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Press Release

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Middletown – Mayor Sebastian N. Giuliano recognized Russell Library today as it was named a 2009 Excellence in Public Library Service Award winner by the Connecticut Library Association (CLA) and the Connecticut State Library. The Russell Library was the award recipient in the category designated for libraries serving populations over 15000.

Giuliano said, “This is a great honor for the library, its leadership and staff. Everyone at the library deserves a great deal of credit for creating an atmosphere that is true to its mission.” The library, based on Broad Street in Middletown, has served the public since 1875 and has a current mission statement to be “A Gateway to the Future of Middletown.”

A panel of 3 judges from outside Connecticut reviewed numerous candidates in this tough competition, and the vote was unanimous for Russell Library. On selecting Russell Library for the prestigious award, CLA officials remarked, “Russell Library offers an incredible depth and breadth of programs and services to the over 47,000 residents of Middletown and the surrounding area. Their mission statement articulates that the library is “A Gateway to the Future of Middletown” and all of their programs and services support that mission.”

The panel also noted in its own press release that the Library fulfilled every review criteria. Russell Library, according to the judges, stood as an example of service to its home community, creativity and innovation in developing programs, leadership in creating programs that can be emulated by other libraries, and in the fact that the library offered services which would impact the library and the community for the foreseeable future.

The judging panel of library peers was particularly impressed by the fact that all age groups and a variety of needs were served the Russell Library. In particular the library's offerings in the areas for children, those seeking career assistance and for older adults were described as cohesive and consistent with the mission of the library.

Russell Library Director Art Meyers said, "It is a thrill to even be nominated. To win is really extraordinary. I think being recognized by our peers in the library profession is especially gratifying. Everyone at the Russell Library believes so deeply in our mission, I think the panel saw that come across in their review of our programs and offerings."

The Russell Library will receive its award at the annual CLA conference on Thursday April 30 at the Omni Hotel and Conference Center in New Haven.