty years. An avid reader and student, she finds her main focus in life to be studying historical events that she uses as fodder for creating relevant and motivational curricula for both youth and adults.

Strangers in a Strange Land: The Story of the Unknown American

The Book of Unknown Americans by Cristina Henríquez

Presenters: Cynthia Zucker and Angela Barrera

“We're the unknown Americans, the ones no one even wants to know, because they've been told they’re supposed to be scared of us and because maybe if they did take the time to get to know us, they might realize that we’re not that bad, maybe
even that we’re a lot like them.” So states one of the characters in this novel by
Cristina Henríquez. Told through the voices of numerous immigrants from Latin
America, many stories unfold in this book, with a focus on the star-crossed young lovers
Maribel Rivera and Mayor Toro. The characters come together in an apartment
building in Delaware. Maribel’s family has come from Pátzcuaro, Mexico, to seek the
right medical attention and school for their daughter. Mayor’s family has come from
Panama, after the American invasion to remove the strongman Manuel Noriega. We
follow the developing relationship of Mayor and Maribel as well as the voices of their
parents and neighbors who struggle with survival, violence, and love.

In our workshop we will explore issues of point of view, the role of girls and women in
immigrant communities, perceptions of ability and disability, the treatment of
immigrants by the police, and current issues of immigration in the U.S. We will examine
the relationship between immigration to the U.S. and the political and violent
upheavals that have taken place in Latin American countries that are alluded to in
the novel. Finally, we will create and perform a group poem using voices of various
characters from the book.

Cindy Zucker is an ESL Bilingual Specialist from the Center for College Access and
Success. She was a bilingual and ESL teacher and administrator in CPS and taught at
Inter-American Magnet School, a dual language program in Chicago. She helps to
coordinate ESL and Bilingual teacher cohorts and works in the after school 21st
Century program in the Morton H.S. district. Angela Barrera is a Bi-Literacy Coach at
Morton Freshman Center in Cicero. She has taught ELL and Bilingual classes for many
years and served as the department’s Lead Teacher. Her children attend Inter-
American Dual Language Magnet School and she is the co-founder of NENU (Ninos En
La Naturaleza Urbana).

Brown Girl Dreaming: Exploring Identity, Connecting to History, and Finding
the Power of Voice
Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

Presenters: Susan Garr and Christine Johnson

Written in free verse, vivid and direct, Jacqueline Woodson’s memoir explores her
dreams, family history, identity and voice. She shares memories of growing up during
Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement, and of leaving her Southern home for multi-
ethnic New York. She reveals her difficulties in school at the same time that she
discovers her love of stories and her beginnings as a writer. Through her poetry, we look
into the soul of a young girl, then a young woman, as she learns who she is and who
she can be.

Brown Girl Dreaming invites the reader to examine the significance of personal history
and how it connects with the broader history of our times. Woodson urges us to ask:
How am I shaped by history? And how might I shape history? Woodson weaves her
memories and dreams into beautiful poems that offer our students both a window and
a mirror into what it takes to know the self—to ask Who am I? Where do I belong? How do I know?

This hands-on, inquiry-based workshop will use Brown Girl Dreaming to explore identity, connect our personal stories to our country’s history, and consider its relevance to the world today. Strategies to be experienced: gallery walk, reading as inquiry, thinking like a writer, discussion circles and inquiry stations. Join us for a lively and engaging journey into this book, and be ready to share your dreams.

Literacy Specialist Susan A. Garr, MA, taught high school English and Film Studies for 10 years prior to joining CCAS/NEIU. She collaborates with teachers to build standards-based inquiry units. After 25 years as an educator, she is still awed by the talent, time and creative force our GEAR UP Network teachers bring to their students. Chris Johnson is the Professional Development Manager at the Center for College Access and Success and has worked with the GEAR UP program and the YAL Conference for more than 10 years. She believes that it is more important than ever that we each find our personal connection to our country’s history and future, that we raise our voices for justice, and that we hold fast to our dreams.

