In this 1st year as YSRT Chair, I have managed to visit 17 libraries (outside of my own system). While that is a rather small number compared to all the public libraries in the state of Utah, it was a great feat for me, and one that I have been enjoying. Here are pictures of the libraries I’ve visited so far. More pictures of the libraries’ interiors are on our YSRT Facebook page.

By Heidi Tice
In January 2015, I (Library Director Blythe Ogilvie of Richfield Public Library) was awarded one of two Taylor Willingham Legacy Fund grants through NIFI (National Issues Foundations Institute), from among hundreds of applications received both nationally and internationally. The grant allowed the Library to conduct dialogues in the community around reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, and to purchase young adult and parenting materials which address issues related to mental illness, including teen fiction.

Unfortunately, Sevier County and the surrounding area has one of the highest suicide rates in the nation. I sit on a multi-agency team including Central Utah Counseling, Sevier School District, community agencies and religious organizations which meets monthly to address prevention issues, and to plan and evaluate ongoing programs, including anti-bullying campaigns and "kindness" initiatives in the schools. The NIFI youth dialogues are part of this effort. Sadly, the Central Utah area has had three more teen suicides in the three months since I won the grant. I am working to assure that the dialogues are integrated with efforts by local mental health professionals and the school district.

I am working with the director of the Richfield Indian Dormitories, Cody Workman, whose degree is in Mental Health Counseling, and a counselor from Behavioral Health Associates, Kristie Jensen, to create an evidence-based dialogue curriculum on "Resiliency," which is proven to be a key factor in suicide prevention. The program will pilot it in April in the Indian Dorms, where about 90 Navajo - Dine high school youth from Northern Arizona live during the school year, attending Richfield High School. The dialogue programs will be presented at the dorms in "Family Group" meetings - in six-week sessions. The youth who participate, as well as a control group, will take before-and-after surveys to assess the relevancy of the dialogues in creating a better awareness of mental health issues and resources.

For the past two months, I have also been meeting weekly with incarcerated youth at CUYC - Central Utah Youth Corrections, for about 45 minutes each Wednesday. I am working together with the youth to help them re-define their perception of the world - (instead of the Self-stigma: "I'm a loser, I'm a delinquent") - they are working on re-labeling themselves as being fortunate to attend "private school" and to see their challenges as great opportunities for growth! - A time to reflect, read, write. Using the books purchased with the Taylor Willingham grant funds, the students discuss how the literature relates to their healing and recovery. This recovery-based realistic fiction deals with youth who are depressed, suicidal, have problems with addiction, are incarcerated, etc. She also brings a variety of other books for them to choose from. They love science fiction/fantasy, and have some great discussions, relating what we are reading to our lives.

During April, the youth will be creating poetry to submit to "Words Unlocked" - http://ceeasorg.wix.com/wordsunlocked in "an effort to encourage literary exploration by young people held in locked juvenile facilities. Far too many people are locked up around the country. Through this initiative, we continue to ensure that their words are not." Grant funds were used to purchase personal journals for each student, as well as some brightly colored marker pens for them to illustrate their feelings and ideas.

I have met with the school district superintendent to assess their needs for staff training materials available
through the National Libraries of Medicine and has purchased the journal articles which they chose among those available on suicide prevention efforts with teens and in schools.

I am following the lead of the professionals (School Administrators, Mental Health Professionals) to create positive programs, and to enhance the programs they already have in place. The only one that is "mine exclusively" is the one at CUYC on a weekly basis - I have brought in American poetry as a bridge to start dialogue, including some from Maya Angelou, Shel Silverstein, Walt Whitman, e.e. cummings and Emily Dickinson. The students have shared their poetry with me, created artwork, which I have posted on our Library Facebook page, and signed the Victory Over Violence Pledge (see www.vov.com). It’s an exciting opportunity to interact with youth who are at high risk for suicide.

