



NYC NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY AWARDS

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****PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST****

Six NYC Library Branches Take Home the “Oscars of Libraries”

Arverne, Glen Oaks, Inwood, Morrisania and Sunset Park Branches Get Top Honors and \$20,000 Checks at 3rd Annual NYC Neighborhood Library Awards

[Short Documentaries](#) Premiere, Highlighting Heartwarming Stories of Libraries Improving Lives

Jerome Park Library Wins New Heckscher Prize for Outstanding Service to Children and Youth

New York, NY – June 7, 2016 – The winners of the annual “Oscars of Libraries” have been chosen! Six library branches from Queens (**Arverne, Glen Oaks**), Brooklyn (**Sunset Park**), Manhattan (**Inwood**), and the Bronx (**Morrisania, Jerome Park**) have won the 3rd annual [NYC Neighborhood Library Awards](#). The honor, an initiative of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the Charles H. Revson Foundation, awards \$20,000 to six outstanding public libraries – places where all are welcome, the programs and resources are free, and the librarians are making it all happen on a shoestring budget.

“We are thrilled to honor these library branches as heroes in their communities,” said **Julie Sandorf, President of the Charles H. Revson Foundation**. “From ESOL classes for new immigrants, to after-school safe havens for at-risk youth, these institutions play a critical role in shaping the lives of New Yorkers all across the city. To keep up with the high demand for programs and services, we must continue to invest in our libraries.”

“Congratulations to the six winning neighborhood libraries and the five finalists who have gone above and beyond to provide exceptional services and programming for their communities,” said **Sarah Needham of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation**. “In neighborhoods from Glen Oaks to Inwood, these libraries are critical resources for New Yorkers. For providing excellent after-school programs, job search

assistance, story-time and adult learning classes, and much more, our City depends on our excellent libraries now more than ever.”

To document the impact of these exemplary library branches on their surrounding communities, acclaimed filmmakers **Juliane Dressner** and **Nara Garber** produced a series of two-minute documentaries on each of the winning branches and five additional finalists. The mini-documentaries feature stories of New Yorkers whose lives have been improved by libraries and their dedicated staff—individuals like Juan from Sunset Park, a recent immigrant who hopes to take advantage of the free legal services at the library so he can bring his wife to the U.S.; and 89-year-old Gertrude from Glen Oaks, who takes one-on-one technology classes so that she can use her iPad to stay connected with family. Watch all eleven films [HERE](#).

The winning libraries – and an excerpt from the nominations for each – follow:

- **Arverne Library** – Arverne (Queens) – John, a neighborhood resident, husband and parent, stated: “Arverne Library goes out of their way to make us feel comfortable and the kids love going there after school. It means a lot to us that we can send our kids somewhere we feel they are safe and the staff knows them. We are disabled so it means a lot to us. It is like an extended family.”
- **Glen Oaks Library** – Glen Oaks (Queens) – An immigrant and neighborhood resident stated: “The Queens library at Glen Oaks gave me my first taste of books. I moved to this country when I was 9 and I learned English by checking out books after books from this library. I have been going to this library for nearly two decades and the staff members and the services have been impeccable.”
- **Inwood Library** – Inwood (Manhattan) – Sophie, a library volunteer and parent, stated: “The Inwood Library is always involved in the community, making its programs known, catering to both English, Spanish speakers, and beyond! When I approached the library about starting a new francophone toddler reading hour, the branch manager welcome me, partnered me with a tenured volunteer, and a library staff member has been working diligently to build the francophone children's section!”
- **Morrisania Library** – Morrisania (Bronx) – A parent and community group member stated: “This library has a great computer class. I was completely computer illiterate and this library has taught me to have confidence in my new found skills. I also like the bilingual class and parent child classes. I think this library deserves the money in every way possible.”
- **Sunset Park** – Sunset Park (Brooklyn) – Daniela, a student, immigrant, and neighborhood resident stated: “I’m from Dominican Republic, and I moved in New York in 2008. One of the best places for me and my brother to get resources, as new residents and immigrants, was the Sunset Park Library. Here we attended ESL classes, we used to come for computer classes and to use the internet to communicate with the rest of our family in DR. I thank God because my life can be enriched by having more learning experiences with all the books and services at the Sunset Park Library.”

In a new twist this year, a sixth branch was chosen to receive a \$20,000 prize: the [Heckscher Foundation for Children](#) awarded the *Heckscher Prize for Outstanding Service to Children and Youth* to the **Jerome Park Library** (the Bronx)—a branch that has proven its commitment to the City's youth through special programs, classes and events.

