In spring 2022 library staff in Oregon were invited to share how we are rebuilding as we enter year three of the pandemic. Reading their survey responses, I got inspired, laughed, cried, thought deeply, and got great ideas. Most importantly, reading all the thoughts my colleagues bravely shared made me feel proud to be part of this library community.

I hope you enjoy the following #OYANReview2022!

Katie Anderson,
OYAN Publications Manager
The activity helping me rebuild is... 

Talking with kids and teachers on a regular basis, when I can. It keeps my head in the game and helps me adapt our program to our audience.
Mindfulness breathing practices through the Meru Health app, a program available through the Oregon Educators Benefit Board.

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School
(Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
The activities helping me rebuild are...

Processing books.
Rethinking my scope and sequence.

Anonymous
I am leading a Library Affinity Group through the local Education Service District, reading as much as I can, and attempting to breathe more deeply.

Marie Felgentrager, Roseburg High School
I run twice a week with a friend. I really think that helps me clear my head and stay positive while attempting to navigate these uncertain times.

Caitlin McMahan,
Eugene Public Library
The activities helping me rebuild are...

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
The activities helping me rebuild are...

20 minutes of yoga most mornings.

Suzanne Harold,
Astoria Public Library
The activities helping me rebuild are...

Gaming tournaments, they're still well-attended.

Ian Duncanson,
Beaverton City Library
Reading only books with BIPOC and/or queer representation. Also, cookies are good!

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
At least for the moment, I am giving myself permission to do "easy" programs - low prep/high connection - Jackbox games, art nights where we all work on art projects and talk, and our super-chill teen writing group, book club - and to repeat as necessary.

Sonja Somerville,
Salem Public Library
The activity helping me rebuild is... Only working 8 hours a day.
Screaming into the void, releasing the trauma held in my body with movement, yoga, medication, meditation, psychedelic music, making up mythology and songs with my family, 90s hip hop, reading for queer joy, letting others be uncomfortable with my gender instead of me, radical not giving a shit, therapy, opera and I'm not even kidding, try some Puccini when everyone sucks, it's truly therapeutic, something called Dad O'Clock where I go do a Dad Project for an hour, making valentines for everyone who ever did something nice for us, making care kits for kids in foster care, cursing a lot, financially supporting LGBTQ refugee resettlement programs, leaning into Queer Eldership and club membership with my family. Current clubs are: Reading Club, Star Club, Puzzle Club, Art Factory, Coze Club, and Sunset Appreciators.
Starting each day thinking about addressing equity with all of my responsibilities.
I started a Social Justice Book Club; I added Spanish language books to the teen collection for the first time; we published and promoted a trio of book lists for Gay Lit, Lesbian Lit, and Trans/Non-Binary Lit.

Sonja Somerville,
Salem Public Library
I'm rebuilding with an equity focus by...

Paying attention to who I call on during lessons.
Encouraging everyone to be involved in all discussions.
Curating a diverse collection and continuing my own education, while trying to find ways to support equity in an overwhelmingly white community.

Suzanne Harold,
Astoria Public Library
I'm rebuilding with an equity focus by...

Looking for new connections with our Latino community.
BIPOC, elders, LGBTQ crew, children to the front!
Not letting all the rich white people in this town push their ideas on everybody else.

I'm rebuilding with an equity focus by...
I'm rebuilding with an equity focus by...

Listening.

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
Trying to purchase books with all sorts of diverse characters.

I'm rebuilding with an equity focus by...

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School
(Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
Looking for teens who don't use the library often and welcoming them in to a more inviting space.

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
Meeting kids where they're at. Different kids will have different needs. Making it clear that we will do our best to help kids no matter what's going on. Some kids will need help with finding a book for a book report, some kids will need a toothbrush because they don't have access to basic necessities. They can all come to the library and be treated with respect and helped to the best of our ability!

Caitlin McMahan,
Eugene Public Library
I'm rebuilding with an equity focus by...

Researching the best titles to support intellectual growth of our students.

Marie Felgentrager,
Roseburg High School
Including dual language books in children's storytimes.
I'm rebuilding with an equity focus by...

Thinking about outreach and getting books to kids we don't normally see.
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

To connect with local middle school students and ask what they would like us to provide.

Suzanne Harold,
Astoria Public Library
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Creating a fun, welcoming environment.

Caitlin McMahan,
Eugene Public Library
Clear the nonfiction of outdated materials.

Marie Felgentrager,
Roseburg High School
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

More opportunities for the Teen Library Council.

Ian Duncanson,
Beaverton City Library
My short-term goal for rebuilding is to make the teen area feel like a safe, welcoming, fun space again.

Sonja Somerville, Salem Public Library
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Hold a BreakoutEDU Lock of the Day gathering at lunch in the high school every Thursday.

