



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Hartford Public Library and Hartford Stage Announce New Book Club**

HARTFORD – Hartford Public Library and Hartford Stage invite the community to a new book club, called “Deep Appreciation,” a heart-led gathering featuring live readings, interactive dialogue and reflections on fiction and poetry by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) authors, past and present.

The book club will meet quarterly to discuss the selection with teens and adults, as well as provide a family friendly book pairing for those who wish to continue the conversation at home. Everyone is welcome. To register, [click here](#) or call 860-695-6320.

“Among the many values Hartford Stage and Hartford Public Library share is empathy. We believe that cultivating understanding between people, and then acting on what is learned, is a fundamental good. That’s why this book club project is exciting to me – it’s an opportunity for people to engage with great literature with an open heart and an open mind,” said Bridget Quinn-Carey, HPL’s president and CEO.

The meeting schedule is as follows:

**First Meeting:** November 19, 7:00-8:30pm, to discuss “Red to the Bone” by Jaqueline Woodson and “I Am Enough” by Grace Byers

**Second Meeting:** January 21, 7:00-8:30pm, book selections to be announced

**Third Meeting:** April 29, 7:00-8:30pm, book selections to be announced

**Fourth Meeting:** July 22, 7:00-8:30pm, book selections to be announced

The Book Club was inspired Black Lives Matter activists and by Black author Jasmine Guillory, who writes “...when we say Black Lives Matter, we mean the whole of Black lives—not just when we die at the hands of the police and not just when our lives intersect with white lives to our detriment. Racism is not the only thing to know about what it means to be Black. Our joys, our sorrows, our love, our grief, our struggles to fit in, our families, our accomplishments and our triumphs—these things also matter.”

Together we will honor BIPOC stories of joy, grief, healing, sorrow, and love. In this spirit, the book club will live by a shared set of values, including committing to the practice of anti-racism in its gatherings.

"As two neighboring institutions dedicated to amplifying storytelling and storytellers on our bookshelves and on our stage, we are thrilled to have found a new way to come together. We are looking forward to

the inspiration and insight we will gain from the writings we will share, helping us to forge new connections, and to better know ourselves and each other at this challenging time,” said Melia Bensussen, Hartford Stage’s artistic director.

Since 2018, Hartford Stage has partnered with the Hartford Public Library to create a program inviting Hartford residents to attend shows at the theatre, free of charge. Through the Library Pass Program, Hartford residents with an adult or teen library card can reserve a two-ticket pass per eligible show from any community library in the city. Since its inception, nearly 2,000 Hartford residents have enjoyed free performances at Hartford Stage. HPL @ Hartford Stage – a micro-branch of the Hartford Public Library housed in the Hartford Stage lobby – gives theatre-goers the opportunity to browse through a selection of carefully curated titles directly related to the themes of each production.

The partnership has evolved to include programs that unite the theatre, the library, and the community to create deeper connections all across the city.

For more information about the library, visit [hplct.org](http://hplct.org)

For more information about Hartford Stage, visit [hartfordstage.org](http://hartfordstage.org).

#### **About Hartford Public Library**

Now celebrating its 126th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. [www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org).

#### **About Hartford Stage**

Hartford Stage’s mission is to enlighten, entertain, and educate by creating theatrical works of the highest caliber that have a transformative impact on audiences, the community, and its field. Led by **Artistic Director Melia Bensussen** and **Managing Director Cynthia Rider**, Hartford Stage has presented the world premieres of the new musical *Anastasia; Rear Window* with Kevin Bacon; *Reverberation* by Matthew Lopez; Big Dance Theatre’s *Man in a Case* with Mikhail Baryshnikov; *Breath & Imagination* by Daniel Beaty; *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* on Broadway, winner of four 2014 Tony Awards; and Quiara Alegría Hudes’ *Water by the Spoonful*, winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. [www.hartfordstage.org](http://www.hartfordstage.org)