

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY AND WALMART
UNMASK SUPERHERO ACTION FIGURE KITS**

(Belcamp, Maryland- June 17, 2015) -- Here they come to save the day! Sponsored by Walmart, the Harford County Public Library is proud to announce the addition of Superhero Action Figure Kits. Children will have the opportunity to borrow a Superhero Kit which includes a 12 inch superhero figure -- you can choose from Batman, Captain America, Falcon, Hulk, Iron Man, Superman, Thor, Wolverine, Armored Spider-Man and Ultimate Spider-Man! – books featuring the superhero, and a journal to record a story about your adventures together. The Superhero Kits, which will be launched at the Summer Reading Program kickoff on Monday, June 22nd, come neatly packed in a backpack to carry home!

“The Superhero Action Figure Kits have been a dream for some time,” stated Mary Hastler, CEO of the Harford County Public Library. “Walmart helped make it happen and it is a perfect complement to this summer’s reading program ‘Every Hero Has A Story’”.

“Harford County Public Library’s Summer Reading Program gets bigger and better every year,” said Nina Albert, Director, Public Affairs and Government Relations at Walmart. “We are pleased to have a hand in encouraging boys and girls to read and to play by giving them their favorite superhero action figures! We look forward to another year of this program bringing joy and excitement to thousands of children throughout the county.”

The Superhero Action Figure Kits are joining the very popular American Girl Doll Kits launched in October 2013 which are currently available at the Library. The Superhero Action Figure Program will be a great addition to the Library's resources helping girls and boys develop their literacy skills through fun play. And it is perfect timing to introduce these Superhero Action Figure Kits as research shows that children who read during the summer maintain their reading level and are better prepared for school in the fall. After all, we know that reading is an extraordinary super-power!

The Summer Reading program, which runs June 22-August 22, is geared for children from birth to high school to encourage continued learning that inspires a lifetime love of reading. Kickoff activities take place on Monday, June 22nd at the Abingdon Library from 10 a.m. to noon and at the Whiteford Library from 2 to 5 p.m. The Abingdon kickoff will feature special guests wearing superhero costumes and "Touch a Truck," where children can get up close to police cars, fire trucks and other community hero vehicles. Also expected is an appearance by Tales, the library mascot, and the Innovation Lab will be open for use. The Summer Reading Program kickoff continues later in the day at the Whiteford Library at 2 p.m. Children are encouraged to bring a picture of their favorite hero to go on the Hero Wall.

Children may sign up for the Summer Reading Program beginning June 22 at any of the 11 Harford County Public Library branches or online at hcplonline.org. Program completion is based on the ages of the children who register. Babies from birth through pre-K are encouraged to read or listen to 25 books. Elementary school participants are asked to read 10 books, and middle and high school students are asked to read three books.

Beginning July 6, every child who completes the program will receive a ticket voucher to an Aberdeen IronBirds game. Children through middle school will also receive an age-appropriate book selected by Harford County Public Library librarians. High school students who complete the program will receive a \$10 gift card from Wegmans. In addition, the public elementary, middle and high schools with the highest percentage of completers win a trophy.

More information may be found at hcplonline.org or by picking up a copy of the *Headlines & Happenings* newsletter at any of the library's branches.

Harford County Public Library operates 11 branches located throughout the county. The library serves more than 191,000 registered borrowers of all ages and has an annual circulation of more than 4.1 million. Harford County Public Library is committed to connecting people with information and promoting the love of reading within the community.

The Harford County Public Library Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization established to raise funds to augment the financial resources of the Harford County Public Library and to promote awareness of its services. For more information call 410-273-5601 x2283.

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Photo caption #1: Harford County Public Library introduces ten Superhero Action Figure Kits just in time for its Summer Reading Program "Every Hero Has A Story."

Photo caption #2: Superhero Action Figure Kit featuring Iron Man.