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MEDIA CONTACT: Nina Foster
(202) 414-0791; nfoster@susandavis.com

Chicago Public Library to Receive 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Service
National Award Recognizes Exceptional Contributions of Chicago, IL Library

WASHINGTON (April 24, 2014) – The Institute of Museum and Library Services today announced Chicago Public Library is one of 10 recipients of this year’s National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The National Medal, the nation’s highest honor conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community, has celebrated 20 years of institutions that make a difference for individuals, families, and communities. The National Medal will be presented at an event in Washington, D.C., on May 8.

Chicago Public Library continues to expand its services for patrons of all ages in innovative ways. Its new Maker Lab allows the public free, hands-on experience with 3D design software, 3D printers, and other 21st century tools. The library also expanded its YOUmedia digital learning opportunities for teens, and revamped the 2013 Summer Learning Challenge, which offered kids more ways to participate in creative learning activities and saw a record 71,000 children participate. Patrons have access to both physical and digital resources at all 80 locations and, as Alarm Press editor in chief and founder Chris Force found, access to valuable librarian knowledge and expertise.

When building his business, Chris learned about the magazine industry through Chicago Public Library resources and used the library as his business incubator, booking meeting rooms and using the free databases to source leads. “The staff at Chicago Public Library is fantastic. Along with being knowledgeable, they’re very supportive—and sometimes as a small business owner all you need is anyone, even your local librarian, to give you some encouragement. Chicago is a great city for that, and the CPL is great resource for any small business owner.” Force’s belief in the value of the library extends to his staff – he insists that all Alarm Press employees obtain a Chicago Public Library card when they are hired.

“Congratulations to the 2014 winners of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. From programs that foster passion for science, literature and cultural heritage, to critical 21st century skills training for improved educational outcomes and workforce readiness, the services and programs of these institutions truly do make a difference,” said Susan H. Hildreth, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. “We thank each of this year’s medal recipients for their innovation and their dedication to serving their communities.”

Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon will to be traveling to Washington, D.C., to accept the National Medal. He states, “We are dedicated to serving as Chicago’s hub for free access to information, inspiration and the ideas of the day, and want to thank IMLS for this national recognition of the work we are doing.” Chris Force will travel to Washington with Bannon and share the impact the Chicago Public Library has had on his life as a small business owner during the May 8 celebration.

The ten honorees exemplify the nation’s great diversity of libraries and museums and include a natural history museum, a children’s museum, a natural sciences museum, an aquarium, a botanic garden, public library systems, and a book center, hailing from ten states.

Winners of the National Medal were selected from nationwide nominations of institutions that demonstrate innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. The award will be presented during a celebration in Washington, D.C. on May 8. After the ceremony, StoryCorps – a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans – will visit to document stories from the community.

For a complete list of 2014 recipients and to learn more about the National Medal winners, please visit www.imls.gov/medals.

Celebrating 20 Years

This year, IMLS celebrates the 20th anniversary of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. For the past two decades, the National Medal has honored outstanding institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Including 2014 winners, 142 institutions have received this honor.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit <http://www.ims.gov> and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About Chicago Public Library

Since 1873, the Chicago Public Library has encouraged lifelong learning by welcoming all people and offering equal access to information, entertainment and knowledge through innovative services and programs, as well as cutting-edge technology. Through its 80 locations, the Library provides free access to a rich collection of materials, both physical and digital, and presents the highest quality author discussions, exhibits and programs for children, teens and adults. CPL recently received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards and was ranked number one in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. For more information, visit www.chipublic.org.

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