



CONTACT:
Donna Haghghat
Chief Development Officer
860-695-6296
dhaghghat@hplct.org

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**HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY ONE OF 75 ORGANIZATIONS NATIONWIDE
TO RECEIVE A BIG READ GRANT**

***Hartford to Read and Celebrate *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
During The Big Read***



Hartford, Connecticut (June 3, 2015) —Hartford Public Library is a recipient of a grant of \$16,200 to host The Big Read in Hartford, CT. A program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), The Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. Managed by Arts Midwest, this initiative offers grants to support innovative community reading programs designed around a single book. Hartford Public Library is one of 75 nonprofit organizations to receive a grant to host a local Big Read project between September 2015 and June 2016. The Big Read in Hartford will focus on ***The Grapes of Wrath*** by John Steinbeck. Activities and programming will take place March 13 through April 30, 2016. Community partners will include organizations such as Billings Forge Community Works, The Connecticut YOUTH Forum, Goodwin College, HartBeat Ensemble, Hartford Food System, and The Connecticut State Library, Museum of Connecticut History.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, “The Big Read is a powerful example of how the arts can bring communities together and help us to connect with one another. These 75 organizations, including Hartford Public Library, are creating valuable opportunities for their communities to share wonderful stories and characters and to have meaningful conversations.”

“We are delighted to bring The Big Read back to Hartford with ***The Grapes of Wrath*** by John Steinbeck,” said Matthew K. Poland, the Library’s chief executive officer. “Steinbeck’s *work* evokes unique American themes of hard work, self-determination, and reasoned dissent. It speaks from assumptions common to most Americans whether, their ancestors came over in a stateroom, in steerage, or were already here to greet the migrants. It’s perfect for our City.”

For more information about The Big Read please visit neabigread.org

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 a national leader in redefining the urban public library in the 21st century as an innovative and stimulating place where people can learn and discover, explore

their passions, and find a rich array of resources that contribute to a full life. Hartford Public Library provides free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Serving the residents of Hartford and beyond at its nine branches and Downtown location, Hartford Public Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year from adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Visit 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 NEA 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. For more information, visit arts.gov.*

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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