The Road to College
by Judith Wright

To a parent or teen, the college application process can be overwhelming. From the daunting thought of paying for college to application essays and ACT/SAT scores, there is no doubt that this experience can be tough to navigate.

As librarians, we constantly highlight our resources to help improve test scores or find scholarship opportunities, but this does nothing to ease the parents’ and students’ concerns. The resources we provide are valuable, but we aren’t experts. After seeing one high school student take the ACT thirteen times, I knew that experts were what our community needed.

I decided to create a program that helped families get the answers they needed straight from the horse’s mouth, so to speak. I knew that taking the ACT thirteen times did more harm than good, but to the parent who wants their child to get the best score, it is perfectly acceptable. I wanted to provide a different kind of resource: professionals in the college application field that would not only answer questions, but also explain the do’s and don’ts of applying to college.

When it came to structuring the program, I liked the accessibility of a college fair. However, while college fairs traditionally provide great opportunities to get answers to school-specific questions, they don’t always answer general questions. Luckily, Chris Pinto knew what I was looking for (even if I didn’t know how to articulate my idea). Pinto, who now serves as Assistant Director of Admissions at UAB, helped me construct a program that would be part presentation...
and part college fair. The Road to College was born.

As a seasoned admissions counselor, Pinto knew the questions the parents were going to ask. He was able to assemble a 15 minute presentation that highlighted the answers to the most common questions:

- What should you look for in a school?
- What do you need to do before applying?
- How many times should you take the ACT/SAT?
- How do you find out about Scholarships and Financial Aid?
- What happens after the applications have been submitted?

Now that I had the presentation, I needed to get the schools. This is where I very un glamorously emailed representatives for over 30 colleges and universities, inviting them to the Road to College. Due to the hectic schedules of the representatives, I would advise planning this program at least five months in advance.

After the presentation, families visit with representatives from their desired schools and get answers to their school-specific questions. For this reason, we did not take questions after the presentation.

Now that I had the program set, I needed patrons. I emailed every high school guidance counselor in my library’s county and the adjacent counties. As the daughter of a high school guidance counselor, I knew how dedicated counselors are to getting information to their students. Many went above and beyond by including our flyer in the daily school emails to parents. This was a tremendous help in getting the word out to families who might not have our library on their radar.

Due to the success of the Road to College, we have been able to offer this program twice a year. It is completely free and simply involves sending a lot of emails. Our patrons love having the opportunity to have their questions answered and their fears eased. The road to college can be extremely stressful and bumpy, but with the help of the public library, it doesn’t have to be traveled alone.

-Judith Wright is the Teen Librarian at Homewood Public Library
Looking for things to do with school age kids for Summer Reading? Here’s a FREE, completely online option you can try!

**Signum Academy** offers FREE interactive reading camps to young readers. Our reading camps utilize an exciting and engaging blended model with live, interactive, online sessions and locally organized onsite group meetings. You only have to have Internet for kids to view the live (interactive) or recorded sessions (not interactive).

![Book covers](images)

**What is Signum Academy and how does it work?**

Signum Academy connects with local libraries, homeschool groups, schools, churches, and other groups across the country to offer free summer reading camps for school-age kids. At this time we are offering programs geared for middle school age kids. Younger and older kids will likely still benefit and participation age can be determined by the group organizers.

Campers must have access to a reliable Internet connection and a digital device to participate in the live online sessions or to view the recorded sessions. Because we delve into the texts, we ask that our campers come to the camp having read the book. We realize some campers may not have read the book by the time camp begins, but they can still enjoy the camp experience and perhaps be inspired to read the book later.

For more information about Signum Academy and how to participate and register your group, go to: [https://signumuniversity.org/academy/](https://signumuniversity.org/academy/)
Rainbow in a Jar

courtesy of: www.playdoughtoplato.com

Items you will need:
A tall, see-through container (a clean mason jar works well)
Honey
Light corn syrup
Dish soap (eith blue like Dawn or green like Palmolive)
Olive oil
Rubbing alcohol
Water Food coloring
A dropper

Pour a rainbow in your jar:

(It is important for all but the last step to pour your liquids in the middle of the jar WITHOUT letting it touch the sides.)

1. Pour honey into the middle of the jar. Remember - don’t let it touch the sides.
2. Color the corn syrup with purple food coloring  Pour it into the middle of the jar.
3. Do the same with the dish soap.
4. Color the water blue. (If you are using blue dish soap, color the water green.)  Again, pour the water into the middle of the jar.
5. Do likewise with the olive oil. Pour a thick layer of oil.
6. Next, color the rubbing alcohol red. This, in itself is a study in density because the food coloring just sits at the bottom of the alcohol until you stir.
   WAIT! DO NOT POUR THIS IN THE MIDDLE!!!
   This is where you use the dropper. Add the colored alcohol by dropping it in with the dropper slowly along the side of the jar. Otherwise it will mix with your water and ruin the whole thing. The key is for it to not break through the oil layer.
7. Now you are done. Carefully hold it up to the light without shaking and enjoy your rainbow!

