



News Release

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs, (517) 241-4395

Litchfield District Library Wins 2013 State Librarian's Excellence Award

***Citations of Excellence go to Lakeview High School Library in Battle Creek
and Kent District Library in Kent County***

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LANSING – State Librarian Nancy Robertson announced today that the Litchfield District Library is the recipient of the 2013 State Librarian's Excellence Award for superior customer service.

The Library of Michigan Foundation annually gives this statewide honor, which includes an elegant trophy and \$2,000 in privately donated funds, to one Michigan library. Robertson presented the award during the Michigan Library Association annual conference in Lansing.

Lakeview High School Library in Battle Creek, and the Kent District Library in Kent County each received a 2013 Citation of Excellence, a trophy and \$500.

The State Librarian's Excellence Award is sponsored by Roger Mendel and his late wife June Mendel. Gifts from Martin L. Gibbs and Carole Sorenson and from Elaine M. Logan supported the Citations of Excellence.

“Libraries used to be a valuable old stand-by. Now they are leaders in identifying and meeting their communities' quickly evolving and changing needs for information, digital literacy, and community connection and enhancement,” Robertson said. “The 2013 nominations all were filled with evidence of this in their narratives and letters of support. In the midst of swirling change, libraries provide ever evolving but constant support for Michigan's residents in their municipalities, their schools, their institutions of higher education and in their workplaces.”

The Library of Michigan (LM) recently commissioned the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) to record Bright Side Episode 13: “21st Century Libraries” to demonstrate the breadth and depth of scope Michigan's libraries provide.

“Take a peek. You may think you know what to expect from Michigan's libraries, but you might be surprised by all that they offer,” Robertson said.

The Library of Michigan Foundation and LM present the State Librarian's Excellence Award and Citations of Excellence each year in part to keep the value and services of Michigan's libraries in the forefront.

Janet Barton, director of the award-winning Litchfield District Library, said, "On behalf of the library staff and our library board we are honored and very pleased to accept this prestigious award and especially the recognition that comes with it."

Litchfield District Library is one of the smallest public libraries in the state, with an annual budget of just over \$68,000 and serving nearly 2,400 people. It strives to provide 100 percent customer service and tireless engagement with its community.

Board Vice Chair Patsy Hart noted in her nomination cover letter, "Our staff believes that the library is the community's living room, and regardless of where you live, once you enter our library you are one of our neighbors." The library's costumed "Library Fairy Godmother" does in-house book readings and also gets out to other locations in the community to promote early childhood literacy. In partnership with churches and other local community organizations, the library has a holistic approach to meeting community needs. It is involved in providing free summer lunches for children in need and providing affordable prom dresses for teens from low-income families.

Its Guitar Hero Contest; Battle of the Bands; and "Drummunity" community celebration event bring the community together in innovative ways. The community's support for the library is invoked in a letter of support from the director of children's services at their Community Action Agency, Mary Cunningham DeLuca.

"Our agency recognizes the Litchfield District Library as a leader in early childhood education," DeLuca said.

Evaluation factors for the State Librarian's Excellence Award are:

- Demonstrating that the library provides superior service to its customers and community in a cost effective manner; with a can-do attitude; and by always delivering on promises; and
- Demonstrating the library's commitment to high standards of customer service through staff dealing with customers and the service community.

Lakeview High School Library of Battle Creek, and Kent District Library of Kent County also were recognized for their devotion to customer service, earning Citations of Excellence.

The Lakeview High School Library serves a student population of over 1,300. Margaret Lincoln, the library director, is a recognized leader in school librarianship statewide and nationally. Besides training high school students in information literacy, notably through her special course developed for library assistants, Lincoln also has shown exceptional commitment to facilitating learning about issues of race and diversity for both her students and the community as a whole.

Lincoln has demonstrated very fruitful partnerships with classroom teachers on projects to incorporate electronic resources and online communication into the school curriculum and lesson plan.

She worked with her colleague, Scott Durham, the school's social studies teacher, to develop a blended learning project. Mr. Durham is spending several grant-funded months abroad visiting historic landmarks in Europe and Asia. While he is traveling, the library will facilitate online interactions between him and Lakeview High School students.

Lincoln said, "Lakeview High School Library is truly honored to receive a 2013 Citation of Excellence. This is also the occasion to recognize the staff, teachers, students and administrators of Lakeview Schools who have supported the need for a successful high school library media program over the past 41 years."

The Kent District Library is a Class VI library, one of the largest public library systems in the state. It has 18 branches and serves over 395,000 residents. KDL's focus on excellent customer service is embodied in its motto, "Convenience Is King."

Director Lance Werner said, "The Kent District Library is honored to be recognized with a Citation of Excellence from the State Librarian. This citation is a tribute to the KDL family that is made up of the Board, employees, volunteers, partners and customers who inspire us to provide innovative, convenient service that remains friendly and personal."

Kent District Library excels in early literacy programming designed to develop pre-reading skills in young children. This past year, attendance at these programs was 65,000. It also partners with the county's Great Start Collaborative to provide free education for early childcare providers. Last year it offered 48 classes to nearly 2,000 parents and early childhood educators on all aspects of child development.

It recently commissioned a special demographic study and public opinion survey, and will use the findings to identify areas where it can meet changing realities.

This year's State Librarian's Excellence Award recipients were selected by a review panel including the State Librarian, an LM librarian, two school librarians, an academic librarian and a special librarian.

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