



Media Release – for immediate release

Date: September 6, 2018

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**Howard County Library System**  
**Urban Libraries Council Recognizes Howard County**  
**Library System for Innovation in Customer Experience**

*New DIY Education Center Demonstrates the  
Irreplaceability of the library as a Community Institution*

ELLICOT CITY, MD – The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) today announced Howard County Library System as an Innovations Initiative awardee during its 2018 ULC Annual Forum Awards Ceremony in Baltimore. A panel of expert judges selected Howard County Library System’s DIY Education Center for recognition as Honorable Mention in the Customer Experience category.

“Our DIY Education Center taps into the growing DIY industry and inspires students of all ages to actively participate, customize, and experiment on projects. The community has enthusiastically embraced our DIY collection and classes, putting us at the forefront of this movement to collaborate and innovate,” said Tonya Kennon, HCLS President and CEO.

The DIY Education Center opened in March 2018 as the HCLS Elkridge Branch was being transformed from a drab 23-year-old antiquated 15,000 square foot facility to a bright, spacious 35,000 square foot community gathering place. In making its selection ULC noted that the Center “nurtures the basic human desire to create, enhance, and push limits through access to tools and classes in three categories—repair and maintain, create, and adventure.” Plans for the Center grew out of dream sessions with community residents who shared ideas about what they wanted to see in the new facility. The HCLS DIY Education Center includes a collection of tools for home projects, classes, and space that provides an opportunity to learn and work together.

“Today’s public libraries are bold and pioneering community leaders that play many roles, from educational institutions to technology centers and entrepreneurial hubs,” said Urban Libraries Council President and CEO Susan Benton. “I congratulate Howard County Library System for illustrating a persistent commitment to realizing a groundbreaking initiative that has transformed their community.

2018 Innovation Award winners were selected from 220 submission in 10 categories, were recognized for their innovative programs, services and operating practices. One winning and one honorable mention selection is chosen in each category. There were 17 submissions in the Customer Experience category. All 2018 ULC Innovations can be viewed at [UrbanLibraries.org](http://UrbanLibraries.org).

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### **About Urban Libraries Council**

Urban Libraries Council (ULC), founded in 1971, is the voice for public libraries and the force that inspires them to evolve. ULC creates the tools, techniques, and ideas to make ongoing improvements and upgrades in services and technology. ULC also speaks loudly and clearly about the value public libraries bring to communities, and secures funding for research that results in the development of new programs and services. And by serving as a forum for library leadership, ULC produces innovative ideas and best practices that ensure community impact.