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**450 People Attend Hartford Public Library’s Beyond Words Fundraiser**

**(HARTFORD, CT: December 11, 2018)** An estimated 450 people attended Beyond Words, Hartford Public Library’s signature fundraising event, on Friday, December 7, at the Hartford Marriott Downtown hotel.

“We were extremely gratified by the high turnout for the Beyond Words this year, as well as the diverse range of people who attended the event. It truly reinforces the unifying effect libraries have in our society,” said Bridget Quinn-Carey, CEO of Hartford Public Library. “I want to thanks our many sponsors and those who gave so generously, which reflects the vital importance so many people in the Hartford area attach to our library and its mission,” she added.

Acclaimed author Jacqueline Woodson was the keynote speaker at Beyond Words. The author of over 30 books for children, teens and adults, Woodson read passages from several of her works that she felt had special resonance for the current state of our nation.

Sandra Bender Fromson and Howard Fromson were presented with the Caroline M. Hewins Medal by HPL Board President Gregory Davis and HPL CEO Bridget Quinn-Carey. The medal is presented to individuals who have provided outstanding service to HPL and the community as a whole. Both Fromsons spoke about the critical role libraries play in a free society. Howard pointed out the similarity between the word library and the Latin word for free, *liber*. Sandra, who recently conducted a weaving program at the library which drew over 100 participants from all walks of life, called the library the “heart of Hartford.” The award is named after Caroline M. Hewins, HPL’s Chief Librarian from 1876-1926 and a pioneer in opening up libraries to children.

Poet Kate Rushin, who has partnered with HPL on a number of projects, recited “Library Card,” an original poem she wrote in honor of HPL’s 125th anniversary as a free, public library.

A special presentation on HPL teen programs was made by Meryl Braunstein on behalf of the Mandell-Braunstein Families/Data-Mail, Inc., the presenting sponsor for Beyond Words. Other major sponsors for the event included Eversource, The Hartford and the Travelers Foundation.

The library’s dedication to learning, growth and opportunity was reflected throughout the evening, from the choice of speakers to the collection of books that served as centerpieces at the event. “I was so touched and moved by the impact the library has on the community and especially by the individual stories.  The author was engaging and so eloquent.  The honorees were amazing.  It was truly a beautiful evening,” said Beyond Words guest David Jacobs.

**ABOUT HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Now celebrating its 125th 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. Please visit [www.hplct.org](file:///C:\Users\dlarcen\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\2FWNZWFK\www.hplct.org).