Can Fiction Help Us All Face Facts? For Grade 7 and up

The Carbon Diaries 2015 by Saci Lloyd & Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines by Paul Fleischman

Presenters: Mary Massie and Kate Thomas

The Carbon Diaries 2015 describes a near-future world of cataclysmic climate change with ensuing natural and social disasters as experienced by a 16-year-old girl, her family, friends, and neighbors who must radically reduce their use of everyday energy sources to comply with carbon rationing in London. It combines elements of a thriller with a coming-of-age diary, all grounded in some pretty startling climate science. The voice of narrator Laura is funny, ironic, warm and entertaining, even during frightening circumstances and multiplying troubles. The book paints a plausible picture of events that may well be coming soon, leavened with humor, humanity, and hope.

In Eyes Wide Open, award-winning YA author Paul Fleischman moves briskly through some very heavy topics, not by dumbing down content, but by dividing it into compact segments with photos, sidebars, and touches of humor. It includes source notes, a rich bibliography, a glossary, and advice on how to weigh information—all perfect elements for inquiry projects.

Our workshop will explore creative ways to use the immediacy and humor of both books to pull readers out of indifference and into active learning, blending well-researched science, social commentary, and the perspectives of teens who really do need to save the world.

Mary Massie, Ph.D., Senior Literacy Specialist at CCAS for 17 years and a founder of the YAL Conference, believes in the potential of literature to lift us all to higher levels of
understanding, joy, and achievement. Mary currently directs an NCLB-ITQ literacy grant in J. S. Morton H. S. District 201. Mary loves the hard fun of this annual YAL celebration of teachers, books, and community. Thanks to everyone who makes it happen! Kate Thomas is an arts educator who has worked with Redmoon Theater and has led arts integration programs in multiple school districts for the past 15 years. She is currently working on her Ph.D. and is interested in the concept of vibrant matter or “thing power.” How do things call to us and how might we re-think environmentalism through this approach?

**Anchors, Tentacles and Mapping Happiness**

*It’s Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini

Presenter: Jeremy Babcock

Happiness. What is it exactly? And, more importantly, how do you achieve it? As children move through adolescence and grow into adults, the emphasis tends to be on traveling the “right” path, going to the “right” school, and becoming a successful member of society. But what is the cost of achieving success? And what is the relationship between happiness and success? The turbulence that often accompanies the teenage years must include a healthy discourse on what it means to be happy and how that definition is unique to every individual.

*It’s Kind of a Funny Story* takes the reader on a journey through the eyes of ambitious NYC teenager Craig Gilner, who gets into a top high school where the pressure to succeed takes a toll. After a suicidal episode, Craig finds himself in a mental hospital with a cast of characters who serve as unexpected guides on the road to true happiness. Craig makes a number of discoveries by pressing the pause button on his life to gain a better understanding on what is truly important.

This workshop will use themes from the novel to focus on tangible ways to create classroom community with a focus on social-emotional skills. We will explore the book’s “anchors” and “tentacles” metaphor, along with “brain maps” as tools for students to express thoughts and feelings. This workshop will use the humor and the pain of Craig’s story to help us develop better understandings of teen mental illness and depression, along with ways to identify and offer solutions.

Jeremy Babcock believes in the importance of play and incorporates this belief into his work as an Experiential Learning Specialist with NEIU’s Center for College Access and Success (formerly CTC), and as a Teaching Artist with The Old Town School of Folk Music. In the evening and weekend hours, Jeremy plays music for kids of all ages with The Dreamtree Shakers, ([www.dreamtreeshakers.com](http://www.dreamtreeshakers.com)).

