

# 2021 February Teen Podcast 2

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**Erin** 00:22

Hi, everybody and welcome to All Things Teen. It's Erin here, your teen librarian at the Clinton Macomb Public Library. And today's guest is Julianne Novetski, one of my good friends that I went to library school with. And now we are both public librarians. So, Julianne, how long ago did we meet?

**Julianne** 00:41

I think it was like 2011 or 2012, something like that.

**Erin** 00:45

Yeah, so we've known each other for 10 years now. That's awesome.

**Julianne** 00:47

Close to it. Yeah.

**Erin** 00:48

Julianne, do you want to introduce yourself?

**Julianne** 00:50

Sure. So my name is Julianne Novetski. Erin already told you that. And I work at the Warren Public Library in Warren, Michigan. And I am a library technician is my actual job title. But I do most of the teen programming and purchasing of teen books at the board at the Civic Center branch of the Warren Public Library. I just wanted to say I am speaking non officially about this. This is just my experiences that I've had doing teen programming in Warren. It's not speaking officially for the Warren Public Library.

**Erin** 01:30

Excellent. So I wanted to talk about, we talk about programs frequently. So I'm gonna talk about some of your favorite teen programs that you've hosted at the library. And do you have anything upcoming that you're excited about?

**Julianne** 01:43

I do, which I will tell you about in a minute. But to start with, I will say one of the things that has been really popular at the Warren Public Library is we do this thing. It's called like tastes best. And it's been a

series so we did one where it was candy bars, and you had like we caught up this was obviously pre pandemic. But we cut up candy bars, and they had to try to guess what the different ones were. And then we had Oreo flavor tasting, which I know that a lot of libraries have done that, but it was kind of crazy. I went to Target and bought about 15 different kinds of Oreos, and I think the people at Target thought I was nuts.

**Erin 02:23**

It's amazing, Target's are really good place to buy them. I bought a lot of them at Target also when we did that.

**Julianne 02:29**

Yes.

**Erin 02:31**

What your teens liked the best, which Oreos?

**Julianne 02:34**

Oh gosh, I wish, I think the Red Velvet one was popular. And

**Erin 02:39**

Weirdly, my teens really liked the lemon Oreos. And I was like, these are gross.

**Julianne 02:43**

Yeah, I don't think the lemons were popular. Like, I mean, I don't know that. I don't remember. And then so then after that, and then I also had another part in that. That was like for the next session because we had to do something different to you know, still be interesting. So we did like Faygo pop tasting flavors, because you know, Faygo has all those great different flavors. And then we also did after that we did like if you could tell the difference between the store brand and the name brand. So like I just bought things like crackers like saltine crackers, and you know, I bought like Aquafina and like the Kroger brand water and you know, different stuff like that. And they had to guess what they thought was, you know, and it was funny because like some kids were like, or some teens, I should say were like, they were certain that they knew and then they were actually wrong. And the best part is that at the end, because again, this was pre pandemic, I would be like, you know, you can take home. I'm sorry, I just got a turn...I don't know if this is beeping in the video. I'm sorry.

**Erin 03:50**

Yeah, they could take home the leftovers.

**Julianne** 03:52

Right, they could take home the leftovers. And so then somebody like I thought they'd want to take like pop or you know, something like that. But then they took home, the Saltines because they were like, Oh, it's a joke or something, which I didn't understand what it was, but that's fine. Like, I'm not going to use the Saltines because I'm not going to ever have another program that's a Saltine program. So whatever, so that was fun. And then my other food related program that was really popular because you know, food related programs are always popular is we did something kind of based off of like Iron Chef. Obviously, like I couldn't do a pantry. You know, like how I think it's Iron Chef is a show or no I'm sorry, chopped is the show, I think I'm thinking of where they have like a pantry that they can go through so we couldn't do that. So I just went to the grocery store. I bought all kinds of stuff. Some of it was you know, I don't know like tuna packets and just, you know, kind of weird things. And it was funny because after it was over the stuff that I had leftover, I would put on a refrigerator marked YA and there'd be like, barbecue sauce-YA and my co workers were all like what in the world it says buy a barbecue sauce. And here for. But anyway, um, so then what I would do instead of like, I would say they would have to make, say a, you know, like a dessert, and then they'd have to make like a lunch type thing. And then the other one was like, kind of dealer's choice, like, whatever they wanted. And then instead of, like, what I would do is I would say, like, you have to use, you know, one, like, you have to use like the tuna fish, for example, like, that wasn't what I made them use, but like, there was one thing that they had to use. And then in each of the different meals,

**Erin** 05:33

I liked that because they do give them like a chapter, they give them like, ingredients that they have to use. So it's good to like, be like, you have to use this and your dish.

