**About the Conference**

“Books for the Beast” is a biennial conference devoted to showcasing and discussing the best in Young Adult Literature. This activity was established in 1991 by Dr. Mary K. Chelton and a statewide steering committee, as a way to pay tribute to [Margaret Alexander Edwards](http://www.prattlibrary.org/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6322) and the impact she had on the development of young adult reader’s advisory. In 1993, Deborah Taylor assumed the position as Chair of the planning committee. The "Books for the Beast" Conference gets its name from the highly regarded book about serving teens in libraries, written by Margaret Alexander Edwards, *The Fair Garden and the Swarm of Beasts*.

Each conference features an outstanding young adult writer who brings his or her unique perspective on this growing field of literature. In the past, the attendees have heard from writers such as: David Lubar, Patricia Wrede, Gail Giles, Jacqueline Woodson, Kenneth Oppel, and Robin Wasserman. Since 2009, this keynote lecture has been designated the Sara L. Siebert Memorial lecture to honor another great trailblazer in Young adult services and the librarian who followed Ms. Edwards and was one of the original trustees of Ms. Edwards legacy. There are morning and afternoon discussion groups that focus on primary young adult themes. The discussion groups give participants the opportunity to get involved with the literature.

In 1993, the conference began its popular practice of inviting up to fifty teen readers to participate, free of charge, as a way of including their important insights on what is being written about and for young people. The afternoon panels have featured teens and librarians discussing their favorite teen novels, editors explaining the trends in young adult literature, and creators of graphic novels. The 2017 conference will be the 14th "Books for the Beast" gathering.