**Fantasy Fiction and Found Images** For Grade 7 and up

*Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Riggs

Presenter: Lynette Emmons
“This fantasy novel mixes adventure fiction and haunting vintage photography in a thrilling, spine tingling adventure. A horrific family tragedy sets sixteen-year-old Jacob journeying to a remote island off the coast of Wales, where he discovers the crumbling ruins of Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children. As he explores, it becomes clear that the children who once lived here—one of whom was his own grandfather—were more than just peculiar.” - Ransom Riggs

Fantasy fiction is taking over the world!

In this workshop we will explore the ways this genre can be a surprisingly useful device in the classroom by looking at how Ransom Riggs uses found photographs and random snapshots to write fantasy adventures. Likewise, we too will closely observe photographs that were rescued from the dustbin to create legendary tales from our own lives. The people in these photos are strangers to us and indeed peculiar, but they will become the inspiration for interesting stories as we exaggerate them to the point of fantasy fiction.

Presenter Lynette Emmons began her teaching career at Nettelhorst School in Chicago. Currently she is the Director of the Center for City Schools in the Urban Institute at National-Louis University. Her work focuses on developing classroom communities where best practices, active learning and collaboration enrich all. Like the author Ransom Riggs, she is also fascinated with found photographs.

Save the Drama for Your Mama: Social Media and Online Ethics

*Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli

Presenters: Kat Tigges and Molly Kelly - Chicago Public Library

Sixteen-year-old Simon Spier hasn’t come out—not to his friends or family, and certainly not at school. The only exception is his online pen pal, Blue, an anonymous classmate who is in the same situation. When one of Simon’s schoolmates discovers their correspondence and uses it to blackmail Simon, things get even more complicated. Can Simon juggle his role in the school play, friendships old and new, and keep the blackmailer at bay without messing things up with the perfect guy (who he’s never even met)? This humorous and heartwarming story explores the LGBTQ teen experience through Simon’s genuine, believable voice, touching on themes of coming out, coming of age, privacy, bullying, and stigma.

This book is particularly relevant in English and Drama classrooms, though it could be adapted for any classroom discussion of behavior, ethics, diversity, and/or tolerance. As teens increasingly interact with their peers online and through social media, the use and misuse of internet platforms is a topic of heightened importance. In this workshop, we’ll examine this theme within the text, engage in replicable hands-on activities, and explore resources for further consideration with special attention to LGBTQ issues.

Kat Tigges is a Teen Services Librarian at Chicago Public Library. She has worked in libraries and educational institutions since 2002, specializing in Teen Services since
2012. She is an editor for the graphic novel review website No Flying No Tights and currently spearheads an initiative to improve library services for LGBTQ homeless youth. Molly Kelly creates and highlights booklists, online resources, news and events for Chicago Public Library as its website teens content curator. She also assists with program planning, events and professional development to directly support staff and teens throughout the city. She received her Master of Library and Information Science degree from Dominican University and earned a Bachelor’s degree in English and Journalism from the University of Iowa. Crafts and lifelong learning are two of her favorite things.

Building Meaning with Spare Parts

*Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot and the Battle for the American Dream* by Joshua Davis

Presenters: Germania Solorzano and Juan Madrigal

In *Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot and the Battle for the American Dream*, Joshua Davis lays out the story of four unlikely teenagers who become underwater robotic rock stars by defeating their competition, including MIT. Each young man works through various struggles to reach that victory, primarily poverty and immigration status. Although the boys are victorious at the competition, the book follows them beyond high school graduation, where their struggles with immigration status greatly affect their trajectories. This is reportage. The book alternates between chapters about the boys: their backgrounds, families, schools and teachers, and chapters about immigration policy during the timeline of the events.

This true story could be easily connected to Science, Social Studies as well as English for reading of nonfiction texts. It offers readers the opportunity to follow along on a problem-solving trajectory in the sciences with the creation of the robot; in life, with young men figuring out how to live in the United States despite being undocumented; and in learning in general with youth figuring out their interests and how to pursue those interests with limited resources.

This workshop will offer participants opportunities to explore the text, its themes, as well as hands-on problem-solving activities.

