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Hartford Public Library Receives 2019 NEA Big Read Grant

(June 12, 2019 – Hartford) Hartford Public Library (HPL) is a recipient of a grant of \$13,800 to host the NEA Big Read in Hartford, CT. An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. Hartford Public Library is one of 78 nonprofit organizations to receive an NEA Big Read grant to host a community reading program between September 2019 and June 2020. The NEA Big Read in Hartford will focus on “Advice from the Lights” by Stephanie Burt. Activities will take place September 7 through October 10, 2019.

Numerous special events and programs around LGBTQ art, literature and performance, as well as participatory workshops exploring and celebrating participant identity will be offered throughout the city. Copies of the “Advice from the Lights” and its accompanying youth book selection, “George” by Alex Gino, will be available at all library branches and at partner locations.

“We are thrilled to be a part of the Big Read again this year,” said HPL CEO Bridget Quinn-Carey. “Stephanie Burt is such a powerful writer and her robust advocacy of inclusion and acceptance is needed now more than ever. It is vital that we deal with these issues in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, and that’s what the Big Read is all about.”

“It is inspiring to see both large and small communities across the nation come together around a book,” said National Endowment for the Arts Acting Chairman Mary Anne Carter. “We always look forward to the unique ways cities, towns, and organizations, like Hartford Public Library, explore these stories and encourage community participation in a wide variety of events.”

The NEA Big Read showcases a diverse range of titles that reflect many different voices and perspectives, aiming to inspire conversation and discovery. The main feature of the initiative is a grants program, managed by Arts Midwest, which annually supports dynamic community reading programs, each designed around a single National Endowment for the Arts Big Read selection.

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,400 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$20 million to organizations nationwide. In addition, Big Read activities have reached every Congressional district in the country. Over the past twelve years, grantees have leveraged more than \$50 million in local funding to support their NEA Big Read programs. More than 5.7 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, approximately 91,000 volunteers have participated at the local level, and 39,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible. For more information about the NEA Big Read, please visit arts.gov/neabigread.

*Now celebrating its 125th year, **HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY** remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With eight 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. Please visit www.hplct.org.

*Established by Congress in 1965, the **National Endowment for the Arts** is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit arts.gov to learn more.*

***Arts Midwest** promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 25 years. For more information, please visit artsmidwest.org.*

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