

## Canadiana: Programming for your Library!

*\*Halifax is being used as an example city. This program could be applied on both smaller and larger scales.*

### Halifax Reads

In any given year, up to four branches within the HPL system may participate in Halifax Reads (*HR!*) Each branch will select four young adults between the ages of 13 and 18 to participate in a local panel to defend their book and challenge others. Participants will be offered a variety of Canadian young adult novels in order to choose which book to defend. This selection will differ from branch to branch to prevent the same book from being defended by more than one participant in the final round.

Over the course of four weeks, the participants will defend their books as others are eliminated week by week until a branch winner is declared and then sent to the city championship to determine which book is the young adult text all of Halifax should read. Rather than starting another week-by-week playoff, however, participants will gather for two lightning elimination rounds before the group chooses a champion from the remaining three. The elimination rounds will ensure that some participants will be forced to choose books which were not their own favorites; they will place during the Word on The Street Festival, held in late September on the Halifax waterfront. The panel will meet before a live audience to debate their texts, take questions from the public, and make their votes. In between votes, the audience will be encouraged to discuss the texts themselves at open microphones, as well as to register for library memberships. By working with Word on the Street, *HR!* can leverage the local community to increase the success of the program.

Participating alongside the young adults will be a local celebrity who will also read the texts, take part in the debate, and help decide the branch winner. These celebrities will engage the young adult participants as their equals and peers by valuing their opinions, reading choices, and decisions. We intend to look toward the local entertainment industry to find celebrities who are willing to donate their time with *Halifax Reads!* Given the fact that organizations such as the Halifax Mooseheads hockey team, the Halifax Rainmen basketball team, and Neptune Theatre productions such as *High School Musical* contribute to community events as part of their own ongoing promotions, we hope to draw from organizations willing to volunteer their time for a festival geared toward their own market. For instance, integrating a star hockey player will not only bring participants to our program but also promote the hockey team in the community, so we hope to find willing participants in this free cross-promotional exercise.

*Halifax Reads!* will draw heavily on HPL's young adult resources during the summer and early fall. Since the community will be encouraged to read along, the library should make a selection pool from books which they have several copies of. To that end, participants chosen to represent their branches should be given extended loans for their books to ensure they have ample time to read and properly defend their choices. *HR!* will also provide books lists for suggested further reading based on the participant's choices and champions.

