



Central Rappahannock Regional  
**Library**  
INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING

# Everybody Wins: How to Use Contests To Engage Teens With The Community

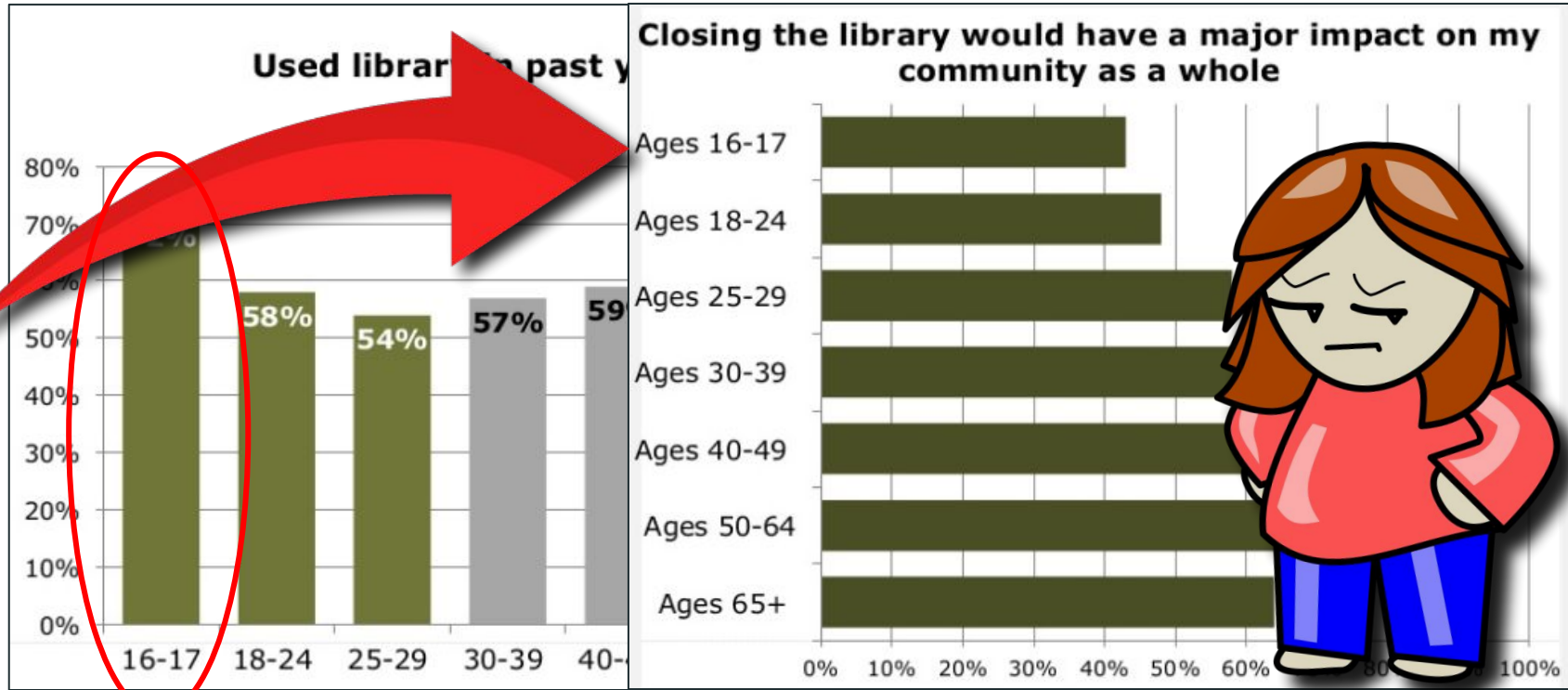
**Sarah Hutchinson**, Youth Services Librarian, Teen Specialist  
Central Rappahannock Regional Library  
Fredericksburg, VA



