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For Immediate Release

Hartford Public Library Makes Room For UConn Collection

Hartford, CT (May 9, 2016) — Managing extensive collections of print and non-print materials is something that goes on every day at libraries around the world. At the Hartford Public Library, trained library employees are continuously assessing and reviewing new and old materials to keep the collections current, make room for new materials, and make sure our valuable shelf space is being used to its best advantage to provide the information our users want and need.

Hartford Public Library (HPL) is currently reorganizing its collections at the Downtown Library as it prepares for the new partnership with the University of Connecticut's Hartford campus, which goes into the construction phase this summer. HPL will host the university's campus library on its ground and main floors, using about 12,000 square feet of the 132,000 square feet that makes up the Downtown Library. The Library is busy preparing for its new partner and is using this time to analyze the collections, weed outdated materials and materials in poor condition, put up shelving that takes up less space for CDs and DVDs, and put some of its own collection in temporary storage. Construction will begin this summer in preparation for the fall 2017 opening of the campus.

Why are materials removed from the collections? Some have outlived their usefulness. For example, older medical, science and reference books can have outdated information. Books, journals, CDS and DVDs that haven't circulated in a long time are replaced by newer ones, although there are many classic titles that will remain in the collections even if they haven't found their reader in some time. Some print reference material can be offered electronically, which ensures they are current, and also allows the library more available shelf space. Removing outdated, worn, duplicative or damaged materials (sometimes referred to as 'weeding') is seen by professional librarians as one of the profession's best practices for collection management.

Another benefit of keeping collections well managed is that circulation and usage figures often increase after weeding and inventory control because materials are easier to locate and in better condition. At HPL, trained staff make decisions about what is retained and what is removed.

So what happens to the books that are moving off the shelves? The Library uses Better World Books (BWB), to sell books that are being deaccessioned (moving off the shelves). The Library receives a portion of the sales revenue; in addition, BWB donates books or a percentage of its profit to support literacy programs around the world. BWB acquires its books from more than 3,000 libraries, and through book drives at colleges and universities.

Some of HPL's discarded materials, particularly children's materials, are available as free giveaways at the Library. For some of the other withdrawn materials, particularly those that are in poor condition or are outdated, HPL recently entered into an arrangement with Easter Seals to provide work for people with disabilities who are helping with recycling these materials.

We are particularly proud of the Hartford-specific historical and research materials which are curated by Hartford History Center staff. During the UConn construction, the majority of this historical collection will be carefully secured in the Connecticut State Library's Van Block Storage Facility in Hartford. Those materials will be accessible by request. A sizable portion of the Hartford History Center's book collection will remain in the 3rd floor history center. The center is not part of any construction plans.

Another element of good collection management is ensuring that the Library is responsive to changing demographics. For example, as immigrant populations arrive, get established in a neighborhood, and later move out, local libraries may need to acquire materials in many languages and keep up with the changing needs of the community. Spanish language materials are the most common non-English language in the HPL system, especially at the Park Branch, Camp Field Branch and Goodwin Branch.

As technologies change, so do the source of books, periodicals and research databases. Many print materials, music and movies are available through screening and downloading for Hartford Public Library customers. Making that change can reduce the number of print books, CDs and DVDs. But that must be judged by the needs of the patrons. Many do not have access to a home computer or other digital device. They have a need for more traditional formats for materials like periodicals, DVDS and books.

Keeping HPL's collections fresh, responsive to the needs of users, easy to use and up to date is a critical part of the service at the Library. Good collection development and management, including weeding, is an important process to keep collections relevant and vital to the communities they serve.

ABOUT HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

As a finalist for the 2013 and 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. In 2015 the ten locations of the Hartford Public Library counted 722,047 visits 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.

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