

Library's Common Cent\$ Fair Teaches How to Hang On to Your Money

Hartford, Connecticut (January 31, 2011) Hartford Public Library will host a Common Cent\$ Fair on Saturday, February 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Free tax assistance for households earning \$50,000 or less, Federal Student Aid application (FAFSA) assistance, and Common Cent\$ financial information will also be offered. The event will take place at the Downtown Library, 500 Main Street. Light refreshments and door prizes will be available.

Matthew K. Poland, Hartford Public Library CEO, will welcome attendees at 10:30 a.m. Hartford Mayor, Pedro Segarra, will then kick-off the local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA provides free tax preparation services to low-to-moderate-income individuals and families. IRS-trained volunteers are certified to prepare returns and screen customers for special tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), that can help them to make ends meet. Visiting a VITA site instead of a paid tax preparer saves each filer an average of \$150. Taxes can be filed electronically, in which case refunds are received within 7-10 days.

Korky Vann, the Hartford Courant's popular lifestyle reporter and "Savvy Shopper" will speak from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. The title of her presentation is "How to Save Money on Anything and Everything." Ms. Vann views shopping as a competitive sport and in her blog, columns, and tweets, she lets people know where the buys are. She also shares "ways to maximize your savings through coupon stacking, online coupon codes, Craig's List, Freecycle and other bargain sites."

According to Teresa Benning, an independent financial service professional, "Before you can implement an investment strategy, or a college-savings strategy, or a retirement-planning strategy – you need some money to work with. All financial planning should start with a budget." Her workshop, "Budget and Debt Reduction," from 11:00 to 11:45 a.m., will help people learn to budget their money and offer strategies to reduce or consolidate their debt. At 1:30 p.m., Ms. Benning's workshop, "Job Dislocation," will help attendees gain an understanding of how to manage the financial impact of job loss as well as learn strategies for moving forward.

The event is free and open to the public. Free parking is available on the deck behind the Library and on street. Registration is not required. Appointments are recommended for tax preparation services and may be made by calling 860-695-6295, however walk-ins will be helped if preparers are available. If special accommodations to participate in these workshops are required, please contact Access Assistance at 860-695-6284 or TTY 860-722-6890, two weeks prior to the workshops.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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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 850,000 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 the Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration.