

News Release



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Gale and *Library Journal* Name Maryland's Howard County Library System as the 2013 Library of the Year

Columbia, MD and Farmington Hills, Mich., June 5, 2013 — Gale, part of Cengage Learning and a leading publisher of research and reference resources for libraries, schools and businesses, and *Library Journal* magazine today announced that Howard County Library System in Columbia, Maryland is the 2013 Library of the Year.

Each year this prestigious recognition goes to a public library that most profoundly demonstrates service to community, creativity, leadership and innovation in developing community programs, particularly programs that can be emulated by others. In addition to a cash award of \$10,000, the Howard County Library System (HCLS) will be featured as the cover story for the June 15 issue of *Library Journal*.

“Through unique partnerships with various community groups, innovative programming and a strong focus on education for all, HCLS has truly become a staple in local residents’ lives and for that we’re excited to present them with the 2013 Library of the Year Award,” said Ian Singer, publisher, *Library Journal*.

Established in 1940, HCLS is comprised of six branch libraries serving a population of more than 280,000 residents, of which a whopping 90% have – and use – their library card. Not surprisingly, usage is up - in the past decade, items borrowed from HCLS branches doubled to 7.1 million (the highest borrowing per capita in Maryland), as did research assistance interactions with HCLS instructors (2 million), while physical visits tripled to 3 million along with virtual visits (6 million) and class and event attendance (more than a quarter of a million).

However, what truly sets HCLS apart is its standing as an educational institution. HCLS is an allied agency similar to the school system and community college and its mission is to deliver high quality public education for everyone. The HCLS curriculum is built on three pillars:

- **Self-Directed Education** – utilizing one million print and digital resources, HCLS empowers residents in many different facets of life – from genealogy research and foreign language studies to health education and homework help.
- **Research Assistance and Instruction** - offers personalized research assistance, in person, online and via phone, as well as classes and events taught by HCLS instructors, such as:
 - *Kindergarten Here We Come* and *Movin’ Up to Middle School* provide practice with real-life tasks like getting on a school bus and using a locker combination lock.
 - HiTech, a digital media lab for teens delivers cutting-edge science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education via hands-on video, music, app and e-book projects. Projects have included a mobile game app, *Escape from Detention!*, that is available for iOS and

Android systems and has been downloaded 5,000 times across the globe—from 30 countries on almost every continent.

- Enchanted Garden, an innovative outdoor teaching venue centered on environmental education, includes a rain garden, bioswale, and composting.
- HCLS Project Literacy, an adult basic education initiative has taught English to 6,500 adults from 33 countries, qualified nearly 150 students to receive their high school diplomas and enabled 122 residents become U.S. citizens.
- **Instructive & Enlightening Experiences** - offers cultural and community center concepts, signature events, and partnerships, such as A+ Partners in Education and Choose Civility.
 - A+ Partners in Education brings together HCLS, Howard County Public School System and Howard Community College to improve student success by taking the library into the schools, and bringing the schools – students, faculty, and staff – into the library.
 - Choose Civility is a community-wide initiative that invites all to choose respect, empathy, and consideration at every opportunity when interacting with others, at work and in their personal lives. With more than 100 Alliance Partners in Howard County, Choose Civility has inspired communities in other states around the country to form Choose Civility Chapters.

“At Cengage Learning our mission is to provide leading educational content and services to engage learners and improve student outcomes and we’re excited to supporting a library that is so clearly focused on providing education for all audiences,” said Nader Qaimari, senior vice president, marketing, Cengage Learning.

“We express our deepest gratitude to Gale and *Library Journal* for this esteemed award. Above all, the credit goes to our extraordinary staff members—a team whose professionalism, innovation, creativity, and collaboration sets the bar for excellence—and the visionary HCLS Board of Trustees. For his unsurpassed support, we thank Howard County Executive Ken Ulman. We also thank former Howard County Executive James Robey, the Howard County Council, Maryland State Legislators, Friends of Howard County Library, philanthropic partners, volunteers, and the dynamic Howard County community,” said Valerie J. Gross, president & CEO, Howard County Library System.

The 2013 Library of the Year Award will be presented formally at a gala reception at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago, IL on June 30, 2013. For more information, please contact Kristina Massari at kristina.massari@cengage.com or Christie Lassen at christie.lassen@hclibrary.org.

About Cengage Learning and Gale

Cengage Learning is a leading educational content, software and services company, empowering educators and driving learner engagement through personalized services and course-driven digital solutions that bridge from the library to the classroom. Gale, part of Cengage Learning, serves the world's information and education needs through its vast and dynamic content pools, which are used by students and consumers in their libraries, schools and on the Internet. It is best known for the accuracy, breadth and convenience of its data, addressing all types of information needs – from homework help to health questions to business profiles – in a variety of formats. For more information, visit www.cengage.com or www.gale.cengage.com.

About *Library Journal*

Founded in 1876, *Library Journal* is one of the oldest and most respected publications covering the library field. Over 75,000 library directors, administrators, and staff in public, academic, and special libraries read *LJ. Library Journal* reviews over 8000 books, audiobooks, videos, databases, and web sites annually, and provides coverage of technology, management, policy, and other professional concerns. For more information, visit www.libraryjournal.com. *Library Journal* is a publication of Media Source Inc., which also owns *School Library Journal*, The Horn Book publications, and Junior Library Guild.

About Howard County Library System

Learn more about HCLS' signature events and innovative curriculum at www.hclibrary.org.