**Julianne** 05:42

Exactly. And and I think the last one, if I remember it, cuz this was a while ago, but I think the last one, they could do anything with that one. So I think it was like they had to make, you know, like use for the first two, they had to use one thing, but then the last one, they could do whatever they wanted. And that was really great, because, um, we had some really delicious, like looking things like kit, like, you know, teens who did these wonderful like presentation where it looked amazing. And then we had some really gross looking things and so when we voted, they had like a voting for like winners. And what I did is, um, everybody had to vote, but you couldn't vote for your own. So then that way, and because I didn't want to be the one making that decision, because I felt like what I think is the best is not necessarily what they think is the best. And actually, I'm sorry, I have one other, um, also kind of food related program that was super fun. So I do this thing every year, called holidays, and it's in December, but it's not like, you know, obviously, it's not Christmas, or, you know, it's just kind of like, you know, like, it's

**Erin 06:47**

All of the the holidays.

**Julianne 06:48**

Exactly, all of the, you know, winter holidays kind of thing. And every year I do it differently, because I want to keep it fresh, and I don't want to just the same program, I don't like to fall into that, you know, especially I think with teen programming, and you, you know, I feel like you probably agree with me, you don't want to do the same thing all the time, you want to do something different. But you also want to have kind of like consistency, right? So, um, one of the ones that was very fun was, I wanted to do gingerbread houses, but I was like, you know, gingerbread houses can be even for adults, like I remember, when you made one, a few years ago, I'd be put the picture on Facebook. And it was, um, it was not exactly like the store, like what you would expect. So I called it ruin gingerbread houses. And that way, you could just make a mess. And like, you know, or you could try to make one that was like, you know, more traditional, or you could just make some crazy scene or, you know, whatever you wanted to do. And, um, I felt like that was really successful. And people had a lot of fun with it. And we had some very

**Erin 07:53**

That's good because you're setting the bar low. So that, like teens don't have to feel like, Oh, this has to be perfect. Like...

**Julianne 08:01**

Exactly. I try to do that. Because I know, like, most of the time, it's not an issue because most of the teams who I like, are very creative. And, you know, but I know when I was a teen, I have a lot of like, where I would have felt like pressure to make something a certain way. And so if you purposely, you know, kind of make it like you can do whatever you want, but it's it's like more fun. If it's a mess than that, you know, it's something that people don't have to feel pressured. And they can just come and have fun and joke around with their friends. And you know, it doesn't matter. So that was another one that was really fun.

**Erin 08:37**

Awesome. One of my favorite food programs that we do, and we're going to be doing this when we can open back up for the public, just because we have such good response every time is Will It Waffle? And so we've got four different \$10 waffle mini waffle irons from Amazon, and we buy a whole bunch of different things and see if we can make waffles out of them. And the teens really like it. We do like savory things and sweet things. So we always buy like muffin mix, which is really good biscuit, biscuits. If you get like a roll of Grands Biscuits, those come out really nicely. And then sugar cookie dough is like another favorite. But you also have to get weird things too like mashed potatoes or some sort of

noodles. I like waffles macaroni and cheese. It almost kind of like a fried macaroni and cheese. It comes out really interesting. But that's a really big fun program that Colleen and I do every every year so...

**Julianne** 09:37

You know it the reason I kind of was sighing a little bit is last summer I had planned a program very similar to that and I didn't get the opportunity to do it. But that's good to know that it was successful that you know, the teens that come to your library like it because maybe someday I'll be able to do something.

**Erin** 09:55

I feel like you should totally do that because the waffle irons are only kind of limited ones are \$10 a piece, so you could buy a couple of them. And, um, and then you just need, you know, food ingredients. So it's a really inexpensive program,

**Julianne** 10:07

Yeah, you'll have to send me your your things that you listed like this cinnamon rolls or whatever. So you'll have to send, so, so I know what works and what doesn't work. And

**Erin** 10:16

Yeah, there are some things well, and I wish some things were like hard to portion and we gave, we actually bought like Pop Tarts that we put in there, which apparently don't work very well. But it's good thing to learn. So it's good to get things like that, that you're like not sure about. And we got like hash browns. But the bag of hash browns was like, massive. So like, I also got pizza rolls, which is super weird to put in. But you have to get some weird things too.