**“Failure to invest in youth  
reflects a lack of compassion  
and a colossal failure of  
common sense.”**

Coretta Scott King





Rainie, Lee. (April 9, 2014). Millennials and Libraries: Teens and Libraries in Today's Digital World [Powerpoint]. (Pew Research Institute). Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/PewInternet/2014-4914-young-amers-reading-and-libraries-texas-librarians-pdf>



# What are teen contests good for?

- Generate participation and interest in the library
- Feature community partners who support the contests
- Community is exposed to teen talent, which fosters goodwill
- Gives teens the chance to showcase their individuality, an important aspect of adolescent development
- Contests provide an emotionally “safe” space to experience critique and evaluation of their talents outside of an academic environment.
- Teens judging has twofold benefit: teen judges develop critical appraisal skills, and award recipients get the benefit of peer recognition.



# Presentation Outline:

- Promotion
- Finding Judges
- Submission Periods, Rules & Other Considerations
- Exhibiting art and/or poetry
- Notifying/Announcing Winners
- Opening Night: Planning Event Receptions
- Q&A



# Promotion - generate interest!

## IN HOUSE

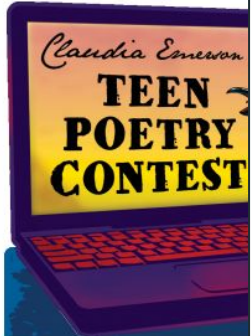
- Library Buildings (posters, flyers)
- Library Publications (magazine, newsletters, digest emails)
- Library Social Media accounts
- Library Website

## OUTREACH

- Schools - art & english teachers, librarians
- Galleries offering art instruction, coffee shops that serve young people, etc.
- Local community centers that have writer's groups/art lessons
- Organizations that serve teens in general (community centers, YMCA, etc.)
- Have a "main street" nearby? Ask businesses to advertise with posters in windows.



Celebrate National Poetry Month by submitting your original poetry



Entries will be judged by University of Mary Washington faculty: Amanda Rutstein, Adjunct; Laura Bylenok, Assistant Professor of English

Two categories: Grades 6-12  
Maximum of two entries per student

Entries will be accepted through **librarypoint.org**

A graphic of two spotlights shining down on the text.

*Claudia Emerson*  
**TEEN POETRY NIGHT**  
Wednesday, May 15  
7:30-8:30 **ALL AGES**

Celebrate National Poetry Month with poetry readings by the winners of the Claudia Emerson Teen Poetry Contest, as well as by our hosts and judges, University of Mary Washington faculty:

*Claudia Emerson*  
**TEEN POETRY CONTEST**

Amanda Rutstein  
Adjunct English Instructor

Laura Bylenok  
Assistant Professor of English

**Fredericksburg Branch**  
1201 Caroline Street  
Fredericksburg

A graphic of a black bird perched on a laptop keyboard. The laptop screen displays the text 'Claudia Emerson TEEN POETRY CONTEST'.

The logo for the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, featuring a stylized blue and white graphic of a star and waves, with the text 'Library' and 'INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING'.

Central Rappahannock Regional

540-372-1144  
804-472-3820

[f](#) [t](#) /crrnews  
librarypoint.org

FREDERICKSBURG FIRST PRESENTS

A graphic of a town skyline with colorful buildings.

13th Annual  
**TEEN ART SHOW**  
FRIDAY, MARCH 9  
6:00-9:00

Judged by Johnny P. Johnson, Gabriel and Joelle Cathleen

A colorful artwork of a butterfly with blue and purple wings.

**Fredericksburg Branch** • 1201 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg

The logo for the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, featuring a stylized blue and white graphic of a star and waves, with the text 'Library' and 'INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING'.

24th Annual

**TEEN ART SHOW AND RECEPTION**

FRIDAY, MARCH 8  
6:00-8:30

A black and white artwork of a person's face with flowers.

*Touch of Green* by Briana Paris  
1st Place, Grades 11-12,  
2018 Teen Art Show

A colorful artwork of a girl's face with orange markings on her forehead.

Untitled by Meghan Baker  
Best in Show,  
2018 Teen Art Show

**Fredericksburg Branch** • 1201 Caroline St., Fredericksburg

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# A Word About Prizes...



