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West Bloomfield Honored with the Nation's Highest Award for Libraries

West Bloomfield, MI—The West Bloomfield Township Public Library is one of only five libraries in the country to receive the 2010 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries.

The award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) recognizes libraries and museums that demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service and inclusiveness, which exceed accepted standards for community outreach. The U.S. has more than 123,000 public, school, academic and special libraries.

The National Medal will be presented to the West Bloomfield Library at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. The library also receives \$10,000 in recognition of its contributions.

“The National Medal recognizes how our library and community partners work together to benefit everyone in West Bloomfield,” said Clara N. Bohrer, library director. “The library has focused on creating partnerships with parents, schools, community service and health care organizations, and others to support a lifetime of reading and learning. We can all be proud of this incredible honor.”

IMLS selected the West Bloomfield Library based on its innovative public service, extensive outreach and collaboration with community partners, and positive impact on those it serves. This includes the Library's:

- Advocacy for children and families through its Grow Up Reading® early literacy initiative, which provides services, programs and other resources for young children, their parents, and other caregivers. An interactive learning environment at the Library serves as a learning center and a model for integrating literacy and learning activities into everyday family life.
- The Help is Here initiative focusing on workforce development through programs, services and other resources for unemployed and underemployed community members. Unique services, developed in response to West Bloomfield residents, include individualized help with job search strategies, learning how to use social media for job networking, and one-on-one critiques of resumes.
- Services and programs that support West Bloomfield's diverse population, including Language of the Heart family storytimes with stories told both in a language spoken in the Township and in English; the International Language

Collection with popular books written in languages represented in West Bloomfield; and the World Cinema Collection offering DVDs in more than 30 languages.

U.S. Senator Carl Levin (MI)

“The West Bloomfield Library is truly a comprehensive educational environment, where children can learn and socialize, parents can get medical guidance, and families get support they need for healthy and happy development. The Library has gone above and beyond the call of duty, and for that they are truly deserving of this award.”

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (MI)

“I have had the pleasure of seeing the Library’s work first-hand and know that they are creating partnerships with the community to help Michigan families, especially in addressing early literacy. During these difficult economic times, they have also worked hard to help people looking for work find the resources and information they need.”

U.S. Representative Gary Peters (MI–09)

“The hallmark of a good library is its ability to foster community and provide access to a diverse set of information and resources. The efforts of the West Bloomfield Township Public Library to connect with each resident, whether teaching a child to read or helping an adult perfect their resume, are exemplary. I am incredibly proud of their work and grateful for their contribution to our community.”

IMLS Acting Director Marsha L. Semmel

“This year’s National Medal winners are serving their communities with innovative and creative approaches to lifelong learning, commitment to addressing diverse community needs, plain old hard work, and a lot of heart. Our winners empower and enrich the lives of their community members by cultivating collaboration and openness. I am deeply appreciative of their efforts to make a difference. They serve as the nation’s role models.”

Partners that will be listed in the IMLS National Medal brochure are:

Beaumont Hospitals
Bloomfield Hills Schools
Ferber Kaufman LifeTown/ Friendship Circle
Friends of the Library
Great Start Michigan–Oakland
Greater West Bloomfield Community Coalition
Japanese Business Society of Detroit Foundation
Jewish Community Center
Jewish Vocational Services
Oakland Community College
Oakland County Economic Development Services
Oakland Literacy Council
Optimist Club of West Bloomfield
Walled Lake Schools
West Bloomfield African American Parent Association

Greater West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce
Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society
West Bloomfield School District and West Bloomfield Community Education

About the West Bloomfield Township Public Library

www.westbloomfieldlibrary.org

The West Bloomfield Main Library and Westacres Branch serve 64,860 residents, plus 6,710 people through contractual arrangements with Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake Village and Sylvan Lake. Last fiscal year, the West Bloomfield Main Library and Westacres Branch circulated more than 2.6 million items, making it one of the busiest libraries in Michigan. 37.4 items were checked out per person, the highest in Library history and almost five times the state average. A 2008 independent telephone survey of randomly selected township residents showed that three out of four residents have a library card, and of those almost 80% come to the Library one or more times a month.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS) www.imls.gov.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas.

IMLS Board members, who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, advise the Institute's Director on the selections for the National Medal.