**Julianne** 10:44

Sure it's more fun that way. And then especially if something like macaroni you wouldn't think would turn out very well. So that's interesting.

**Erin** 10:51

Yeah, and we get like the the cops that you can just make so that you so you do need a microwave to if you're gonna use like noodles, and like a mashed potato cup that you can just microwave and wait that way, you just put water in it, and you microwave it and you stir it before you hand it off to them to throw in the waffle iron.

**Julianne** 11:09

That makes sense. For sure.

**Erin 11:13**

So what are upcoming programs that you're looking forward to?

**Julianne 11:16**

So um, because we are still working on take home, a lot of what we're doing is more like craft related. And the thing about crafts. In the past, the things that have been most popular have not necessarily been crafts with our teams. A lot of times we have a normally we have a monthly program called Teen Spot, which is a second Saturday of every month from two to four. And we have you know, video games and food. And usually I'll try to have something that like, each month, there's something a little different. So it'll be like a craft or something like that. But I generally don't do a lot of craft only programs, just because they're not as much of a draw for the teens in our area. It's like you kind of have to have like some, you know, different ideas put together or, you know, like, like I said, more the hands-on food type programs are very popular. But you know, right now what works best is, you know, crafts because it's hard to do a take home, you know, taste test, right/? So, um, yeah, it's not impossible, but I think a lot of the draw that is like, you know, being there with other teams and things like that. So um, so I do have some ideas, I'm excited about, like, you were talking about Pop Tarts, and I have this idea we're gonna make a out of felt we're gonna make a Pop Tart pillow, which I know doesn't sound that cool.

**Erin 12:41**

No, it sounds adorable.

**Julianne 12:42**

It's super cute. I you know, something I found online. And it tells me that...

**Erin 12:48**

You'll have to send me that.

**Julianne 12:48**

I will. And I'm so like, that's what I'm really excited about. I think that's gonna be a lot of fun. And then we're doing um, so our last program was in March last year in the new year. So we're doing a program and it's called Pandemic Succs. But it's like, Succs, which is succulents. And it's like, kind of like our description for this program is like we are haven't been able to have a team program for your. And we're really sad about that. But like, let's all cheer up and make this succulent, you know, like make a succulent craft. So basically, like, kids will be able to get succulent and dirt and then we'll have a pot that they can decorate in some way. I haven't figured out exactly how it's going to work out, although I need to soon because it is in the middle of March. And it's already the middle of February. So I need to work on that. And then the other one that I'm very excited and very scared about which I shouldn't be

admitting this, but hopefully nobody will tell me. Um, so May is mystery month. I don't know if you know this.

**Erin 13:53**

No, I didn't.

**Julianne 13:54**

Okay, so in May, no not May, I'm sorry, a year or two ago, we did a murder mystery when people could come in, in real life. And it was a fairy tale based murder mystery. And we had, like, we had pizza, and everybody got to play a character, you know, just, I mean, you've probably been to a murder mystery, you kind of know how they work. So that was super fun. It was super popular was one of my most popular programs. And one of the things that I think about for my teens in my area is that the most popular programs are usually ones that you can't necessarily do at home. Like it's hard to, you know, kind of create that same atmosphere at home. So, what we want to do is have a mystery, but it's like a take home mystery. So if you've ever heard about, like, those mystery in a box, like you've probably seen ads about it on Facebook, where it's like, you know, like, there's like hunter killer or whatever. I don't know if I can say that, but whatever. Um, anyway, it's so it's kind of like that, and it's going to take we have four libraries in Warren. So there's going to be closed that are related at each branch, whether it's something that they can go in and see, because, you know, possibly, you know, hopefully, by May, things will be a little better. But if not, then it can also be something where they can call and it'll be, you know, they can talk to somebody at circulation or something like that about, like what this clue is. And my hope is to make it kind of based in Warren history a little bit so that, you know, it's, it's something where we can like, learn about our city and learn about, you know, and have fun doing this mystery, and then the suspects are actually going to be library staff members. So like, I will be a suspect, and probably the other teen librarians and may love that. And it's just a good way for kids or teens. I'm sorry, I keep saying kids, but teens, if maybe they don't know us, it's a way for them to kind of find out like, Oh, hey, I saw, you know, this girl in this game. And, you know, I know who this is. And because we unfortunately, in Warren, we we don't have necessarily dedicated teen librarians and we don't have a teen reference desk and so it's sometimes difficult for us to get to know, and for the teens to get to know us and feel comfortable with us. So it was kind of a way to do something different. Like, if the pandemic is still going on, that's super fun. Hopefully, hopefully, if I'm good at reading mysteries, I don't know, but and, you know, something a little bit different and then also, you know, hopefully get to know us a little and feel more comfortable with us when they are able to come back to the library.

