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READY FOR FREEDOM? HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY TO HOST DISCUSSION ON LIFE AFTER PRISON IN CONNECTICUT

Hartford, Connecticut (November 3, 2015)—On November 18 at 6:00PM, Hartford Public Library will present “Ready for Freedom? Life after Prison in Connecticut”, an exploration of the challenges that incarcerated individuals face upon their release from prison and the resources available to prepare them for life “on the outside”. A panel discussion will feature formerly incarcerated individuals, Connecticut prison system and judicial officials, and representatives of organizations that assist with the transition to life after incarceration.

Veteran investigative journalist Andy Thibault will serve as moderator and panel participants will include Scott Semple, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Correction, Deborah Rogala, Program Operations Director at Community Partners in Action, Robert J. Devlin, Jr., Chief Connecticut Criminal Court Judge, and Bonnie Jean Foreshaw, incarcerated for 27 ½ years and granted clemency in 2013 after appeals and a review of her case initiated by the persistence of Thibault.

In July of this year, Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy signed into law the “Second Chance Society” bill, designed to help reduce the state's prison population and “ensure nonviolent offenders are successfully reintegrated into society”. Malloy explained that “the cycle our system currently encourages is one of permanent punishment that hurts too many families and communities. When we should have been focusing on permanent reform, we focused on permanent punishment. For too long, we built modern jails instead of modern schools”.

“The Ready for Freedom discussion will mirror the themes of the Library’s ONE BOOK ONE HARTFORD selection this year, James Baldwin’s novel ‘IF Beale Street Could Talk’, in which a young man’s incarceration deeply affects two families,” said Hartford Public Library chief executive officer Matt Poland. And, of course, Governor Malloy’s “Second Chance Society” presents a practical way forward for many and hope for life after prison”.

Other participants will include Gary Roberge, Director of Adult Probation and Bail Services, State of Connecticut, the Rev. Jeff Grant, Director of the Progressive Prison Project, and Robin Cullen, of *Color Outside the Lines*, an organization that facilitates groups in prisons and community outreach programs.

Copies of Andy Thibault’s latest publication, *More Cool Justice*, will be available for purchase.

ABOUT HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

As a finalist for the 2014 National Medal from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, Hartford Public Library has been recognized as 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. Please visit www.hplct.org.