



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Library Summer Reading Kickoff and Fun Fair**

**Hartford, Connecticut (May 20, 2013)** — Let the fun begin! On June 1<sup>st</sup> Hartford Public Library will celebrate its Summer Reading Kickoff and Fun Fair at the Downtown Library and from noon until 4, the Library will be the scene of all kinds of fun and all of it will be free.

Scheduled to mark the beginning of the annual Summer Reading Program, which emphasizes the importance of early childhood literacy and children reading with their parents and caregivers, the Kickoff offers fun for all ages. This year will be a spectacular celebration with bounce houses, an obstacle course, airbrush tattoos, crafts, snacks, music, and even a chance for children to see and touch dinosaur bones at a dinosaur museum and show. The outdoor fair will stretch from the Library terrace to Burr Mall.

The Summer Reading Program is a joint collaboration with the Hartford Public Schools and it is designed to maintain yearlong learning in an attempt to reduce summer learning losses. To meet that goal, students move from joint school/library activities into a directed summer reading program so that the “learning ball” is never dropped, and parents with limited skills do not need to actively pursue summer reading options in order for their child to increase summer reading gains.

Part of the message of the Library’s Summer Reading Program is also that reading is fun, so a fun afternoon was chosen as an introduction for the program kickoff. Last year, the new Summer Reading Program increased participation from the

previous year by 770 percent – from 300 students in 2011 to 2,610 in 2012. The goal this year is to register even more children for the summer-long program which is, in itself, full of prizes, toys and games. Parents and caregivers can register their children for the program online at [www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org) or at the Kickoff.

As was the case last year, buses will be circulating around the Library's 10 branches providing free transportation to the afternoon's events. Customers wishing to use the buses must go to their neighborhood branch; these special buses will begin running at 11:30 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m.

This year's Kickoff and Fun Fair have been made possible through the generosity of the Lincoln Financial Group, City of Hartford Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, NewAlliance Foundation, Association of Library Service to Children/Baker & Taylor, XL Insurance and William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund.

#### **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 865,000 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. To learn more about the library, please see [www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org).