

News

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HPL Librarian Homa Naficy Receives National Public Service Honor

(CHICAGO, Dec. 10, 2019) Homa Naficy, executive director of The American Place at the Hartford Public Library, has been selected as a winner of this year's **I Love My Librarian Award**. Recognized for her leadership in her community and commitment transforming lives, she is one of only 10 librarians in the country to receive this national honor.

Naficy's nominators noted her devotion to creating services for underserved communities. In response to a sudden influx of refugees and immigrants into the Greater Hartford area, the library's American Place initiative has welcomed and aided often marginalized and disenfranchised populations.

"Homa is the consummate librarian – passionate about connecting people with the services and information they need to succeed. Her efforts in Hartford are legendary; she has touched the lives of thousands of people and barely takes a breath before embarking on the next project or program that will undoubtedly help thousands more. We are proud to have Homa as part of the HPL family – we love our Librarian!" said HPL President and CEO Bridget Quinn-Carey.

Homa has developed a partnership with Hartford's United States Citizenship and Immigration Services office and received accreditation by the Bureau of Immigration Affairs to provide legal services to immigrants, the first library in the nation to receive that designation.

Through her efforts, the library has made its mark as a cradle of opportunity and a springboard of upward mobility, offering programs that help in the acquisition of English language skills, preparation for employment in the health care and food service industries, completion of GED or high school credentials and the attainment of U.S. citizenship.

In an area where 40 percent of residents do not have access to broadband internet services, the library bridges the digital divide with the Crossroads-to-Connectivity project, which allows participants to borrow a laptop and mobile Wi-Fi device for an extended time period and receive training in how to use the equipment.

Naficy has reached out to the community, partnering with Hartford Public Schools on an online, interactive curriculum that builds students' linguistic and academic skills through assignments that foster the concept of belonging – to one's school, neighborhood and community.

The American Library Association (ALA) receives I Love My Librarian Award nominations from the general public that showcase the lasting contributions of dynamic librarians working in public, school, college, community college and university libraries. This year library users nationwide submitted 1,974 detailing how their favorite librarians have gone above and beyond to improve community members' lives.

Since the award's inception in 2008, ALA has selected up to 10 librarians from a pool of hundreds of nominations. This year's award winners will each receive a \$5,000 cash prize, a plaque and a travel stipend to attend the I Love My Librarian Award ceremony in Philadelphia on Jan. 25, 2020, at 3 p.m. during ALA's Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits. The event will be streamed via Facebook Live at <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanLibraryAssociation/>.

Over the last decade, library supporters have shared more than 19,000 nominations detailing how librarians have gone above and beyond to connect them to information, educational opportunities and critical technology. Information regarding previous award winners, can be found on the I Love My Librarian website at <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/lovemylibrarian>.

Carnegie Corporation of New York generously sponsors the I Love My Librarian Award. The New York Public Library and the New York Times are award co-sponsors. The ALA administers the award through ALA's Communications and Marketing Office, which promotes the value of libraries and librarians.

Award artwork and 2019 recipient photos are available at <http://bit.ly/ILMLA2019winners>

About Carnegie Corporation of New York

Carnegie Corporation of New York was established by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 "to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding." In keeping with this mandate, the Corporation's work focuses on the issues that Andrew Carnegie considered of paramount importance: international peace, the advancement of education and knowledge, and the strength of our democracy.

About Hartford Public Library

Now celebrating its 126th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national

recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. Please visit www.hplct.org.

About the American Library Association

The American Library Association is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice of libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to all. For more information, visit ala.org.

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