There's no doubt that promoting your contest with cash prizes will bring the most entries, but what do you do if there just isn't room in your budget for them?



# A Word About Prizes...

- Check with local businesses. Emphasize that you'll feature their sponsorship prominently.
- Do you have an active Friends group that can donate funds?
- Inquire with library staff to find out if their family/work connections can produce donations of goods/services/cash.
- Consult your administration to see if you can offer extended library privileges, free books, free lessons, etc.
- Be sure to emphasize that it is a prize in itself to get your work exhibited/heard.

## JUST ASK.

Remember, once your contest gets off the ground and garners community interest, you'll be able to upgrade your prizes.



# Finding Judges

## ART CONTEST

- Local artists - Any locally renowned or published artists?
- School Art Instructors (NOT h.s., but community colleges, universities, etc)
- Use upperclassmen to judge lower grades - teaches critical thinking, appraisal skills
- Check with local galleries, arts instruction centers, etc.

## POETRY CONTEST

- College level literature instructors
- Local poets - published or otherwise recognized
- Any local writers groups? Who facilitates those?



# Claudia Emerson, 1957-2014



**Laura Bylenok**

Assistant Professor of English,  
Linguistics, and Communication at  
University of Mary Washington



University  
Winning poe  
eate.



**Amanda Rutstein**

Current office manager for  
Geography dept at UMW, former  
Claudia Emerson protege. MFA in  
creative writing, poetry.

# Johnny P. Johnson



**Gabriel Pons** - with wife Scarlett,  
Fredericksburg gallery owners and  
art instructors.



her -



**Joelle Cathleen** - Fredericksburg  
artist and gallery owner.





11th & 12th grade  
9th & 10th grade  
of receipt

## Remember to Consider:

- ▶ **CREATIVITY**  
Is the work original and/or innovative?
- ▶ **TECHNICAL ABILITY**  
How well does the artist work with the media?
- ▶ **COMPOSITION**  
Did the artist place things in a pleasing manner?
- ▶ **IMPACT**  
Does the work invite you to FEEL anything?

39508

Category: Grades 9-10

1ST  
PLACE \_\_\_\_\_

Artist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

2ND  
PLACE \_\_\_\_\_

Artist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

3RD  
PLACE \_\_\_\_\_

Artist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

*Honorable Mentions will be determined if there are artists whose work is close behind 3rd place.*



# Poetry Judging

- Submissions through Google Form → Google Sheet (name, grade, poem, contact info)
- Copy & paste poems into a document, one poem per page
- Each poem's sheet will have contestant's grade and spreadsheet line #
- Judges receive anonymous poems
- Judges give numbers of winning poems to library staff, who then notify winners
- Winners are invited to read their poems at reception.



# Submission considerations

## ART CONTEST

- Rules are going to be the most variable depending on your resources.
- Consider max size of art and types of media accepted
- Presentation required (how will you hang? What hardware do you need to do it?)
- How many pieces can you accept (do you have room for more than one piece per artist?)
- Where/how you will store the art during the submission period?

## POETRY CONTEST

- Who can enter? Middle school? High school? Both?
- How many entries? Gauge your likely participation and set limits accordingly.
- How will you accept entries? (Google form? Paper forms? Email?)



### The Rules:

- All work must be original interpretations by the artist. No copies please. We cannot use pieces hung at the library in previous years.
- All work must be framed OR painted canvas on stretcher strips OR mounted on foam core and shrink-wrapped (no plastic wrap please). We cannot accept three-dimensional, freestanding work. Foam core with acetate or shrink-wrap is the least expensive option. Minimum matted or framed size is 11" x 14". No gallery clips, plastic frames, or picture frames with easel supports/stands. Questions? Please call the Fredericksburg Branch Youth Services Department at 540-372-1144, extension 7243.
- An entrant may submit no more than two pieces.
- All work will be accepted contingent on being reviewed by the installation committee. The library reserves the right to refuse any entry.
- While we make every effort to care for your art, the library is not responsible for the damage or loss of any work.
- Entries may not be picked up before March 26. Work must be picked up March 27-April 12 from the 2nd Floor Desk at the Fredericksburg Branch, unless you wish to donate your work to Loisann's Hope House.\*

## FRAMING REQUIREMENTS

Works must be framed and ready to hang. We cannot hang your art unless it is framed to our specifications.

