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Orange County Library System Recognized as a 2018 Recipient of Nation’s Highest Museum and Library Honor

National Medal for Museum and Library Service Recognizes Community Contributions of the Florida Public Library System

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 1, 2018) – The Institute of Museum and Library Services today announced Orange County Library System of Orlando, Florida, as one of 10 recipients of the 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation’s highest honor given to museums and libraries that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Over the past 24 years, the award has celebrated 182 institutions that are making a difference for individuals, families, and communities. The award will be presented at an event at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., in May.

The Orange County Library System was recognized for the work it does to support its community, particularly when it comes to providing access to STEM education for children living in underserved communities, ESOL classes for adults and families, and a commitment to providing access to high-quality educational tools for children in the county’s public school system.

“It is a pleasure to recognize the 10 distinctive recipients of the National Medal of Museum and Library Service,” said

IMLS Director Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew. “Through their programs, services, and partnerships, these institutions exemplify the many ways that libraries and museums are positively transforming communities across the nation.”

Selected from 29 national finalists, the 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service winners represent institutions that provide dynamic programming and services that exceed expected levels of service. Through their community outreach, these institutions bring about change that touches the lives of individuals and helps communities thrive.

“It’s a great honor to receive the 2018 National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. We’re proud of the work we do at the Orange County Library System, and this award is an acknowledgment of the fact that our libraries provide people with an opportunity to engage in truly meaningful learning experiences that they won’t find anywhere else. I am so grateful for our staff, who work with our customers directly every day to change their lives, and to our customers for believing in and supporting the library’s mission,” said Mary Anne Hodel, Orange County Library System Library Director and CEO.

As part of the ceremony and celebration, Orlando community member Terhys Persad will travel to Washington, D.C. with Hodel to accept the National Medal on behalf of the library system and provide a personal account of the power the organization has had in the community. With the help of the library’s Melrose Center, Persad learned video editing skills that she put to use in producing her web series, *Where Art Thou*, which features her travels around the globe and explores different cultures through the context of contemporary art.

Following the ceremony, [StoryCorps](#)—a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans—will visit the Orange County Library System and provide an opportunity for community members to share stories of how the library has affected their lives. These stories are preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

For a complete list of 2018 recipients and to learn more about the National Medal winners, visit <https://www.ims.gov/news-events/news-releases/ims-selects-top-10-museums-libraries-national-medal-museum-and-library>.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the Orange County Library System

The Orange County Library System is where you engage in amazing experiences and opportunities to learn, explore and create the best you. The library adds to the quality of life in Orange County by creating a learning environment and experiences that foster personal growth and development. For more information about the Orange County Library System, visit www.ocl.info.

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