



NEWS RELEASE

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LOCAL GIRL SCOUT COMPLETES HER GOLD AWARD WITH WORK AT LIBRARY

(Belcamp, Maryland – November 25, 2014) Girl Scout, Kelsey Almes, with Troop 234, partnered with the Abingdon branch of the Harford County Public Library to develop an autism awareness program for elementary-age children plus to raise money to support the Harford County Public Library's initiative to serve the autism community. With this project, Kelsey was able to complete her Gold Award, the highest achievement in Girl Scouting for the Girl Scouts of America.

Kelsey attended the Library's Sensory Story Time program, a program designed for children ages 2 ½ -8 who have sensory integration challenges or who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. During the school year 2013/2014 Kelsey observed several of these programs presented by children's librarians Margaret Polischek and Karen Hagerman, and she was able to participate and to interact with the children and family members. In March, Kelsey co-presented a Sensory Story Time featuring the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?*. Kelsey created the program herself, including a simple craft to compliment the book presented.

"Kelsey has been an Abingdon customer since the branch opened 10 years ago and was a Summer Reading volunteer for many years. We are so proud of her and were honored to be a part of helping her achieve her Gold Award," explained Lisa Mittman, Branch Manager.

From her experience, Kelsey decided to donate the money she raised to purchase special software to support the Abingdon Library's Sensory Story Time program. The software, *Boardmaker*, will enable staff to create valuable print materials like communication boards, program sequences and schedules with Picture Communication Symbols™ (PCS) for use during sensory story time programs.

For more information about the Sensory Story Time at Harford County Public Library please contact the Abingdon Library at 410 638 3990 or go to HCPLonline.org.

Harford County Public Library operates eleven branches located throughout Harford County, Maryland. The library serves over 191,000 registered borrowers of all ages and has an annual circulation of over 4.1 million. Harford County Public Library is committed to connecting people with information and promoting the love of reading within the community.

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Photo caption #1: Kelsey Almes donates \$500 to Harford County Public Library as part of her Girl Scout Life achievement award. Pictured from left to right: Alex Allman, Board of Trustees Chair; Margaret Polischeck, Children's Librarian; Kelsey Almes, Girl Scout; Mary Hastler, CEO, Harford County Public Library; Lisa Mittman, Abingdon Branch Manager.