**Erin 16:36**

I love that. I totally want to create like a mystery like that. We've had really good success with adult murder mysteries, firstly, so and I'm not really sure exactly how they've run it. But they said us a really popular and so they'll probably bring that back again, I think they've done it twice now.

**Julianne** 16:53

Do you know, is this something they're writing in house? Or is it something that they're like? Because...

**Erin** 16:57

Yeah, it is, um, and then I believe they have breakout rooms in their Zoom. And so they have different staff members, which are different characters, which give out clues when patrons talk to them. Oh, so they have and it's, it's like, usually, at least two days, I think the first time they did it, they did three evenings in a row. And then the final night is like people could have their guesses. But I believe last time they did it, they only did two nights. And so you had like, the first night and then half of the second night to like interview people and try to solve the mystery, and then give your guess and then they revealed, you know, what the truth was at the end. So

**Julianne** 17:40

That's a really interesting idea. Like I was thinking about making it more like contained. Like, you know, how I was saying, like a, like a box where they take it home just just because, um, you know, I don't know, everybody's ability, like for teens, you know, to be able to be, you know, online, as opposed to like, for adults, but but that's interesting to like, since I am still this...

**Erin** 18:03

I love that idea. Like, I think that's great. Like, you know, we started a program super secret book box, which is like a subscription box for teens. And we put in one of our library books, and they get to check that out for a month. And then we also pick a book for them to keep. And then we put in some snacks and an activity for them to do and just kind of some other fun toys, like squishy toys, or like gel pens, or whatever we have to change and stuff like that. And we started this in January, and every we've had really great feedback, like everybody loves it, we only do 20 at a time, because it is time intensive. Sure to pick out all of the books, and put them on hold, make sure they come in. We check them out, like the day before they go out to patrons so that hopefully, and a lot of kids parents register them, which is great. Because if the if the teens, parents register them, then they won't know if their parent doesn't call them, they will have no idea what their book is until they actually open a box. So...

**Julianne** 19:14

So I actually wanted to ask you a question about that, if that's okay, for me, absolutely. Go for it. Um, so we had kind of a similar plan in place and I actually bought boxes for this and I got them. I was looking at my Amazon receipts the other day, and I got them on February 26 last year. So, you know, that didn't turn out so well. Um, but so my question for you because it's something that I would like to pursue something similar. But do you...like you'd make it a subscription where the same people are

signed up and they get one every month? Or do they have to sign up? Like do they have to call every month to sign up?

**Erin 19:53**

Yeah, that's a really good question. So because we wanted to go out to as many teens as possible we open registration in the first every month, and then we just kind of we knew we had to give them out like the last week. So we kind of picked our arbitrary date, which is the 22nd of the month. So the 22nd of every month, the boxes are ready for pickup. So they don't even have to call to make sure they just know that on the 20th. And actually, in January, all of them were picked up on that date, they were all picked up on the 22nd.

**Julianne 20:27**

For sure, I mean, that's a really--

**Erin 20:28**

The teens were so excited to have them in their hands. So all the parents and teens just came and picked them up. But, so, we do have repeat, I'd say about half of the people that signed up this month, got the box in January. But I'm excited because there are 10 new people that are getting boxes that haven't had it before. That was actually, what was that?

**Julianne 20:55**

Oh, I'm sorry, I was just noise. I don't know, if you're hearing that feedback, but I'm hearing like, it sounds like somebody at whatever. Anyway, um, no, what I was gonna say is, I think that's a great, um, you know, speaks to the worth of that program, because the fact that you're having repeats, but then you're also having new people interested. It's, it's some, I think that's perfect. And having it half and half like that. I think that's great. I mean, that shows that that's a popular program, but it's also going to sustain itself, like long term, but yeah, I think so too, and it fills up really fast. So like, within a couple days, it's full. And so people, I think they're gonna be setting reminders if they want, you know, that box that month. I mean, I want that we can expand it in the summer, and maybe do maybe like 30 boxes. Because we know, you know, kids will have even more time for reading in the summer. But we'll see. Do you think you can make the teen librarian boxes that teen librarians in the area can pick up?

