



Stephanie Curcio Squicciarini
1967 – 2018

The Leadership of Stephanie Curcio Squicciarini A Tribute

by Lisa C. Wemett, YSS Past President

Stephanie Squicciarini, MLS, became a shining star in the field of teen services, through her involvement in professional associations and as the Founder and President of the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival (TBF). For seventeen years, Stephanie was the Teen Services Librarian at the Fairport (NY) Public Library. Stephanie's position was the first full-time young adult specialist at this suburban library. Her name was at the end of reviews in *Kliatt* and *School Library Journal*. She loved her work, sharing the joy of reading with teens, and in turn, inspired her peers to also provide outstanding library services to adolescents.

Stephanie's vision and tireless dedication brought a teen book festival featuring nationally-recognized authors to the Rochester region. But TBF had a much farther reach, as participants came from across

New York State to attend, year after year. In 2017, over 2000 teens and adults got to know 27 authors in small-group breakout sessions.

Before choosing librarianship as her second profession, Stephanie held senior management positions in the retail industry for nine years, for Nine West, Eddie Bauer, and GAP Kids. She considered herself a "recovering retail manager." So you can imagine she had "mad skills" in supervision of personnel, customer service, and merchandising before she entered "Libraryland!"

People say I brought Stephanie into teen services. But I didn't "discover" her. She sent me an e-mail wanting to discuss an internship at Webster Public Library while she was in library school at the University of Buffalo. She was leaning toward specializing in teen services and wanted to explore that. We made a great team and I thoroughly relished being her mentor. I was able to guide her to apply for the opening for Teen Services Librarian at Fairport Public Library and prouder still when she got her first professional job in librarianship. And the rest is history.

In the seven years following the receipt of her MLS, Stephanie became totally involved in her profession, volunteering for the Youth Services Section (YSS) of the New York Library Association (NYLA) and the Young Adult Library Services Association of the American Library Association (YALSA). She was elected Treasurer for the Youth Services Section (YSS/NYLA) (2005-2007) and also concurrently worked on the YSS Annual Conference Planning Committee (2001-2006).

Her committee work and achievements with YALSA on a national level encompassed scholarship and author awards and ALA's Emerging Leaders Program. She was elected to the YALSA Board of Directors and chaired the YALSA Young Adult Literature Symposium Task Force. First offered in Nashville in 2008, this national Symposium is now in its tenth year. Stephanie became a YALSA certified "Serving the

Underserved” trainer in 2005 and shared her expansive knowledge of teen literature and services at the local, state, and national levels, as a presenter at conferences and area workshops for school faculty and generalist library staff. Locally, Stephanie was also a member of the Fairport Library Council, a consortium of special, academic, school, and public libraries, which worked to maintain a cooperative environment for all patrons in the community.

Members of the Teen Book Festival Planning Committee called Stephanie a “legend.” Her energy, optimism, “can-do” attitude, and ebullient personality drew teens to the library. Stephanie modeled the behavior that inspires people to rise to the top, leading the TBF team to offer an outstanding annual event for teens and professionals for thirteen years (2006-2018). Her enthusiasm, strength, and determination to succeed led her peers to wholeheartedly embrace this monumental project year after year, committing to do their personal best. The TBF Planning Committee has pledged to continue Stephanie’s legacy, both for the teens she loved and to honor her memory.

Since her death March 1, tributes have poured in from all over the country from family members, authors, library patrons, colleagues, and TBF families who returned to the Fest every year. She influenced so many people and had an enormous impact on her community because of her dedication to whatever task came her way. Beginning in 1997, Stephanie and her husband Fred called Irondequoit home. Starting in 2003, Stephanie stepped up to volunteer at her hometown library, serving in a variety of capacities on the Board of Trustees of the Irondequoit Public Library, including Board President. She concluded her term in December 2017. If you’d like to read more about Stephanie and yet another legacy, her campaign for fifteen years to bring her town a 21st century library, see this article from the Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle* on March 9, “Librarian Stephanie Squicciarini was one of a kind”: <http://on.rocne.ws/2tvhFYv>

Library Journal named Stephanie a “Mover and Shaker” in 2008 for her work as Founder and Director of TBF. In May 2015, Stephanie was recognized by the Italian American Community Center in Rochester with their “Civic Affairs Award” for her work with the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival and the board of trustees of the Irondequoit Public Library. (Stephanie was one of four Rochester area women of Italian descent who were cited as “Women of the Year” for their accomplishments and service to the community.) Other accolades included a Community Service Award from the President of Nazareth College (2015) and the “Big Pencil Award” from Writers & Books of Rochester, honoring Stephanie’s significant contributions to the Rochester literary community (2010). But no recognition was better than basking in the glow of hundreds of teen fans cheering for their favorite authors at TBF, turning those writers into rock stars.

Leading two nonprofit boards, building community partnerships and strengthening those relationships, managing an annual literary event that celebrates and promotes reading by connecting teens and authors: all these are remarkable accomplishments in the eighteen years Stephanie was a librarian. We were so fortunate to know and work with her.

You can tell a lot by a person’s signature line in their e-mails. Stephanie’s proudly listed her professional memberships in NYLA, YSS, ALA, and YALSA. Knowing the power of marketing, she always included “save the date” for the next Teen Book Festival along with the TBF website. (I think she immediately updated that date when the last school bus pulled out of the parking lot from that year’s Fest!) But her signature also had a quote from the character Jenna in ***Best Foot Forward*** by Joan Bauer: “When the going gets tough, the tough get a librarian.” Stephanie was that librarian—one we will not soon forget.