



KITCHEN

at Hartford Public Library

Billings Forge Community Works and Hartford Public Library Partner to Open Kitchen at Hartford Public Library

Nonprofit partnership pairs farm-to-table job training with permanent job placement services

Hartford, Conn. (August 28, 2013) – Billings Forge Community Works, a driving force in community participation and empowerment in Hartford, and Hartford Public Library, an award-winning public library known for its civic engagement, have joined forces to create a one-stop-shop for job training and permanent job placement for those who work in Hartford. This unique partnership between two leading area nonprofits was born out of shared commitments to strengthening Hartford’s Main Street and improving the quality of life for those who live in Hartford.

Cary Wheaton, Executive Director, Billings Forge Community Works, and Matt Poland, CEO, Hartford Public Library, explained that both of their respective organizations are deeply committed to the economic vitality of Hartford.

“Providing hands-on job training and assisting City residents with securing permanent employment opportunities are critical to improving the quality of life for those who live in Hartford. With Kitchen at Hartford Public Library we are also able to offer the community an opportunity to eat well while doing good and show support for those who are gaining valuable skills and work experience through our programs,” Wheaton and Poland said.

Similar to Kitchen at Billings Forge, Kitchen at Hartford Public Library is a farm-to-table job training café and bakery offering breakfast, lunch and catering. Additionally, the library’s second floor is home to a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen where café and library customers will soon have the opportunity to take cooking classes.

“Bringing Billings Forge Community Works job training program under the same roof as the library’s CT Works @HPL initiative, a partnership with Capital Workforce Partners, was a natural way to offer Hartford residents increased access to job training, placement opportunities, skill development programming and other library resources,” Poland said. “We are delighted to launch this partnership by opening Kitchen at Hartford Public Library and look forward to growing our collaboration for the benefit of our customers.”

The partnership between Billings Forge Community Works and Hartford Public Library aligns with Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra’s Opportunities Hartford program, which seeks to weave together what the community does well to minimize the City’s social deficits with an emphasis on income, education and employment. Supporters of the partnership between Billings Forge Community Works and the

Hartford Public Library, include: the City of Hartford, CT Department of Economic and Community Development, Capital Community College, CT Works, Bank of America and The Melville Charitable Trust, which founded and is the leading supporter of Billings Forge Community Works. Bank of America 's support has been instrumental to the growth of Billings Forge Community Works, in particular through its 2012 Neighborhood Builder Program, and is a supporter of CT Works at Hartford Public Library.

“We are excited to add a second job training facility, by opening Kitchen at Hartford Public Library and helping more City residents gain access to the work skills necessary to secure permanent employment,” Wheaton said. “This partnership is great for the library, great for Billings Forge and, most importantly, great for Hartford.”

The Kitchen at Hartford Public Library is open Monday-Friday from 8a.m.-4p.m.

About Kitchen

Kitchen is farm-to-table café offering breakfast, lunch and full-service catering. The locally-grown and sourced food is prepared by local residents through the Billings Forge Community Works (BFCW) job training program. BFCW is a nonprofit 501(c)3 that works to build vibrant, healthy communities and promote economic vitality.

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. According to a recent editorial in *The Hartford Courant*, “Indeed, the Library has established itself as the center of the community in Hartford.” To learn more about the library, please visit www.hplct.org.