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School (Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Getting the word out again about library services, especially as programming returns
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Variety in the collection and offered activities.

Anonymous
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Declutter.
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Focus on connections between others.
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Clean up the collections and space so they are warm and welcoming.

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Review the last 4 years and use it as a base to recreate my scope and sequence.
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

In-person programs.
My short-term goal for rebuilding is...

Build solid foundations; set myself up to be successful by making sure I'm doing the foundational work first.

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
My mantra for rebuilding is...

Prioritize what is most important.

Anonymous
My mantra for rebuilding is...

We are not a book warehouse. We are not a book warehouse. We are not a book warehouse.

Anonymous
My mantra for rebuilding is...

In with the new!

Anonymous
My mantra for rebuilding is...

Due diligence.
Make the task enjoyable.

Marie Felgentrager,
Roseburg High School
My mantra for rebuilding is...

Good enough is good enough.

Lou
My mantra for rebuilding is...

There is no "going back to normal." We're building what we'd like to be going forward.

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
My mantra for rebuilding is... In-person programs.
My mantra for rebuilding is...

One baby step at a time.

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School
(Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
My mantra for rebuilding is...

Focus on individual relationships.

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
The library is for everyone.

Anonymous
My mantra for rebuilding is...

Adjust your expectations.

Sonja Somerville,
Salem Public Library
This can't be worse than COVID.

Ian Duncanson,
Beaverton City Library
My mantra for rebuilding is...

Any month now we can start in-person programs and I can re-start teen programs.

Suzanne Harold,
Astoria Public Library
My mantra for rebuilding is...

Slow and steady.

Caitlin McMahan,
Eugene Public Library
My mantra for rebuilding is...

The library is awesome!

Anonymous
The social media platform helping me rebuild is...

Instagram!

Caitlin McMahan,
Eugene Public Library
Necessity: the library is "home" to many teens who need a safe, comfortable, accepting environment, now more than ever.

Marie Felgentrager,
Roseburg High School
My thoughts about rebuilding are...

My biggest realization is that we've all been changed by this pandemic. What teens needed or wanted in 2019 is just not the same. The big, zany fun, herds-of-kids events aren't just not possible right now, but don't seem as wanted. I'm seeing and hearing so much more need to feel cared for, safe, valued, connected and need to update my thoughts about programming and teen services accordingly.

Sonja Somerville,
Salem Public Library
The therapist helping me rebuild is...

convinced she'd be out of work if capitalism didn't exist.
I'm really worried that we're going to forget everything we've learned.
Our library has been used as a garage for chromebook carts; it is time to open the area and allow students to have a beautiful location to read, work, and collaborate.

Marie Felgentrager,
Roseburg High School
Rebuilding feels like a strange and exhausting concept because it's all I've been doing for the past two years. We never stopped rebuilding, and renewing, and trying again and again as we respond to the pandemic. I kinda don't want to rebuild now. I just want to lay a good foundation and see what grows.

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
I want to rebuild, but I'm so deeply exhausted from the past 2 years, and from still not knowing when it will be safe to do programs again - or even what metric to use. Community spread? Something else? I've been holding out for when our community spread is "low," but I'm wondering if that will ever happen.

Suzanne Harold, Astoria Public Library
The advice helping me rebuild is...

The best advice I've ever gotten is to ask yourself if this will matter a year from now. If the answer is yes, then by all means stress out about it. If the answer is no, then it's not worth the stress. This seems more important than ever with the limited emotional energy I have these days.

Keli Yeats,
Multnomah County Library
The person helping me rebuild is...

My therapist.
Bless her.

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
My thoughts about rebuilding are...

We are our only relevant hope. We are our only possible medicine.

Lou
The obscure emotion helping me rebuild is...

That feeling you get when you look at your past self and she feels both within you and 10,000 years ago. I don't have a word for that feeling, but it has been sponsoring my life lately. It's helping me rebuild because it's teaching me that time is a wibbly wobbly, Jeremy Bearimy mess, and this too shall pass.

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
The staff helping me rebuild are...

Our career (student-to-work) staff person and our homeless liaison staff person. They love the library and I'm getting ideas on how to connect with/through them.

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School  
(Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
I feel like I've just been kind of muddling along during the pandemic. I am hoping to get more focused, especially this summer during summer reading.

Ian Duncanson,
Beaverton City Library
My thoughts about rebuilding are...

The main thing we have to offer is our space. We have to get back to in-person soon. There are many aspects to a teen's health, and socialization is a big one. Getting them together with each other is pretty important.
The mindset helping me rebuild is...

Start slow and rebuild thoughtfully.

Anonymous
My library is in a ground zero state, so I'm trying to focus on just getting books catalogued and organized and getting students in (when I'm just there one day a week).

I'm also trying to engage students, so I keep trying to tell myself ANY LITTLE BIT HELPS. And not get caught up in trying to keep up with established programs elsewhere, as much as I'd like to be at that stage.

