For Immediate Release

Harford County Public Library Foundation
Raises More Than $100,000 Net at 19th Annual Gala

Funds raised will benefit the Rolling Reader, an outreach vehicle that provides access to Library resources to the county’s most vulnerable youth

Belcamp, Md., November 21, 2023-- Harford County Public Library Foundation’s 19th annual gala, “SpyBall: Secrets in the Stacks,” raised more than $100,000 net the evening of November 4 at the Abingdon Library. Proceeds from the gala will benefit the Rolling Reader, an outreach vehicle that serves the county’s most vulnerable youth by providing access to Library resources.

The theme, “SpyBall: Secrets in the Stacks,” celebrated the 70th anniversary of Ian Fleming’s James Bond novels. In the spirit of the suave and sophisticated 007, the SpyBall transported more than 650 guests to a glamorous world of mystery and intrigue with mouthwatering cuisine and an imaginative drink menu by Evolved Catering and Events. The evening also showcased musical entertainment by the Klassix, a mock casino, a jewelry raffle courtesy of Saxon’s Diamond Centers, an escape room and more.

The silent auction featured a variety of exclusive, unique and one-of-a-kind experiences including an open cockpit tour of Harford County in a vintage biplane with photographer Edwin Remsberg; a street naming in the town of Bel Air; a catered dinner for six by Evolved Hospitality Group; and a Sagamore Spirit tour and tasting experience. The silent auction also provided getaways to New York, Montana, Ocean City and Great Wolf Lodge; a children’s birthday party in the Library plus a variety of artistic treasures including legendary African American artist David Driskell’s woodcut titled "Mask and Urban Man”; a Vincenti decoy; a locavore dinner for six with Master Chef John Shields at Gertrude’s Chesapeake Kitchen; packages from MaGerk’s on a Roll, Kona Ice and Village Mobile Bistro food trucks; a crab feast complete with Yeti cooler from Madonna Seafood Restaurant; a Gramophone surround sound system; a mini Aston Martin for children; and more.

In addition, a “raise the paddle” fundraising initiative was led by WJZ-TV’s Kristy Breslin and Harford County’s Register of Wills Derek Hopkins. Steve Linkous, president and CEO of
Harford Mutual Insurance Group, kicked off the fundraising by committing to match bids up to $10,000.

“Harford Mutual Insurance Group was founded in 1842 on the principles of mutuality,” said Linkous. “Donating these funds to support the Rolling Reader exemplifies the company’s commitment to the community and shows that mutual success is achieved when we help each other thrive.”

Keene Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram, the Society of Italian American Businessmen and many individual donors contributed to the match, raising $20,000.

“Our 19th Annual Library Gala, SpyBall: Secrets in the Stacks, was an unforgettable evening. I am so grateful to the Gala Committee, sponsors, guests and Library staff for being part of this magical night,” said Mary Hastler, CEO of Harford County Public Library. “Thanks to our generous supporters, we are close to our goal to replace the Rolling Reader, which provides critical resources to the county’s most vulnerable youth.”

The current Rolling Reader is 23 years old and travels to communities that don’t have easy access to transportation. The Rolling Reader helps children develop a love of reading and learning and assists with school readiness. In the first half of 2023, the Rolling Reader offered 458 programs to more than 10,000 people, and over 22,000 books were checked out. The Rolling Reader is in need of significant repairs, and the funds raised by the gala will go toward replacing the well-loved community outreach vehicle.

The Gala’s Presenting Sponsors were ThinkBig Networks, Richardson’s Flowers & Gifts and Saxon’s Diamond Centers.

Headlining Sponsors were Absolute Investigative Fingerprinting and Security Services; Bel Air Friends of HCPL; Cassella; The Daily Record; Freedom Federal Credit Union; The Highlands School; Huether-McClelland Foundation; #stayINLINE a barre studio; The Kelly Group; Klein's ShopRite; Lynch Design|Build; M&T Bank; and Rainbow Restoration.

Premier Sponsors were ACER Exhibit & Events; APGFCU; Kristy Breslin; Coffee Coffee; Comcast; DiPaula Law; FASTSIGNS; Gramophone; Derek Hopkins; Harford County Trash Services; Harford Mutual Insurance Group; iCare Medical Transport; Jim’s BottleWorks; Keene Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, Ram; Kiddie Academy; Evolved Hospitality Group; Steve and Sandi Linkous; Market Street Brewery; Maryland Brew Tours; Nature’s Care & Wellness; NVS Bridal & Beauty; NVS Merle Norman; #NoFilter; Pairings Bistro; PNC Bank; Reflected Images Custom Detailing; Skylight Creative Ideas; Jon & Liz Shimaitis; Tar Heel Construction Group LLC; Thompson’s Moving Inc.; Tropical Smoothie Café; University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health; and WebIXI.

Supporting Sponsors were Dr. William and Carol Allen; Brightview Senior Living; Broom’s Bloom Dairy; Campion Insurance, Inc.; Chesapeake Employer’s Insurance Company; DXI Construction, Inc.; Emerald Custom Builders, Inc.; Jeff and Jean Foulk; Frederick Ward Associates; Gemcraft Homes; Greater Harford Committee; Green Valley Growers, LLC; Guido Piccinini & Sons; Harford Community College; Harford County Chamber of Commerce; Mary and Mark Hastler; Jones Advisory, LLC; Library Furniture International; The Liriodendron Mansion; Madonna Seafood Restaurant; Nagle & Zaller – A Community Association Law Firm;
SpyBall was a huge success! We asked the community for support for the Rolling Reader, and they responded with tremendous enthusiasm and generosity. We are very close to reaching our goal to replace the Rolling Reader thanks to our amazing sponsors, auction donors, partners, volunteers and attendees,” said Amber Shrodes, director of philanthropy and community engagement for Harford County Public Library.

Mark your calendar now for the 20th annual gala on Saturday, October 26, 2024. Tickets go on sale in August and will be available at eveninginthestacks.org.

The Harford County Public Library Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization that raises funds to augment the financial resources of Harford County Public Library and to promote awareness of its services.

Harford County Public Library operates 11 branches located throughout Harford County offering access to ideas that inform, entertain and inspire. Last year the Library interacted with its residents more than 12 million times – borrowing free materials, visiting branches and the website, using free WiFi, and attending classes and events. In 2023 Harford County Public Library received Graphic Design USA’s American Inhouse Design Award™ for graphic excellence, the third time in five years. For more information, visit HCPLonline.org.

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