Be sure to read Why It Works - What’s the Science on page 7
NO MESS Rainbow in a Bag

(not so much science, just fun art) courtesy of: www.powerfulmothering.com

For the fingerpaints (make ahead of time):
1 cup flour
2 cups water
1 tablespoon salt
Food coloring or liquid watercolors

Whisk all these ingredients in a pot and then add to a low heat on the stove. Continue slowly whisking until a smooth substance starts to form. It is between the mix being watery and solid.

Scoop a heaped tablespoon of the mix into seven bowls to make rainbow colors. Use your food coloring in each bowl to get the desired color.

Activity Supplies:
Large ziplock bags
Cardstock
Tape or painter’s tape

Directions:
1. Trim your cardstock to fit into your ziplock. You will be folding the top of the ziplock over so make sure that the cardstock fits the width. Add a heaped teaspoon of paint into the ziplock by holding the plastic away so you don’t mess on it. See image 1.

2. Press down on the plastic to help the paint off the teaspoon.

3. Once you have all your colors lined up close the ziplock and fold over the extra ziplock space.

4. Tape down the ziplock with either clear tape, painter’s tape or anything you have that will easily remove yet keep your ziplock in place.

5. Then it is time to play! Ask your child if they would like to create a rainbow! They will start pushing the paint across the canvass bit by bit to create their rainbows.

6. Some of the colors will mix but that is ok it still looks stunning and regardless it’s a ton of mess free fun!

7. Use fingers to create pictures, shapes, letters or numbers in the paint. Once you have a rainbow all over your page the kids are now able to make drawings and patterns!
MORE STEAMing Along

Your editor got very behind this month, so although we’ve missed Valentine’s Day, you can save this one for next year!

STEAM Heart Toy for Valentine’s Day
courtesy of: www.redtedart.com

Materials:
Cardboard     Paint & brush
Bamboo skewers   Glue
Clay      Scissors
Cardstock     Pencil
Xacto

Directions:
1. Cut out heart and arrowhead templates. Click for template.
2. Trace heart shape on cardboard and cut. Paint if desired. Let dry.
3. Using an Xacto (adults only, please) cut a ½” long slot in the top layer of the cardboard heart just above and to the side of the center. Carefully feed one of the skewers through the slot and out the edge of the cardboard. BE CAREFUL! The skewer ends are sharp. Don’t poke yourself!
4. Repeat with second skewer on opposite side of heart. Clip off sharp ends of skewers.
5. Trace arrowhead shape on colored paper or cardboard and cut.
6. Fold arrowheads in half and glue skewers between halves.
7. Add a ball of clay to lower end of each skewer.
8. Now balance the tip of the heart on your finger!
Why It Works - What's the Science???

Balance is inherently linked to gravity. They go together like salt and pepper. You can’t have balance without gravity. The gravity of the Earth tries to pull everything down towards its center. This pull is called the force of gravity (the invisible force). This is why we don’t just float off into space. When you lift things up you have to pull against gravity. For example, if you drop a pencil, gravity pulls it to Earth. If you rest its mid-point on your finger, gravity will pull down equally on both sides of the pencil and it will balance in the air.

Books:

Balance and Motion.; Sohn, Emily; 978-1599534053.
Balances; Richardson, Adele D.; 978-0736825160.
Heart 2 Heart; Ekhert, Lois; 978-1481480871.
Stickmen’s Guide to Your Beating Heart; Farndon, John; 978-1512432152.
Pete the Cat: Valentine’s Day is Cool; Dean, James; 978-0062198655.

Why It Works - What's the Science???

don’t just explain what density is to the kids - show them!
Get two identical containers and put six marbles in one and twelve marbles in the other. Explain that different liquids have different weights: Everything is made up of teeny tiny things called molecules. Some of these liquids have a lot of molecules in them and some of them have only a few.

Show them the two containers with the marbles. Have them hold the two containers and ask which one is heavier. Of course it is the one with the most marbles. Explain that it is the same with the liquids — the ones with more “marbles” (molecules) are heavier and would stay at the bottom of the jar.

