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Nominations Open for Fourth Annual NYC Neighborhood Library Awards, “Oscars of Libraries” Honoring City’s Exceptional Branches

New Yorkers Can Show Love for Public Libraries – the City’s Vital Democratic Institutions – by Nominating Their Local Branch to Win \$20,000 Prize

New York, NY – The “Oscars of libraries” is back, and is inviting New Yorkers to nominate neighborhood branches that go above and beyond to serve their communities – libraries that will ultimately vie for top honors and the shot at a \$20,000 prize.

The [NYC Neighborhood Library Awards](#) recognize and reward public libraries for being the unsung heroes of New York – places where all are welcome, the programs and resources are free, and the librarians are making it all happen on a shoestring budget. From immigrant services to early childhood education to job training, libraries are on the front lines of serving the city’s most vulnerable communities. The awards, now in their fourth year, are an initiative of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

Starting today, New Yorkers can nominate their library for exceptional service to the community, via a form available [online](#), in paper at local branches, and in ten languages. Based on patrons’ nominations, data on circulation and program attendance, visits to see the branches in action, and the recommendations of a philanthropic review committee, the pool will be narrowed down to ten finalists. From there, a group of eminent judges will pick five winning branches for the \$20,000 prize. The remaining finalists will receive \$10,000 each.

In addition, the Heckscher Foundation for Children will once again award the *Heckscher Prize for Outstanding Service to Children and Youth* to one additional outstanding library branch that has proven their commitment to this City’s youth through special programs, classes, and events. The winner of this award will also receive a prize of \$20,000 to spend on their branch.

Nearly 19,000 New Yorkers nominated their local library to win an award last year, up more than 40 percent from the previous year’s nominations. The six winners have already put their winnings to good use. **Inwood Library in Manhattan** added new charging stations, book bins, and a media cart, and will make upgrades to the teen area. In the Bronx, **Morrisania Library** is adding four new computers, a new television set for library programming, and several gaming consoles, and **Jerome Park Library** is purchasing new seating, replacing old shelving in the children’s section, and expanding hands-on programming for children.

In Queens, **Glen Oaks Library** purchased furniture, sewing machines and video gaming equipment, with plans to expand their cultural and art history programs and special collections, while the **Arverne Library** refreshed the children’s book collection, hosted a series of Zumba exercise programs and holiday workshops and purchased new test preparation books. **Sunset Park Library in Brooklyn** plans to create a staff development and team building workshop and purchase art and music equipment for their children’s programming.

“Libraries are the pillars of any community, and year after year they welcome patrons of all ages, offering enriching programming and essential services,” said **Sarah Needham of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation**. “We’re proud to honor such revered public institutions, and shed light on and support their invaluable work.”

“Public libraries are more important to our city and our society than ever. They are beloved by New Yorkers as trusted community hubs and beacons of opportunity for all. Our libraries represent the best of who we are,” said **Julie Sandorf, President of the Charles H. Revson Foundation**. “Funding for libraries is crucial, as every investment in a library is an investment in the whole community. We are honored to shine a light on our library heroes, and encourage all New Yorkers to show their libraries some love!”

“Providing an environment where children and youth can learn, explore, and grow is vital, especially for those in high-poverty neighborhoods, said **Heckscher Foundation Chairman and CEO Peter Sloane**. “In our efforts to promote and improve the welfare for children in New York, we cherish our partnership with libraries who continue to offer impactful services and resources for young people.”

Nominations can be submitted at www.nyclibraryawards.org/nominate, through each library system’s website, or in person at any neighborhood library. Nominations will be accepted through March 13. This year’s winning branches will be selected by a panel of judges including acclaimed authors **Francine Prose** and **Min Jin Lee**; Executive Director of the National Book Foundation **Lisa Lucas**; and Commissioner & CEO of Chicago Public Library **Brian Bannon**.

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. In 2012, the Foundation, in addition to its standard grant-making activities, embarked on three major grant initiatives totaling \$378mil (€300 mil) aiming to provide relief support against the severe effects of the deepening socioeconomic crisis in Greece, and to help address the critical issue of youth unemployment. Since 1996, the SNF has made grant commitments of \$1.9 billion / €1.6 billion, through 3,685 grants to nonprofit organizations in 111 nations around the world. 2016 marked the twentieth year of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation’s global philanthropic activity.

The Foundation’s largest single gift is the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (**SNFCC**), in Athens. The project’s total budget of \$867mil (€630mil) 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 the architectural firm Renzo Piano Building Workshop (RPBW), 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.

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