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For Immediate Release

LIBRARY CELEBRATES AWARD OF TWO FEDERAL GRANTS TO HELP IMMIGRANTS

Bridget Quinn-Carey welcomed U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Rep John B. Larson, Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, and other state and city officials, Wednesday, Nov. 2, at a Legislative Breakfast in the Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library. The breakfast celebrated the award of two federal grants designed to help immigrants and refugees, and included a construction update for the Library's partnership with the University of Connecticut's Downtown Campus, scheduled to open in September, 2017.



U.S. Rep. John B. Larson speaks about his support of Hartford Public Library at a Legislative Breakfast on Wednesday, Nov. 2, in the Hartford History Center at the Library.

“Today is a day of thanks and to recognize the critical and evolving role of the Library to strengthen and build our communities,” Quinn-Carey said. “We have been recognized nationally for so many different things: early learning, community engagement, partnerships with public schools and UConn. There is one area in particular where HPL is in immigration services. We are recognized nationally and sought out for profession advice for not only how our library provides these services, but because our approach is community based and collaboration. We bring people together to make this happen.”

The two grants are: A three-year grant of \$595,000 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services for its “Linking Learning, Belonging and Community” program in partnership with Hartford Public Schools to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum for immigrant and refugee youth, ages to 21, which focuses on English language acquisition, digital information literacy skills, leadership development, cultural competency, and social action.

A \$250,000 two-year grant from the Department of Homeland Security for Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services supports current citizenship services at the Library and will enhance services to legal permanent residents fluent in English, but with low literacy skills.

“The challenge of people who have been displaced by war and famine and weather will continue to confront us in years ahead,” said Sen. Blumenthal about the importance of the grants. “This nation is a place where people come for hope and opportunity. We are a nation of immigrants. Hartford is a city of immigrants. These grants recognized the enormous responsibility that Hartford and Connecticut has to welcome immigrants, to take advantage of their immense energy and talents. The reason why we are the greatest country in the history of the world is because of our diversity. The Lady who stands in the harbor continues to shine her light and we continue to build bridges, not walls.”

Congressman Larson followed by saying, “These are very competitive grants. I think there were 85 applicants and only 15 were selected countrywide. That speaks volumes to the effort that you have made. Since 2008 this Library has receive \$3 million in federal grants. That’s remarkable...Hartford is leading on so many fronts and will continue to lead. I love libraries. They represent something in this age that we don’t emphasize enough. Daniel J. Boorstin, a former librarian of Congress, referred to libraries as fortresses of knowledge. Think about that.People are able to some and learn in become American citizens. Learn the language, learn the history. The great debate for this current century and into the next will be the difference between information randomly gathered and citizens bombarded with it and the ability to sift through that information to knowledge.

“What we want an informed voter. You are bombarded with information. What library’s present for us is the opportunity to rummage around all of antiquity and all for the ages and be able to contact resources so that you are just not informed, you become knowledgeable.

“The goal of America should be a knowledge based economy to have inquisitive, inventive entrepreneurial people in the world. What allows us to do that? Our public library system. This public library system has excelled.”

ABOUT HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

As a finalist for the 2013 and 2014 National Medal from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, Hartford Public Library has been recognized as national leader in redefining the urban public library in the 21st century as an innovative and stimulating place that provides free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. In 2015-16, the 10 locations of the Hartford Public Library counted 850,000 visits, circulated 408,972 items and had 71,059 registered borrowers. We serve adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Please visit www.hplct.org.