**Erin 21:57**

That's funny, because Colleen was telling me that we they actually, she actually heard from a, somebody had another library who's doing the same thing from adults. They're like, Can we have these subscription boxes? And they were like, No, you can't, because teens get so little like, this is something for them. And like, as an adult, you can purchase your own subscription box. So it's like, we want to do this, do this something special for teens.

**Julianne 22:26**

But I mean, I'm just saying like, if you wanted to make like for your special teen librarian, friends,

**Erin 22:31**

Yeah. Well, I think you are definitely exception to the rule. I could I could make that work.

**Julianne 22:36**

But, not one of your teens boxes, like I don't want to take it from them. I'm just

**Erin 22:39**

Oh, yeah, I know. And we have a special boxes I'll have, I have some other cool boxes that I can use.

**Julianne 22:46**

Very cool.

**Erin 22:46**

We have special boxes that we use, they're actually bakery boxes, because they have to be a pretty decent size. So they're, like 10 inches, by I don't know, I'm gonna say maybe eight inches tall. So they're pretty, they're pretty big, it can fit like a dozen doughnuts in them. But that's just so they can fit to large books and snacks and stuff in them.

**Julianne 23:08**

And I think that's great that you also have, where they get to keep one of the books, like one of the things we were talking about earlier, you and I were talking about, you know, circulation, and I was saying I was trying to think of ways to, you know, make sure we're getting books to teens that you know, because sometimes that's not happening as much as I think, you know, it could be. And so one of my ideas was specifically like boxes like that, where we're circulating books, but I think it's nice that you also give them one that they can keep, as well, you know, so that they get something from the library, but then they also get one that, you know, is there that they can add to their own collection, which is really nice, because, you know...

**Erin 23:48**

Yeah, and it's working out because I'm being able to recommend really good titles that are lesser known by patrons and maybe you don't check out as often. So like, there's a humor category that we have like humor comedy. And because we have we mean 10 different topics so they can choose from for their theme. And then we choose books based off of that. So I love Denton Little's Death Date and Denton Little's Still Not Dead. They're hysterical books by Lance Rubin. And Sony was like the right

grade and I think ninth or 10th grade and I was like, Oh, this is perfect, this hysterical, their kids gonna really like it. And we've gotten really good feedback about the choices that we made for teens. So

**Julianne** 24:32

Good. Sometimes reader's advisory can be really difficult. So that's great that you are kind of hitting the mark on that.

**Erin** 24:38

For sure. I spent a lot of time looking into things and I was really lucky. There's a couple categories we had to drop because it was so difficult to find books like animal books, so much easier to find animal books for elementary and middle school, or middle grade, but like middle school and high school, it's so much harder to find books with animals in them.

**Julianne** 25:00

I agree.

**Erin** 25:02

Well, we already talked for like, 25 minutes that one flew by.

**Julianne** 25:08

I know, I feel like we could talk for another 25.

**Erin** 25:10

We could absolutely.

**Julianne** 25:11

We don't, well...

**Erin** 25:12

I definitely gonna have you again as a guest and we can talk. Since this is my first time talking about programs, maybe we'll have you back like in summer, and we can talk about more programs.

**Julianne** 25:22

Yeah, I'd love to and maybe if I don't have to hang my head and shame when my mystery. Maybe we can talk over? No, I'm sure it'll be fine. I just you know, I'm a little bit in panic mode right now, but I'm sure it'll work. Oh, it always does.

**Erin** 25:39

For sure. I'm super excited. I want I want you to reserve one of those boxes for me. So I can do solve the mystery. Well, actually, I do need like a beta tester. So if you'd like for real seriously, if you'd be interested in being like my beta tester, once again. I will totally beta test that. I beta test a lot of stuff like, our gut librarians tried their hand at an escape room for Valentine's Day. And I tested that out. So that's super fun.

**Julianne** 26:01

Exactly. So I definitely will keep you as my beta. So but yeah, I'd be I'd be happy to come back anytime. I was a lot of fun.

**Erin** 26:09

All right. Thank you so much, Julian, for joining us today. And hopefully in the next all things teen we're going to be talking about Comic Con, so get prepared for that.

**Julianne** 26:19

Bye, everyone.

**Erin** 26:21

Bye