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Hartford Public Library Announces New Parent-Child Summer Reading Program

Hartford, Connecticut (May 22, 2012) — Lincoln Financial Foundation awarded Hartford Public Library a \$10,000 grant supporting its new Parent-Child Summer Reading Program.

“Research shows that the earlier children experience reading and other academic activities the better for their long-term development and chances for graduating from high school,” said Byron O. Champlin, Hartford program officer for Lincoln Foundation. “Lincoln Financial is pleased to partner with Hartford Public Library in this educational initiative.”

The Program is designed primarily for parents/caregivers and children ages 0-5, with the goal of increasing school readiness, summer learning, and future grade level reading. With an emphasis on reading and play-based learning, this program will transform parents/caregivers into active partners in their child's development and help children transition into school-based education.

“To improve children's cognitive development and long-term academic outcomes, communities find new ways to stimulate learning that ensure a more equitable start at school,” said Matthew K. Poland, chief executive officer at Hartford Public Library. With a Parent-Child Summer Reading Program, the parents learn alongside their children, and a successful partnership is established.

The new Parent-Child program works much as the traditional school-aged program, with reading goals and fun incentives, but in this case the focus is on the parent-child partnership. A Summer Kickoff Fair scheduled at the Library for Saturday, June 2, from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m., will encourage registration, expose parents to community resources available from key Hartford literacy groups, provide crafts and games, and feature fun bounce house activities.

The Parent-Child program is part of the Library's comprehensive Summer Reading Program, developed to increase reading proficiency for all Hartford students. Research shows that urban youth can lose as much as three months of grade level equivalency as a result of summer learning loss, but a strong summer reading program can reverse that trend. To that end, the

Library has developed a program that embraces the concepts outlined in Hartford's own Third Grade Promise and the national Campaign for Grade-level Reading. Designed around the theme, "Dream Big: Read!" for youth and "Own the Night" for teens, the program tracks reading by books or hours, and rewards youth with small incentives, books, and chances for grand prizes. This program will provide entertaining activities, open-ended play, and exposure to imaginative books for reluctant readers in order to support and motivate Hartford youth.

Lincoln Financial Foundation is the presenting sponsor for Hartford Public Library's 2012 Dream Big: Read! Summer Reading Program. New Alliance Foundation, the City of Hartford, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and XL Insurance are also participating sponsors.

About Hartford Public Library

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Visit hplct.org and the library's new blog at blogs.hplct.org.

About Lincoln Financial Group

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