FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

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Mid-Continent Public Library Celebrates Local Authors

MCPL Launches ReadLOCAL Collection During National Library Week

Independence, MO – In honor of National Library Week (April 9-15, 2017), Mid-Continent Public Library has officially launched its ReadLOCAL collection, which pays homage to the writing accomplishments of authors who currently reside within the Library’s service area. Books in the collection are available for checkout at all 31 MCPL branches and four Library-To-Go locations.

ReadLOCAL was initiated to support the region’s homegrown writers and simultaneously inspire other local residents who may have their own writing aspirations. Authors accepted into the collection will reap the benefits of additional promotion and exposure from the Library, and for newer authors, the chance to reach a wide audience and gain a catalog record that makes it easier for other library systems and bookstores to add the items to their collections.

“We’re extremely excited to debut this new collection, which we believe is a testament to the talent and creativity that pulses through our community,” said Terri Clark, MCPL Collection Development Manager. “ReadLOCAL will shine a light on the work of local writers—hopefully elevating their success—while also offering readers fresh content to enjoy and glean inspiration from.”

To date, MCPL has added nearly 50 authors and more than 100 titles to the collection, which features a vast range of writing styles and genres—from mysteries and westerns to juvenile nonfiction and healthy cookbooks.

“Community members often aren’t aware of local artists and authors, and programs like ReadLOCAL give residents the opportunity to support arts locally as well as discover new books,” said Jen Mann, New York Times bestselling author of People I Want to Punch in the Throat—which is in the new collection at MCPL along with her other novel, Spending the Holidays with People I Want to Punch in the Throat.

All ReadLOCAL books are first thoroughly vetted by MCPL’s collection development team to ensure the work meets standard acquisition criteria, including having all the necessary permissions in place for the use of graphics, professional editing, and an ISBN number, among other requirements. Books in the new collection stem from various publishing backgrounds—self-published, hybrid published, small press, and large or traditional publisher (with the odd New York Times bestseller sprinkled in)—and have all been published within the past few years.

“I am very excited to have my book, Leaving Cancer for the Circus, included in the ReadLOCAL project,” said Danny Clinkscale, local author and award-winning sports broadcaster. “We have many very talented writers in our area
who are doing great work, but marketing and finding an audience is always a challenge. This initiative is a valuable tool to not only help the writers, but raise awareness for readers hungry for interesting material to enjoy.”

The ReadLOCAL collection is the latest addition to the Library’s robust artillery of writing resources. The Story Center, currently located within the Woodneath Library Center, helps aspiring writers hone their craft with programs and resources on everything from how to develop believable characters to how to navigate the publishing process. After a writer has finalized their work, the Library can then help them take it to the next level by self-publishing on the Espresso Book Machine or publishing it through the Woodneath Press imprint. The final step is acceptance into the ReadLOCAL collection.

“ReadLOCAL is a lovely way to be introduced to local authors. It’s an incredible resource for discovering fiction and nonfiction works by writers in and around Kansas City,” said Jonathan Bender, author and Food Content Editor for KCPT whose three books are in the ReadLOCAL collection. “ReadLOCAL will help to connect local readers and authors, showcasing why libraries and librarians continue to have a meaningful role in helping to bring our community together.”

For more information about the ReadLOCAL collection, including instructions on how to apply for consideration, visit mymcel.org/readlocal.

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Mid-Continent Public Library is the largest library system in the Kansas City metropolitan area, operating 31 branches and four Library-To-Go locations and serving over 792,000 people in Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties. The Library strives to enrich our citizens and communities through expanding access to innovation, information, ideas, and inspiration. MCPL is a 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Service winner. Connect with the Library on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.