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Contact: Rachel Gary, Communications Manager, 860-695-6352, [rgary@hplct.org](mailto:rgary@hplct.org)

**Hartford Public Library Hosts “Right to Libraries” Declaration Signing Event**

HARTFORD, Connecticut (November 12, 2013) — A ceremony declaring the right of all Hartford residents access to vibrant libraries in their communities will be held at 10:00 AM on Friday, November 15, at Hartford Public Library.

The “Declaration for the Right to Libraries” is the cornerstone document of the American Library Association’s Libraries Change Lives initiative to build sustained public support for America’s right to libraries of all types – academic, special, school and public.

“Libraries provide services that inspire and empower their users to change their lives through education,” said American Library Association (ALA) President Barbara Stripling. “The Declaration will serve as an advocacy tool to help communities take action and illustrate the value of their libraries and library staff.”

Hosted in partnership with the ALA, Friday’s event will feature remarks by Stripling and Hartford Public Library CEO Matt Poland, as well as a public signing of the Declaration by administrators and library patrons.

“Free access to public libraries for our citizens is important to the democracy,” said Poland. “We’re thrilled to join with Hartford’s elected officials, local leaders, and the community to publicly demonstrate our commitment to ensuring free access to the services and opportunities provided by libraries of all kinds.”

Public libraries play a critical role in the development of strong communities. According to a recent ALA study, an estimated 300,000 people receive job-seeking help at public libraries each day, and more than 62 percent of libraries report that they are the only source of free public access to computers and the Internet in their communities. Studies also show that students in schools with school library programs staffed by qualified school librarians learn more, have higher academic achievement levels, and score higher on standardized tests than their peers in schools without such library programs.

Signings of the Declaration will occur at libraries and other locations throughout the nation over the next year. The petitions will be presented to Congress by library supporters during National Library Legislative Day activities May 5 - 6, 2014.

For more information about the Declaration for the Right to Libraries, visit <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/declaration-right-libraries>

### **About Hartford Public Library**

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations and a Library-on-Wheels in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 860,000 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. Visit [hplct.org](http://hplct.org) and the library's new blog at [blogs.hplct.org](http://blogs.hplct.org)

### **About the American Library Association**

The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with approximately 58,000 members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

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