"The Heckscher Foundation's mission is to level the playing field for children and youth. Every day, libraries across the city help to do just that. Particularly in the high-poverty communities where such safety nets are needed most, libraries like the Jerome Park Library serve as a vital extension of home and school, a safe, quiet environment where young people can build skills, knowledge, and even a resume," said **Heckscher Foundation Chairman and CEO Peter Sloane**.

In addition to the six winners of this year's top prize, the five remaining finalists were presented with checks for \$10,000 for their remarkable service to the community. They are:

- **Aguilar Library** – East Harlem (Manhattan)
- **Dyker Library** – Dyker Heights (Brooklyn)
- **Far Rockaway Library** – Far Rockaway (Queens)
- **Fort Washington Library** – Washington Heights (Manhattan)
- **Kings Bay Library**– Sheepshead Bay (Brooklyn)

More than 19,000 New Yorkers nominated their local library to win an award this year – up more than 40 percent from last year's nominations. This increased participation underscores the ever more vital role libraries play in our communities and the many ways in which libraries support New Yorkers in their daily lives. The nominations were evaluated by Foundation staff and an independent review committee, focusing on libraries that demonstrated exceptional commitment to the needs of their respective neighborhoods. Site visits were conducted at potential finalist branches, and 10 finalists were chosen.

The winners were selected by a distinguished panel of judges: Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Stacy Schiff**; acclaimed *New Yorker* writer and author **Jelani Cobb**; National Book Award finalist and author **Angela Flournoy**; **Richard Reyes-Gavilan**, Executive Director for the DC Public Library and former Chief Librarian for the Brooklyn Public Library; and **Peter Hatch**, Chief of Staff to Dr. Herminia Palacio, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.

Last year's winners put their awards to good use. The Langston Hughes Community Library in Queens has added to the collections and lectures available at their Black Heritage Reference Center. New Lots Library in Brooklyn purchased new technology and launched an entrepreneurial series for teens. Stapleton Library in Staten Island is planning arts programs for adults and tech classes for students. In the Bronx, the Parkchester Library is adding furniture and materials to their "Spot for Tots," and the Mott Haven Library is remodeling their Children's Reading Room with an interactive wall display.

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About the Stavros Niarchos Foundation

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation (www.SNF.org) is one of the world's leading private international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. The Foundation funds organizations and projects that are expected to achieve a broad, lasting and positive impact for society at large, focusing on vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly, and also exhibit strong leadership and sound management. The Foundation also seeks actively to support projects that facilitate the formation of public-private partnerships as an effective means for serving public welfare.

2016 marks the twentieth year of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation's global philanthropic activity. Since 1996, the SNF has made grant commitments of \$1.8 billion / €1.5 billion, through 3,316 grants to nonprofit organizations in 111 nations around the world. The Foundation's largest single gift is the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC), in Athens, to be completed in 2016. The project's total budget of \$831mil (€596mil) includes two grants of \$6 mil (€5mil) each to the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera respectively, aiming to support the organizations' transition to their new facilities. The project, designed by Renzo Piano, includes the new facilities of the National Library of Greece, and of the Greek National Opera, as well as the Stavros Niarchos Park. The SNFCC is a testament and a commitment to the country's future. It is also an engine of short- to mid-term economic stimulus.

About the Charles H. Revson Foundation

The Charles H. Revson Foundation (www.revsonfoundation.org), established in 1956, operates grant programs in Urban Affairs, Jewish Life, Biomedical Research, and Education. The Urban Affairs program focuses on projects that enhance New York City's vitality as a leading and livable urban capital; it continually seeks opportunities to strengthen the city's pluralistic communities and civic spaces, re-envisioning public libraries, affordable housing, and local public affairs journalism to cultivate knowledgeable, creative urban residents. The Jewish Life program operates in the United States, focusing on projects that reinterpret Jewish tradition for an ever-more-diverse community; and in Israel, where the Foundation partners with Israeli organizations to build a stronger, more inclusive society for young people. The Biomedical Research program is devoted to strengthening basic research in the biomedical sciences by awarding fellowships to exceptionally talented scientists. The Education program supports institutions and projects that seek to provide broad access to the knowledge and resources that sustain an informed and engaged citizenry.

About the Heckscher Foundation for Children

The Heckscher Foundation (www.heckscherfoundation.org) was founded in 1921 to promote the welfare of children in the State of New York and elsewhere throughout the United States. The primary aim of the Heckscher Foundation's grantmaking is to "level the playing field" for needy youth by providing access to education and the varied experiences that make for a richer, forward-reaching life. It seeks to identify under-funded issues or projects that can provide widespread benefit, generate other engagement and funding, and then help leverage that interest to scale. The Foundation also seeks to incubate ideas and initiatives that will lead to high-impact services and improved opportunities.