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Contacts: Chris Boivin, 904-630-7595

Cell: (904) 759-5643, cboivin@coj.net

Olga Bayer, 904-630-2353, OBayer@coj.net

JPL NAMED 'LIBRARY OF YEAR' BY FLORIDA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Annual Award Recognizes Outstanding Service to Community

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., May 11, 2017 — Among a field of more than 800 libraries in Florida, including public, academic, special and school libraries, the Jacksonville Public Library has been named the 2017 Library of the Year by the Florida Library Association. The award, which recognizes a library that has demonstrated outstanding service to the community it serves, comes on the heels of the American Library Association's announcement that JPL Director Barbara Gubbin earned the 2017 Ernest A. DiMattia, Jr. Award for Innovation and Service to Community and Profession. The Jacksonville Public Library was presented with the Library of the Year award May 10 during the FLA Annual Conference in Orlando. The Ernest A. DiMattia Award will be presented at the ALA Annual Conference in June in Chicago.

Gubbin said the award shows how relevant the library is today in our community. With a focus on priorities for educational success, technology success and economic success, the library's innovative programs have measurable results and help change lives. She credits the efforts of the entire JPL team for winning the the Library of the Year award. "This award is in recognition of our staff and what they do every day to make us a great library," Gubbin said. "It is recognition of their dedication and talent."

The award recognizes Jacksonville Public Library for many initiatives that impact the community in positive ways, including the Duval County Public School Student Card expansion, Project LEAP (Library Enhanced Access Program), Career Online High School for adult learners, and a new Jax Makerspace for community hands-on creation and collaboration. Through determined library leadership and fierce advocacy efforts, the library gained additional funding to restore hours—and provide more services—to more people throughout the city.

With a goal to ensure that all Duval County Public School students have public library cards and direct access to library resources, the library expanded its Student Card initiative for the 2016 – 2017 school year to provide virtual student library cards for nearly 130,000 DCPS students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The expansion resulted out of the library's successful 2015 pilot program that initially provided virtual library cards to 60,000 DCPS students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Adult learners are given an opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma through the Career Online High School at the library's Center for Adult Learning. Now in its second year at JPL, COHS boasts the first graduate in the state; 23 graduates who have earned diplomas and career certifications; and 85 students in progress. Through Project LEAP (Library Enhanced Access Program), a Jax Journey funded anti-crime initiative, the library partnered with community organizations to take early literacy, digital literacy, and adult literacy programs into neighborhoods with the greatest needs. LEAP had more than 6,500 participants in its first year, and the program continues into 2017.

With a focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), the library kicked off a 25,000 square-foot Makerspace where the community can explore, collaborate and create everything from art to robotics. Turn It UP! Thursdays turn up the fun with programs that run the gamut from

cooking demonstrations to martial arts classes. The library also offers hundreds of technology classes including 3-D printing, web design, coding and more. Two Comic Cons drew more than 2,400 people, and more than 1,000 young adults attended the library's Young Adult Job Fair.

The library is planning to celebrate the Library of the Year award in the upcoming months. More information will be posted on the library's website at www.jaxpubliclibrary.org, in other library publications, and in all library locations.

Florida Library Association and Library of Year Award

The Florida Library Association is a statewide organization that promotes excellence in Florida libraries by advocating strongly for libraries and providing high quality professional and leadership development for a diverse community of library staff, volunteers, and supporters. The award was open to all libraries in the State of Florida including but not limited to academic, public, special and school libraries. Libraries were evaluated on criteria that included significant expansion or enhancement of a service; demonstration of significant creativity and innovation in programming; and exceptional leadership in implementing programs that can be emulated by other libraries.

About the Jacksonville Public Library

The mission of the Jacksonville Public Library is to enrich lives, build community and foster success by bringing people, information and ideas together. Last year, more than 3.4 million visits were made to Jacksonville Public Libraries, items were checked out more than 5.7 million times, and over 13,000 programs and services were offered to Duval County residents at the Main Library and 20 branch locations. For more information about the Jacksonville Public Library, call 630-BOOK (2665) or visit jaxpubliclibrary.org.

Images from Library of the Year Award Presentation – May 10, 2017 at FLA Conference:

Library of the Year Award.png

BOLT Chair Ronnie King and Library Director Barbara Gubbin with Library of the Year Award.png

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303 Laura St. N.
Jacksonville, Florida 32202
630-2665

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