Germania Solorzano is a professional development specialist at the Center for College Access and Success. She has over 20 years of teaching experience with high school, middle school, and college students combined. She is enthralled with stories of problem-solvers, artists, and innovators. Juan M. Madrigal has been teaching middle school math for 11 years in the West Humboldt Park Community in Chicago. Juan holds a Master’s degree in Mathematics from DePaul University. He has developed a passion for Robotics and initiated a Robotics Program in three Chicago Public Schools.
Dignifying the Other: Portraiture in the Classroom

*Working, the Graphic Novel* by Harvey Pekar, adapted from Studs Terkel’s *Working*

Presenters: Polly Mills and Valerie Xanos

Harvey Pekar, genius author of *American Splendor*, adapted 16 of the interviews in Studs Terkel’s iconic *Working* into the text of this graphic novel and invited 16 comic illustrators to each draw one chapter. The voices of the interviewees live on these pages, and Studs pokes his illustrated mug and mic into the corners of the pages from time to time to introduce the speakers. The interviews represent a range of jobs and voices—folks of all ages and social and ethnic backgrounds—to explore what it means to work in America at a particular moment in our history. This graphic novel brings dignity to work and the human voice. Exemplifying the rewards of listening carefully and asking good questions, the book invites curricular units that include interviewing, blogging, using audio and video recording, portraiture in a variety of visual media, including drawing, painting, and photography, collecting oral histories and ethnographies, and focus on story development, developing characters, dialogue interaction, and sense of place and time. In this workshop, we’ll be exploring portraiture, beginning with Terkel’s interviews, which, because of his extraordinary listening, breach the genre to become sound portraits. We’ll consider portraits across several genres, including drawing, painting, photography, and writing. What opportunities does creating portraits offer as students develop skills of listening, observation, and inquiry? What is the value of moving past empirical information toward the intuitive and personal in your classroom?

Polly Mills, MA, collaborates with CPS teachers to explore experiential approaches to teaching writing, connected learning, inquiry, and arts integration. She is on the Fiction Writing faculty of Columbia College and certified by the Story Workshop Institute at the level of Master Candidate. Her fiction has been recognized by an AWP Intro Award, two of Columbia University’s Scholastic Press Association Awards, and a Pushcart Prize nomination. She is co-author of Tandem Teaching writing texts, *Essays that Open Doors* curriculum, and the Young Author Playlist. Valerie Xanos grew up and still lives where she teaches, sharing a connection to her students through community. A 20-year veteran of CPS, her BFA and teaching certificate were earned at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago and The Glasgow School. She works in the media of paint, collage, and photography and she teaches a Guerrilla Art class at Curie Metro High School; you can visit the student blog: [Guerrillaart4.blogspot.com](http://Guerrillaart4.blogspot.com). Writing is an integral part of the curriculum, aesthetically and as part of artistic process. Valerie also teaches International Baccalaureate Art and Art Studio I, chronicling her explorations with students on the blog, [www.teachersafterhours.com](http://www.teachersafterhours.com). She is also a mother of four amazing, willful, inspiring young adults.

Register at yal.c4cas.org
When you register, you will indicate your top five preferences for workshops. Depending on availability, we will place you in two of these workshops. Participants are encouraged to register on-line by October 15th to get the workshops they prefer. If registration is received after October 30th, conference participation cannot be guaranteed. Register at yal.c4cas.org. Staff at non-partnership schools may attend for $450 per person. Payment in full is requested by October 30th.

Once we receive your payment, you will receive an e-mail confirmation, then we will send the books for your two workshops. Participants who register and pay the conference fee by October 30th will receive books at their schools. For registrations after 10/30 you may need to pick up books at Center for College Access and Success (770 N. Halsted; enter on Chicago Ave.). We strongly recommend that you read your workshop books before the conference to get the most out of your conference experience.

Questions? Call Dan at (312) 563-7134