

Hartford Public Library Screens WITHOUT A NET: The Digital Divide in America

Powerful Film Speaks to Challenges in Ensuring Equity in Education and Net Neutrality

Hartford, CT – June 14, 2018 – The Hartford Public Library today offered a free screening of “Without a Net: The Digital Divide in America” at its Hartford Branch. At a time when American students from economically deprived schools are often ill-prepared for the global, digital economy, Without a Net: The Digital Divide in America, explores how technology can provide opportunities for learning and can help level the playing field.

Hartford Public Library Executive Officer Bridget Quinn-Carey, Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin and Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle Seagull welcomed attendees. The film was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Consumer Counsel Elin Katz and featuring Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Executive Director Jay Williams, Comptroller Kevin Lembo, Hartford Public High School Student Greisha Cintron, and State Senator Beth Bye.

“For too long, students from economically disadvantaged communities like Hartford have been denied access to the tools necessary to compete and thrive in today’s 21st century digital economy,” stated Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin. “Without a Net: The Digital Divide in America” shows the urgency needed to bring those tools to all students so that they can have the same opportunities as students in more prosperous communities to live up to their full potential.”

The one-hour film focuses on digital inequities in public school classrooms, examining the challenges of providing connectivity, technology, and computer learning in public schools (Grades 6-12), as well as the transformative potential of fully equipping all students for the digital world.

The narrative is built, in part, around profiles of schools, educators and students that face extraordinary challenges with connectivity, access, hardware, and teacher training, but are nevertheless achieving remarkable success. These stories illustrate the complexity of the problems faced by the nation's poorest school districts, and the need for multi-faceted solutions to close the technology gap; combining reliable internet at school and at home with up-to-date, relevant devices, as well as innovative teacher training, custom-designed, educational apps and visionary leadership.

“I want to thank the producers of “Without a Net: The Digital Divide in America” for bringing their powerful documentary to Hartford,” stated Hartford Public Library Executive Officer Bridget Quinn-Carey. “All children need and deserve access to the internet in order to learn and compete. We have made internet access a priority in our branches and working to bridge the digital divide is one of our most important missions.

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“Our goal is to make sure that everyone in Connecticut has the tools they need to be successful in today’s marketplace,” stated Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle Seagull. “Access to the internet is one of the most important tools needed to meet this goal and my office continues to work hard to make internet access a reality for all.”

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. 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.

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