

Library Spotlight

The New York Public Library: Building Teen Community Through Comics and Manga

When Tabrizia Jones became a Young Adult Librarian at The New York Public Library's Pelham Parkway–Van Nest branch, she quickly noticed what her teen patrons wanted to read: comics and manga.

Tabrizia began exploring those formats herself and soon made them a central part of her programming. Through author talks, creative workshops, virtual discussions, and systemwide events, she gave teens more ways to discover stories, share recommendations, meet creators, and connect with other readers.

By collaborating with fellow NYPL librarians and comics creators, Tabrizia developed engaging program ideas that could be repeated across branches and adapted by libraries of any size.



“ These programs give patrons a chance to interact with books in a different way.”

Tabrizia Jones

Young Adult Librarian, The New York Public Library

Results at a Glance

5,000+ Votes

Teens cast more than 5,000 votes during Manga March Madness.

15 Libraries

Branches across the NYPL system participated in the manga voting program.

Year-Round Connection

Monthly discussions, creator events, and reader-advisory programs gave teens ongoing ways to connect.

Creating More Ways for Teens to Connect

Tabrizia used a mix of in-person and virtual programming to meet teens where they were and make comics and manga a shared experience.

Bringing Readers and Creators Together

In-person author talks gave teens the opportunity to meet comics creators and engage more deeply with stories they loved. Participating creators included Chris Condon, Jackie Morrow, Mike Curato, Tony Fleecs, Trish Forstner, James Tynion IV, and Shof and Shobo.

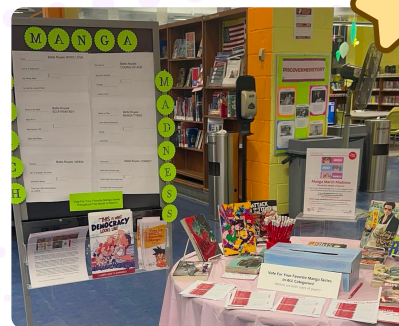
Tabrizia also hosted interactive workshops with creators, including a virtual event with the team behind *Stray Dogs* and an in-person workshop with *Frontera* creators Julio Anta and Jacoby Salcedo. Teens explored how comics move from an initial idea and script to a finished illustrated panel.

Keeping the Conversation Going Online

Working with librarians at other NYPL branches, Tabrizia helped launch virtual programs that made reader advisory more social and accessible.

During Virtual Book Tastings, librarians recommended titles they had recently enjoyed or that they still remember years later. The selections covered different genres and formats, including comics and manga.

Teen Comics Chat grew from a pandemic-era program into an ongoing monthly conversation. Three librarians share a range of comic recommendations, giving teens new titles to explore while creating space to discuss what they are reading.



Turning Manga Into a Systemwide Event

With support from an internal NYPL innovation grant, Tabrizia launched Manga March Madness across 15 library branches.

Teens voted for their favorite manga titles in 12 categories throughout March. More than 5,000 votes were cast, with *A Silent Voice* selected as the overall winner.

The program gave teens a voice in celebrating the stories they loved while helping librarians better understand the titles and themes resonating with their communities.

How Comics Plus Supports Teen Programming

With unlimited, simultaneous access to thousands of digital comics and manga, Comics Plus helps libraries build programs around the stories their readers want.

- No holds, waitlists, or borrowing limits
- Easy access for group reads and shared discussions
- A wide selection for book tastings and reader advisory
- Titles for children, teens, and adults
- Flexible options for virtual and in-person programming

From Reading Interest to Reader Community

By listening to her teens and leaning into the formats they already loved, Tabrizia transformed comics and manga into opportunities for creativity, discovery, and conversation.

Her programs demonstrate that successful teen engagement does not require one single approach. Author visits, workshops, virtual discussions, and interactive voting can all help readers connect with books—and with one another.