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## **YOUmedia Albany Officially Opens; Ready to Grow**

—NEWS RELEASE—

(April 10, 2018 — Hartford, CT) — Building a sense of community for teens is the goal of the new YOUmedia Albany — a next-generation digital learning and creative space. And with a snip of the ceremonial scissors, leaders with the Hartford Public Library, students, and elected officials thanked the Mandell-Braunstein Families for their generous donation to make this creative centerpiece of the Library's Albany Branch a reality.

"We are so thankful for this gift, which enables us to have such a positive impact on our teens," said Bridget Quinn-Carey, chief executive officer for Hartford Public Library. "More than 100 teens a day benefit from this new site alone and what better place for them to gather, learn, and explore than at the Hartford Public Library."

Located at 1250 Albany Avenue in the city's Upper Albany neighborhood, this is the second center of its kind to open within the Hartford Public Library system. The original lab opened in the main branch in Downtown Hartford back in 2014. The innovative space is filled with tools for creating — from screen printing and video editing, to vinyl cutting, computer coding, and 3D printing.

"Our foundation is pleased to support a new Youmedia site at the Library's Albany Branch," said Bruce Mandell, president of Data-Mail Inc. "Replicating this environment in our neighborhoods is important."

"When this place is grooving, the kids are playing chess, they're on the computers, it is awesome," said Elizabeth Lane, the Hartford Public Library Albany Branch manager. "We have a 3D printer going and books are a big part of this experience too. We provide programming and teens give feedback to us on what they want to do — what they want to talk about. They drive the conversation."

Some teens, like Najae Duncan, a sophomore at Pathways Academy of Technology and Design, take advantage of these creative opportunities daily.

"It's a place where I can apply my creativity. I walk around and get ideas. It's almost like a big tool box," said Duncan, who wants to be a Computer Aided Designer.

The slogan for this creative space is "Hang Out. Mess Around. Geek Out." Those attending the ribbon cutting ceremony say the ultimate goal is to replicate this lab in more neighborhood branches in the future. For more information, please visit <https://www.youmedia.hplct.org/>.

### **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 that provides free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. We serve adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Please visit [www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org).

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