The library outreach programs into CUYC and the school district initiated through the auspices of the NIFI (Taylor Willingham Legacy Fund) grant will be ongoing. The grant provided the stimulus to get started, and Richfield Public Library (and Director Ogilvie) is committed to making these programs a permanent part of the outreach for the Richfield Public Library.

**Coming up: ULA Conference!**

Join us at ULA Conference, May 13-15, 2015 in St. George at the Dixie Conference Center. Registration is still open: https://www.regonline.com/ULA2015. The amazing, famous Saroj has flown in from Virginia to do a Pre-conference (Storytimes for Everyone!) on Wednesday—space is limited. You can register for just the Pre-conference if you can’t make the entire Conference. Other YSRT sessions at the Conference include Utah Kids Ready to Read in Storytime, How to Start a Minecraft Club, Literacy and Social-Emotional Development Connections in Children’s Literature, Engaging Readers with Creative Encouragement, Preschool Pioneer Online Library and Utah Kids Ready to Read Online, and the Beehive Book Bash. Many other sessions offered by other Round Tables and Sections, so come and check them out! -Heidi Tice

**Libraries Visited**

These are the libraries that Heidi visited since our last newsletter:

- American Fork City Library
- Highland City Library
- Lehi City Public Library
- Orem Public Library
- Pleasant Grove Public Library
- Provo City Library

**Coming to See You!**

Let Heidi know when it’s a good time for her to come visit your library!

**Contact Information**

- Heidi (chair): htice@slcolibrary.org, 801-943-4636
- Liesl (acting vice-chair): ljohnson@slcpl.org
- Bekah (acting secretary): bgoodman@slcolibrary.org
- Sarah: Sarah.Hall@washco.lib.ut.us
- Ellen: egrove@murray.utah.gov
In-coming YSRT Board Members

New Vice-Chair: Michelle DeKorver

Michelle has been married to a firefighter/Paramedic for 23 years. She is the mother of 4 children; ages 11 to 22.
She has lived all over the North Americas, including California, Michigan, Texas, Idaho, Washington state, several places in eastern Canada, and Utah.
Michelle attended Ricks College (BYU-Idaho) and was majoring in Dietetics with a minor in writing when she left school for a full-time mission for her church. After her church mission, she married and worked in three daycare centers in various capacities including toddler room, preschool teacher, and administration until her oldest child was 2. She then became a stay at home mom, but stayed busy with home jobs and volunteering for various organizations.
Michelle volunteered for many, many years with the Eagle Mountain Public Library in Eagle Mountain, UT. She was hired in 2008 as the Assistant Librarian for the Highland City Library. Her responsibilities include all programming – especially children’s and teen services. As part of this, she runs the Storytime and the Summer Reading Programs and gives Scout, Preschool, and other tours. She also teaches a monthly class for special needs young adults who love to come and visit the library.
Michelle stays very busy at work as she is also responsible for the daily till management, ordering and tracking supplies, Interlibrary Loan services, and acts as Secretary for the Library Board.
Michelle loves cooking, camping, gaming, and of course reading. She cannot remember ever being shy and one of her fondest childhood memories is of her father encouraging her to “ham it up” at a church party.

New Member-at-Large: Sherrie Mortensen

I, like everyone else reading this newsletter, have the best job in the world! When my husband and sons gather around the dinner table on Sunday night and talk about the hard week they had at work. I tell them I understand. I had to tell children stories, play with Legos, and build paper airplanes. I love my job!

My name is Sherrie Mortensen, for eight years I worked as the director of an adult literacy organization. I loved my work and am passionate about reading! One thing I came to see clearly was the importance of foundational literacy skills at an early age. So that is what I do now. Everything I do is to give children from birth on, experiences with language, reading, storytelling, and music.

In my personal life I have one great husband, five glorious children who have each chosen a fantastic spouse, and eleven of (you guessed it) the most beautiful grandchildren. One of my greatest joys is sharing stories and songs with my grandkids.

I am excited to participate in YSRT and look forward to learning from all of you!

If you’d like to have your library spotlighted or have a program idea to share, please send the information to the YSRT Chair. Thank you!