

For Immediate Release

Hartford Public Library Launches Community Collections Program

Hartford, CT, August 17 — Volunteers from Eversource, Hartford Fire Department, and teen interns, assembled and stocked bookshelves that went out to 15 community businesses at Hartford Public Library launched its new Community Collections programs.



Nora Benson, left, Teresa Jackman, and Janet D'Angelo, volunteers from Eversource, worked on assembling, stocking and delivering Community Collections to Unity Plaza Laundromat.

The idea came out of HPL staff day last November, when workers were asked think of creative ways to serve the library customer and the community.

Michelle McFarland, Director of Branch Services, Gabbie Barnes, Teen Services Librarian in YOUmedia, and their team came up with the idea of putting collections in “trapped spaces,” such as laundromats, barber shops or community centers. These are often areas where people wait, and offering books to adults and children is a way to make a new learning environment.

“We love this idea,” says Erica Chancey, manager of the laundromat in Unity Plaza, near the Library’s Barbour Branch. The business keeps a rack of magazines in the front of the store that customers populate. They already had a small shelf of paperbacks in the back, now next to the two three-foot high bookcases full of new material from the Library.

Eversource volunteers were recruited by Ana Alfaro, HPL board member and Evergreen’s Corporate Relations Specialist. Her team, in green T-shirts packed boxes, gathered groups for photos, and deliveries.

“It feels good to volunteer, said Janet D’Angelo, who works in Eversource’s Windsor location. “This was a different kind of service project. The kids are going to love it.”

Deliveries of new books are scheduled every three weeks, “but the locations can call sooner if they need more,” says Tricia George, YOUmedia and Teen Services Director.

Community Collection locations are: **Norris Barber Shop**, 183 Barbour St.; **Habitat for Humanity Financial Freedom Center**, 780 Windsor St.; **Wilson-Gray YMCA**, 444 Albany Ave.; **Mary Mahoney Village**, 73-81 Vine St.; **Intercommunity Inc.**, 16 Coventry St.; **Betty Knox Apartments**, 141 Woodland St.; **Kent Apartments**, 186-188 Sigourney St.; **Smith Tower**, 80 Charter Oak Ave.; **Mary Shepard Place** 1-106 Mary Shepard Place; **Unity Plaza Laundromat**, 291 Barbour St.; **Hartford City Mission**, 280 Vine St., 2194 Main St., 221 Greenfield St.; **Parker Memorial Community Center**, 2621 Main. St.; and **Tuff Cut Barbers**, 1102 Albany Ave.

The project is supported by a \$5000 grant from the Fund for Greater Hartford.

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