

Planning Your Own Awards Gala

What is it? The Awards Gala is a celebration of the American Library Association Youth Media Awards. Students, parents, and teachers gather to watch the awards ceremony and celebrate the winning books.

Why? The Awards Gala promotes reading new high quality literature. It helps “series readers” to break out into something new. This also creates awareness of the ALA Youth Media Awards (beyond just the Newbery and Caldecott). It lends an extra sense of excitement to reading and the world of literature.

Who? Students must earn an invitation by reading two or more award contenders and completing a very short review sheet (with built in permission slip). We define contender as “any book published in the USA in the previous year.”

When? This year’s YMA Announcements will be Monday, February 2nd.

Timeline for Planning

November

- ☞ Look over the lists of probably award contenders.
- ☞ Purchase contenders for the library (within your normal budget).
- ☞ Begin to read or skim your contenders.
- ☞ Purchase paper goods and decorations.
 - Halloween black and white paper plates/cups on clearance look classy.

December

- ☞ Publicize your Gala.
- ☞ Gather all the contenders from your collection. Put them on display. Add a sticker to the cover.
- ☞ Keep reading yourself.
- ☞ Booktalk your favorites to students. Demonstrate your genuine excitement for the awards.

Early January

- ☞ Publicize with renewed vigor. Talk to all classes about the gala.
- ☞ Purchase or scavenge prizes.
 - Posters from publishers make excellent prizes, as do calendars (as low as 90% off in January).
 - Last year I spent \$4 and got 40 calendars and planners at Michaels (\$1 each then 90% off).
- ☞ Collect review sheets/permission slips from students. Make a large list of all books read.

Just Before the Awards Day

- ☞ Distribute invitations to your Awards Gala. Make sure they know it is formal dress.
- ☞ Continue last minute publicizing.
- ☞ Purchase punch supplies (white grape juice and seltzer), pretzels, and forks.
Bake or purchase cakes.

On Awards Day

- ☞ Display all contenders around your party area.
- ☞ Hang lists of books students read.
- ☞ Prepare "Winner!" stickers and tape to put on winning books.
- ☞ Decorate and prepare refreshments.
- ☞ Get streaming/projector ready.
- ☞ -Dress in your fanciest attire.

During the Party

- ☞ Turn on the streaming of the Awards Announcements.
- ☞ Serve cake and award "Best Dressed" prizes during the boring bits.
- ☞ When a book wins that a student has read, circle it on the list and that student wins a prize.
- ☞ Have runners put "Winner!" stickers on any books that win an award.
- ☞ The Awards Announcement takes about an hour, and the Caldecott and Newbery are at the very end. Build up the anticipation

Typical Budget for 40 Participants

Prizes - \$4.00
Paper Goods - \$6.00
Punch - \$15.00
Pretzels and Carrots - \$5.00
3 9x13 Cakes (Homemade) - \$10.00

Total - \$40.00

No Frills Budget for 40 Participants

Raid your prize cupboard or beg off your colleagues - Prizes - \$0.00
Use simple cheap plates, napkins and forks from the dollar store - \$3.00
Serve Hibiscus tea "Hawaiian Punch" - just hibiscus tea bags, water, sugar, lemon juice - \$3.00
Have students bring treats to share - \$0.00

Total - \$6.00

More Questions? Email Mary Zdrojewski at mzdrojewski@scio.wnyric.org