Trying the "spaghetti" approach with activities to engage--throw something at the wall and see if it sticks--but keep throwing it each week and see if there's an increase in interest.

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School (Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
One of the best things I have experienced as we work towards rebuilding our teen services is to have open communication with work groups and staff as a whole. I think it's been an adjustment trying to get back to whatever normal used to be. Staff and patrons are pretty emotionally tapped out and many people are in a different place than they were in 2019.

Staff should feel supported not only in the ideas they have, but also in their mental and emotional health. By holding space to have those conversations I think makes staff feel heard and empowered. Honestly I think it gives people the feeling that they're in this with others, so maybe the task of returning to various services doesn't seem so daunting. It also creates space to share ideas about making changes moving forward.

Caitlin McMahan, Eugene Public Library
Trying to focus on what value the library can add to teens' lives at this point.
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Resources: Teen Underground Facebook group, OYAN, YALSA, and colleagues in other library systems.

Suzanne Harold,
Astoria Public Library
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Patience.
Manage expectations.
Redefine success.

Sonja Somerville,
Salem Public Library
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Sleep.

Anonymous
Involving the whole staff is important. We have better networks working together.

Anonymous
Introducing myself and learning other people's names! I have always found that positive relationships more than anything are what makes a great teen space. The first step towards learning about someone is learning their name. That way the next time they come in I can say hello!

Caitlin McMahan, Eugene Public Library
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Research, listening, and super detailed to-do lists.

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Not trying to do everything at once - take gradual steps.

Ian Duncanson,
Beaverton City Library
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Even tho I am a staff of one,
I am not alone.

Anonymous
Focusing on my students' needs and requests.

Marie Felgentrager,
Roseburg High School
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Start small.
Have 2-3 sets of curriculum: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 2-5.
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Giving us permission to fail.

Anonymous
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are...

Know that the act of showing up is sacred in itself.
The tips & tricks helping me rebuild are:

Setting aside specific time to work on collections. Cleaning up my desk. Getting to know individual teens.

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
Joining a Makerspace/district librarian, librarian Professional Learning Community in another part of the state to get me inspired.

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School (Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
Stop listening to all the conflicting advice and do what I think is best.

Anonymous
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

I want to start a library ambassador program in the schools, where kids talk to other kids about summer reading and how to get signed-up. I'm in discussion with the various parties at each school.
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

Focus on ways to find a great read in the library and online.

Anonymous
Spend a lot of time on a few teens, and hope that their love of the library will grow to include more of their peers.

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

Doing a Project Lit book club
or March Madness or...

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School
(Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

Heck, maybe we can hire another member for the team!

Anonymous
Sunset Club at the library.
Once a week making popcorn
and hanging out on the lawn
with camp chairs in silence
lookin' at the sunset. If I have
to trapped at work for the
sunset I'm dang well going to
make it so I can enjoy it too.
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

Collaborate with the local County Library.
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

An "uncomfortable conversations" book group for teens, held in the local bubble tea shop.

Suzanne Harold,
Astoria Public Library
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

Yoga on my lunch breaks (that I never take).

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
The half-baked idea I have for rebuilding is...

An adult crafting group.
I want to explore hybrid events that happen partly online and partly in person. What I learned from going totally online is that some teens need an option that doesn't rely on their parents bringing them to the library and/or dealing with the anxiety of being in a room full of strangers; but also some teens can't make virtual participation work because of technology limitations or just because it is unsatisfying.

My next goal is to find a way to accommodate both simultaneously or determine whether some events just always need to be virtual and some can be hybrid and some just have to be in person.
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

Organization?
That's funny!

Lisa Elliott,
Tigard Public Library
Slack helps a little. I do like Beanstack as well. Mostly my favorite tool is a giant wall calendar where I can map things out.
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

The YALSA Symposium.

Suzanne Harold,
Astoria Public Library
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

Spreadsheets. They help me compare past years side by side.

Anonymous
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

Staff meetings where we can reconnect.

Anonymous
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

Trello and Microsoft Teams.

Ian Duncanson,
Beaverton City Library
At the beginning of each shift, I identify one task/duty as my #1 priority for the day. When unexpected things pop up, which they usually do, it helps me not feel as overwhelmed in the moment and like I accomplished something at the end of the day. I got that 1 thing done - success!
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

My planner

Caitlin McMahan,
Eugene Public Library
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

hahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha

Lou
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

A vision board.

Marie Felgentrager,
Roseburg High School
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is... BreakoutEDU right now.

Debbie Pfeiffer, Burns High School (Slater Elementary & Hines Middle)
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

Graph paper and my favorite pens for highly organized to-do lists with color coding and the works!

Taylor Worley,
Springfield Public Library
The organizational tool helping me rebuild is...

Outlook calendar.