- ▶ The library can display artwork that can be hung on a wall and weighs less than 13 lbs.
- ▶ We cannot display sculptural or other 3D pieces that cannot be hung by picture wire.
- ▶ Your pieces must be properly framed with a hook on each side, which we will wire from. Wooden frames must have two screw eyes 2" from the top on the back.
- ▶ Metal frames must have hooks slid to the top of the frame.
- ▶ Unacceptable frames:
  - gallery clips
  - frames with stands on the back
  - plastic frames
- ▶ Your pieces must be clean and presentable.
- ▶ Exhibitors may be included on our web page, [librarypoint.org/arts](http://librarypoint.org/arts)
- ▶ The library takes no commission and assumes no responsibility for the sale of your work. We post your contact information alongside your work, so that customers can contact you directly.
- ▶ The library takes no responsibility for loss or damage to artwork.

### EACH piece of artwork submitted.

by writing as neatly as you can!



Title of 1st Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: 9 10 11 12 Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Medium: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Pieces in Exhibit: 1 or 2

Size: \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum matted size is 11"x14")

Title of 2nd Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: 9 10 11 12 Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Medium: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Pieces in Exhibit: 1 or 2

Size: \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum matted size is 11"x14")





# Further submission considerations...

- **Both** contests require a disclaimer about reserving the right to disqualify inappropriate entries.
- **Submission periods** - about a week for the art contest. This is to limit the entries to a manageable amount. As poetry doesn't take up room, we give a couple of weeks to submit online, but CRRL does have two judges who split the work of reading all those poems. If you have one judge or a very large service area, you might consider shortening the submission period.
- With an art contest, you'll want to be **very specific** about what you can and can't accept. You need to be firm about not accepting artwork that is too large or small, unframed, etc. You'll also need to require two submission forms for each piece - one to go on the back of the art, and a duplicate to use when creating a label for the exhibit.
- **You will invariably get kids wanting to submit after your submission period is over for any kind of contest.** You can decide how firm you want to be about that, especially in your beginning stages, but as with any library policy, you want staff to be consistent to ensure fairness to all contestants.



# Displaying the work...



Hanging art via pin  
are win

You don't need to  
"display" poetry,  
but it's a good  
idea to have a  
large screen with  
slides featuring  
the text of winning  
poems that the  
reception  
audience can read  
along with.



# Announcing winners

## ART CONTEST

- Judging is completed the night of reception
- Winners are presented with ribbons and certificates at reception
- Ask winners to stay after announcement to have pictures taken with winning pieces
- Verify addresses to send out award checks. Mail any award materials to those who could not attend reception.

## POETRY CONTEST

- Winners determined by judges ahead of reception
- Staff notifies via phone/email and confirms whether teen is willing to read at reception
- Checks, ribbons, and certificates can be ready night of reception to be distributed to winners by judges. Mail out to any winners who could not attend after reception.



# Featuring winners/returning work

- Art is displayed in an exhibit that lasts a month after reception
- Teens are given finite amount of time to pick up work (2 weeks works well)
- Consider donating work that is not picked up to a local shelter or other agency
- Winning poems can be featured on library website, in newsletter, etc. In lieu of media, consider hanging poems on wall in a display for customers to read.



# A word about awards receptions...

- An art show reception will be longer. Give an hour at the beginning for arriving upperclassmen to judge lowerclassmens' art, and for other guests to mingle.
- Poetry contest reception is shorter (no on-site judging required)
- Finger foods work best; see checklists
- Get teen volunteers involved in setting up receptions



Be no

It gets  
easier  
each  
year!



**Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.**



**Sarah Hutchinson**

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Central Rappahannock Regional Library  
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