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WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR FIRST-EVER NYC NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY AWARDS

Five Winning Branch Libraries Emerged From More Than 4300 Nominations By New Yorkers

New York, NY – September 18, 2013 – The Charles H. Revson Foundation last night announced the five winners of the first-ever NYC Neighborhood Library Awards, the culmination of an initiative that resulted in 4,310 nominations from New Yorkers. The five winning libraries, each of which received \$10,000 at an awards ceremony in midtown Manhattan, were selected from 10 finalists by a distinguished panel of judges: **R.L. Stine**, author of the renowned *Goosebumps* series; **Kurt Andersen**, author and host of WNYC's *Studio 360*; **Carla Hayden**, CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore and former president of the American Library Association; **Fatima Shama**, NYC Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs; and **Don Weisberg**, President of the Penguin Young Readers Group. The nomination process took place during a six-week period this summer and was promoted publicly with the crucial assistance of WNYC's *Brian Lehrer Show*, the media partner for this initiative.

“These five libraries are truly outstanding and reflect the extraordinarily important role that neighborhood libraries play in communities all across the city,” said Julie Sandorf, President of the Charles H. Revson Foundation. “It was especially moving to see, throughout the entire selection process, the passion of the nominators and their gratitude for the often life-changing contributions of the neighborhood library.”

The five winning libraries – and an excerpt from the nominations for each – follow:

- **Corona Library** – North Corona (Queens) – “There is a line around the corner of neighborhood residents before the branch opens! People use it for ESOL, homework help after school, internet access, and of course access to books. It is a trusted and safe place where all folks regardless of socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds can come.”
- **Macon Library** – Bedford-Stuyvesant/Stuyvesant Heights (Brooklyn) – “I have found this library as a safe haven and opportunity to know more about my roots. The African American Heritage Center is amazing and I feel like I've discovered a part of myself here.”
- **New Dorp Library** – New Dorp/Midland Beach (Staten Island) – “When we came to this country, my elder daughter was 4 years old. During her first years of school, her reading level was very low. Now my daughter is in fourth grade. This year she was the super-reader of the school. If we didn't have the library perhaps my daughter's progress would not be the same.”

- **Seward Park Library** – Lower East Side (Manhattan) – “My father reads Chinese Newspaper everyday there. The rich collection in Chinese literacy helped him a lot when he first arrived in New York from Beijing. Many of my classmates from the library’s English classes have found better jobs, got citizenships or entered college after several terms’ training.”
- **Sheepshead Bay Library** – Sheepshead Bay (Brooklyn) – “Last fall I was able to overcome my psychological stress caused by Hurricane Sandy only thanks to Sheepshead Bay Library. Those workshops helped me to come back to myself and get back to my daily routines and reality as a human being.”

In addition to the five winners of the NYC Neighborhood Library Awards, the other five finalists were presented with checks for \$5,000 each. Those five were:

- Aguilar Library – East Harlem South (Manhattan);
- Kings Bay Library – Sheepshead Bay/Gerritsen Beach/Manhattan Beach (Brooklyn);
- Parkchester Library – Parkchester (the Bronx);
- Queens Village Library – Queens Village (Queens);
- Tremont Library – Claremont/Bathgate (the Bronx).

The 4,310 nominations were cast from May 20th to July 1st by New Yorkers who identified themselves most frequently as parents, students, seniors, artists, teachers, job-seekers, and entrepreneurs. The nominations illuminated the libraries’ extraordinary dedication to serving their communities in a myriad of ways:

- Library staff members make the library feel like a second home – often greeting patrons by name as they enter and making all visitors feel valued.
- The libraries are highly attuned to the neighborhoods they serve – both in terms of the needs of residents (especially youth, seniors, and immigrants) and their cultures and languages.
- Libraries are often the only source of books and Internet in a city where 36 percent of residents – including 75 percent of residents of the NYC Housing Authority – have no broadband Internet access at home.
- The libraries play a crucial role as community centers – free and accessible to all; safe for children and for seniors; a crossroads for positive inter-generational, cross-racial, and cross-ethnic interactions. They also provide personal quiet space in a bustling city where housing is typically cramped.
- They offer a remarkable range of programs and activities – from those traditionally associated with libraries (e.g., story time for children, arts and crafts, and book clubs) to programs addressing contemporary needs (e.g., computer classes, English as a Second Language, workforce development, and tax assistance) and offerings tailored to more specific community interests (e.g., a Russian poetry club, Spanish-language film screenings, senior acting clubs, Zumba classes, exercise classes for seniors, and even belly-dancing).

- Many of those activities are potentially transformational: from preschool literacy, pre-GED training, resume-writing, and assistance with job searches to healthcare screenings, exercise classes, and citizenship test preparation.

A recent report by the Center for an Urban Future – titled *Branches of Opportunity* and funded by the Charles H. Revson Foundation – revealed that over the past decade, circulation at New York City libraries has increased by 59 percent, program attendance by 40 percent, and program sessions by 27 percent while City funding has declined by 8 percent.

Photos of the winners at last night's awards ceremony are available by contacting Bob Meadows at 212-576-2700 x237 or bmeadows@goodmanmedia.com.

About the Charles H. Revson Foundation

The Charles H. Revson Foundation, established in 1956, operates grant programs in Urban Affairs, Jewish Life, Biomedical Research, and Education. The Urban Affairs program focuses on projects that enhance New York City's vitality as a leading and livable urban capital; it continually seeks opportunities to strengthen the city's pluralistic communities and civic spaces, re-envisioning public libraries, affordable housing, and local public affairs journalism to cultivate knowledgeable, creative urban residents. The Jewish Life program operates in the United States, focusing on projects that reinterpret Jewish tradition for an ever-more-diverse community; and in Israel, where the Foundation partners with Israeli organizations to build a stronger, more inclusive society for young people. The Biomedical Research program is devoted to strengthening basic research in the biomedical sciences by awarding fellowships to exceptionally talented scientists. The Education program supports institutions and projects that seek to provide broad access to the knowledge and resources that sustain an informed and engaged citizenry.

For more information, visit the Foundation's website: <http://www.revsonfoundation.org>.

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