Books:

How the Crayons Saved the Rainbow; Sweeney, Monica; 978-1510705838.
The Night Before St. Patrick’s Day; Wing, Natasha; 978-0448448527.
Rainbow; Bauer Marion Dane; 978-1481463362.
A Rainbow of My Own; Freeman, Don; 978-0140503289.
Many of us struggle to come up with ideas for passive programs, how to get more interaction with patrons, or for how to get program success measurement without constantly surveying attendees. This idea can be modified to fit all of these and more. We are sure you will come up with more variations which we would love to hear about. - Editor

“Post-it” All About It
by Cassandra Brindle

At Oneonta Public Library patrons have been enjoying a special program at the end of a bookshelf: Post-it All About It. This is a super simple program inspired by a Pinterest post and just requires a few office supplies and a bit of your time. What we did was print out a sign that said at the top “What Do You Recommend?” followed by, “Post-it All About It!”. Underneath we used double-sided mounting tape to affix post-its to the sign and used that same tape to stick the sign to the end of a YA bookshelf. We dug into our miscellaneous box of Command mounting supplies and used one of the clip options to put up a pen.

And that was it! People have had a blast with this passive program. We’ve gotten requests along with recommendations, including the current staff favorite, “Some dang poetry plz”. Try to check it at least every few days, so that you make sure supplies are always available, and the pen doesn’t dry out. Also, sometimes there are requests for things that you’ll want to address immediately, or someone will put something up that you don’t want to leave up. The worst we’ve gotten so far is someone asking for followers on social media and someone saying they hated books/reading. We crossed out the address and added on to please not use this space for advertising on the former post-it, and on the latter we highlighted the other things that you can do at a library.

Besides that, to keep things cycled out we collect the notes at the end of the month
and type them up for our patrons. We list the requests first with the status of their request, and the recommendations after. We include title, author, any comments, staff comments if we want to chime in, along with the location.

We’ve been doing it since August of 2017 and typically get about 20 or so a month. While it is on the end of the Young Adult shelf, we are a small library and the Juvenile, YA, and Adult Fiction sections are all very close together. For that reason, we get recommendations and requests from all age groups. The program is also useful because sometimes the requests will point out holes in our collection. These come from patrons who either don’t realize they can request items at the front desk, or do not feel comfortable doing so. The low cost of the program balanced against the benefit makes this a program that’s hard to say no to!

-Cassandra Brindle is the Programming Coordinator for Oneonta Public Library.

**Homewood’s Stupid Cupid Chocolate Party**

Every February the Homewood Public Library holds a Stupid Cupid Chocolate Party for 6th-12th graders. The goal? Forget about love and celebrate all things chocolate! Teens enjoyed games and stations such as guess the candy bar, oven mitt candy races, face the cookie, whopper chopstick challenge, and candy tape ball races! Three fondue pots were set up and teens also got the opportunity to throw darts at cupid!

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

-George Bernard Shaw
**Title:** Speak: the graphic novel  
**Author:** Laurie Halse Anderson  
**Artist:** Emily Carroll  
**Release Date:** February 6, 2018

Speaking is easy, right? When you’re little it’s a challenge to get your tongue to twist the right way, your lips to move as needed, but by ninth grade it should be something you don’t even have to think about.

For Melinda, speaking is becoming harder and harder. High School was supposed to be A Big Deal. Instead, before the school year even starts she’s become infamous. What kind of stupid little rat would call the police on the party of the year?! As far as everyone is concerned, the best favor she could do the world is disappear. None of her friends will have anything to do with her. The new girl does...at first. Melinda’s grades are slipping, her parents are angry, and it’s getting harder to force any words through her mouth.

And worst of all? “It” is there. In the school. Laughing. Smiling. Existing. She avoids him as much as she can.

Art though? Art is good. Sometimes she gets sick of trees though, since that is her only subject for the year. And that old janitor closet she fixed up? It’s great there. Quiet. Safe. Secure. At least until “It” finds her.

Although Melinda’s life broke over the summer before high school, she’s struggling to get through each day, and yet she still has such a sense of the absurdity of high school life. You can’t help but laugh at her commentary and you almost forget at times the serious problems she’s dealing with.

Hopefully all of you have actually read Speak, and know just what a treasure it is. If you haven’t, what are you waiting for?!

When I found out they rewritten Speak as a graphic novel I was unbelievably excited. It is such an incredible, well-written story and Melinda is such an unforgettable character. The graphic novel surpassed even my high hopes. Emily Carroll is a wonderful artist and she brought this story to life beautifully. I have a bad habit of speeding through graphic novels and manga to get to the end of the story. The art work is there and I’m looking at it, but I don’t find myself staring at each individual panel, trying to eke out every single little detail. Well, that changed. She did such an incredible job of illustrating this story and I found myself wanting to savor every picture, marvel at how well she crafted the characters and all the small details she brought to it and...

