

## INTRODUCTION

by Jennie Thompson

This issue of the YA Hotline delves into the various struggles of identity and adversity that teens experience. Going through adolescence can be one of the hardest periods of anyone's life. As a teenager, your emotions and experiences can be a rollercoaster of wonderful highs and miserable lows. Most teens, at some point, will experience those miserable lows through times of adversity. Sometimes these trying experiences will take the form of challenging social relationships, identity development, physical changes or differences, experiencing a loss, and so on.

We see this issue as contributing to the field of youth librarianship by providing analytical discussions of youth identity, adversity, and perseverance, as well as important resources for young people experiencing hardship and self-discovery. For marginalized teenagers, the library can be an important space for exploring, understanding, and accepting their identity(ies). Schrader (2009) highlights this by noting that, "Time and time again, sexual minority adults say that as young people they turned to libraries to try to find out something about LGBTQ realities and identities" (p. 107). However, this can be true of any marginalized youth seeking to learn more about who they are and where they belong.

Through this issue we strive to not only explore the often difficult experiences of

marginalized youth, but also emphasize the potential for strength and growth that can come out of adversity. We highlight young women like Malala Yousafzai who overcame incredible obstacles with strength and determination. With our booklist, playlist, and resources list, we offer young people (and librarians) an assortment of materials to aid in overcoming some of the numerous challenges that young people face.

To overcome adversity, to grow from it and to change for the better, a system of support is vital for young people. This support can come in the form of family and friends, and when those are lacking or absent, it can be found within a community. Librarians have the opportunity to foster that community of support through open-mindedness, awareness, and advocacy of diverse identities and experiences. This issue of the YA Hotline is just one small part of our support and advocacy of marginalized teens.

### Works Cited

Schrader, A. (2009). Challenging silence, challenging censoring, building resilience: LGBTQ services and collections in public, school and post-secondary libraries. *Canadian Library Association*, 55(3), 107-109.

