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Contact: Anne Farrow, 860-695-6296, afarrow@hplct.org

**Fund for Greater Hartford Awards Grant to Library's
New Teen Digital Learning Center**

Hartford, Connecticut (March 19, 2013) — Hartford Public Library just announced that it has received a \$7,500 grant from The Fund for Greater Hartford to help build an innovative, multi-year program for youth who work on computers at the Library.

“On behalf of the trustees of The Fund for Greater Hartford, we are delighted to fund this exciting, new program for youth at the library,” said Executive Director Kate Miller of The Fund for Greater Hartford.

YOUmedia Hartford is a program that will create a digital learning center for teens ages 13 to 19 at the Downtown Library. YOUmedia will connect young adults, books, media, and institutions throughout the city of Hartford in an innovative and 21st-century teen space where students will learn and create media.

The YOUmedia space is based on research by Mizuko Ito at the University of California. Ito's MacArthur Foundation-funded research found that there are three distinct types of interest-driven activities in which youth engage in physical and online spaces: She identifies them as Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out, abbreviated as HOMAGO. From the relatively relaxed activities of social networking to the higher levels of immersion when youth develop specific artistic and technical skills in project groups, the theory of HOMAGO is that it helps students “level up,” moving in an organic, nonlinear fashion into productive, educational and socially empowering activities.

The Library's Chief Executive Officer Matthew K. Poland said this award from the Fund for Greater Hartford for the YouMedia project will help move the ball forward on a project that improves young people's computer literacy in a number of ways. “This grant was constructed in line with national research being done on how young people engage with computer technology – and it will help us build new platforms for the kids as they become increasingly sophisticated.” Ultimately, Poland said that he hopes YOUmedia spaces will be replicated in schools and branch libraries throughout the City.

About Hartford Public Library

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 865,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. To learn more about the library, please see www.hplct.org.

About the Fund for Greater Hartford

The Fund for Greater Hartford seeks to make a sustainable impact on the vitality of Connecticut's capital region by being a catalyst for hope, inspiration and creativity and by improving the lives of its people, especially its children. To learn more about the organization, please see www.fundforgreaterhartford.org