The whole thing is a masterpiece. I wouldn’t say it replaces the novel because I still dearly love it. But it supplements it beautifully and for those who prefer to live solely in the graphic world I am delighted that maybe this will give them a chance to experience Speak for themselves. It does, as the original did, deal with the aftermath of rape. But as the original does, it handles it with sensitivity...
and never gets too graphic. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ve got to go reread *Speak* the novel. And then
the graphic novel again. And quite possibly top it off with the movie. In the meantime, if you don’t
have Laurie Halse Anderson on standing order, please make sure you’ve got *Speak* at least in your
library. And consider adding this graphic novel, too.

**Recommended for:** Fans of realistic fiction, drama, and very dry commentary on the absurdities of
life.

**Things to watch out for:** This is the story of a girl who is dealing with the aftermath of rape. It does
not get graphic but the subject matter is serious. Melinda suffers from depression, there is a short
self-harm scene, and at the end her rapist attacks her again. There is a physical struggle, and she
ends up managing to hold a broken piece of glass to his throat so there is some blood. Language is mild.

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**2018 Youth Media Awards**

- **Wolf in the Snow**
  - Ralph Calecott Medal

- **Hello Universe**
  - John Newbery Medal

- **Piecing Me Together**
  - Coretta Scott King Award

- **Charlie & Mouse**
  - Theodor Suess Geisel Award

- **La Princesa and the Pea**
  - Pura Belpre Award

- **12 Days in May**
  - Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award

- **The Hate U Give**
  - William C. Morris Award

- **Little Lion and the Rainbow**
  - Stonewall Award

- **Vincent and Theo**
  - YALSA Award for Excellence for Non-Fiction for YA

FEB. 27: Programming for ‘Tweens. Join us for a webinar on programming for ‘tweens (ages 8-12). Whether you’ve been offering ‘tween programs for years or you’re just getting started, you’ll come away with ideas on program themes, structures, and organization. Utah State Library: http://heritage.utah.gov/library/workshops

FEB. 28: Introduction to Proposal Writing. Are you new to proposal writing or want a quick refresher? This class will provide you with an overview of how to write a standard project proposal to a foundation or other grant source. GrantSpace: http://grantspace.org/training/calendar/online

MAR. 6: Celebrate 60 Years of Earth Observations with NASA. In its 60 year history, NASA has spent a great deal of time looking outward to find and learn about planets in our solar system and beyond. This Earth Day, however, our focus turns to the numerous NASA missions that study the planet that we live on and help us understand the Earth’s complex, dynamic systems. Join STAR Net and Theresa Schwerin from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies to learn how you can celebrate Earth Day with NASA with programming ideas for children, teens, and adults. STAR-net: http://www.starnetlibraries.org/event/celebrate-60-years-of-earth-observations-with-nasa/

MAR. 8: Design Thinking: How Librarians are Incorporating it into Their Practice. In response to the growing interest in design thinking, this event will provide attendees with both insights into the process and examples of how librarians are integrating it into their practice. If you’ve been hearing about design thinking and want to learn more about how you can develop and lead a design challenge at your library, this is your opportunity. Library 2.0: http://www.library20.com/

MAR. 14: Growing Your Library's Role: Creating a Community Garden with Impact. Inclusive, diverse and supportive of community participation, community gardens are a great way to bring together patrons and expand the library’s role beyond its walls. Pottsboro (Texas) Area Public Library learned how powerful community gardens can be when the library used a single grant to transform an acre of vacant city land into a vibrant garden plot that residents could use, free of charge. ALA, Programming Librarian: http://ala.adobeconnect.com/communitygarden/event/registration.html


MAR. 21: LGBTQAI+ Books to Share, Conversations to Have: More LGBTQAI+ books are published each year. How should you select, display, share, and use in your library for children of all ages? Titles and suggestions will lead into online conversations. Bring your questions, ideas, and concerns and together we will attempt to resolve them. Free and open to everyone. ALSC: http://www.ala.org/alsc/lgbtqai-books-share-conversations-have
MAR. 29: Intergenerational Programs at the Library: Connecting Generations for Healthy Communities. This webinar explores how and why intergenerational relationships are important and develops skills to foster intergenerational communication in libraries. WebJunction: https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/lunch-at-the-library.html

Webinar Series from YALSA

IMPORTANT FOR LIBRARY STAFF WORKING WITH TEENS!!!

YALSA Webinars based on YALSA’s new publication Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff. Held monthly from March through December each webinar covers a different competency. These are free – you don’t have to be a member of YALSA to register and attend.

They are all scheduled for 1:00 CENTRAL time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Teen Growth and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Interactions with Teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Learning Environments</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 14</td>
<td>Learning Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>Youth Engagement &amp; Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>Community &amp; Family Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 13</td>
<td>Cultural Competence &amp; Responsiveness</td>
</tr>
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<td>October 11</td>
<td>Equity of Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>Outcomes &amp; Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>Continuous Learning</td>
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If you work with teens, these are highly recommended. To register: http://www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelearning/webinar/free_competencies_webinars. “SEE” YOU THERE!