



WEST CHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –**  
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**Literacy Hero Nominations Encouraged from Community**  
*New Financial Literacy Hero Category Added to Reflect Current Economic Challenges*

**Chester County, PA** – October 20, 2011 – West Chester Public Library calls for community residents to nominate friends, colleagues, neighbors or loved ones who have advanced the cause of literacy in the greater Philadelphia area. The *Call for Nominations* runs from November 1, 2011 through January 15, 2012, and will culminate with the [Seventh Annual Literacy Heroes Breakfast](#), **Friday April 13, 2012 during which recipients will be honored**. Nominations can be submitted at [www.literacyheroes.com](http://www.literacyheroes.com). There is no fee to participate. The breakfast will be emceed by 6abc Action News Reporter **Alicia Vitarelli** and held in the regal ballroom at Longwood Gardens. The event consistently draws record crowds and puts the critical subject of literacy on people’s radars thanks to the coverage it receives.

Back by popular demand, this premier nonprofit event is hosted by West Chester Public Library along with Verizon, Exelon, *6abc Action News* and other leading companies.

Twenty-two percent of Philadelphia adults lack basic literacy skills – the highest in the state, according to WCPL Director **Victoria Dow**. “With roughly 1.1 million adults living in Philadelphia, approximately 250,000 of our neighbors are reading at a ‘below basic’ level. This is clearly an issue that warrants attention and we’re proud to host an event that celebrates some of the local heroes who are doing something to reverse those numbers.”

A total of **eight** categories have been established to recognize literacy heroes, including two new categories for 2012: Financial Literacy and Medical/Health Literacy. Other categories include:

**more...**

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Community Impact Hero, Education Hero, Local Author Hero, Uniformed Service Hero, Technology/Innovation Hero, and Youth Hero. Each aims to recognize a different segment of the population and raise people's awareness about how many individuals in our community still cannot read and write and the tragic outcomes of illiteracy.

“To keep this event current with the times, we are excited to introduce a new Financial Literacy Hero Category in 2012,” said WCPL Board President **Howard Sundwall**. “In today's tough economic environment, it's never been more necessary – or more difficult – to manage personal finances. Our Financial Literacy Hero will be the person or organization that helps the average person understand how to make informed financial decisions. This hero will empower others with knowledge and literacy to navigate the rough financial waters.”

The *Literacy Heroes Awards* originated in 2003 and was the brainchild of several community members who wanted to recognize some of the good deeds occurring every day in our community. Prior winners have included a teenager who built and funded the first public library in a tiny town in Honduras and a father of quadruplets who spent his spare time teaching prison inmates how to read and write. Stories vary in theme but unite in their motivation.

“**Verizon** is proud to join with The West Chester Public Library once again to recognize individuals in our community who have empowered themselves to spark a joy and passion for reading and writing in their lives and in the lives of others,” says **Gale Y. Given**, President, Verizon Pennsylvania, returning Title Sponsor of the event. “We are quite excited to celebrate these role models who give selflessly of themselves to build stronger, healthier communities.”

The *Seventh Annual Literacy Heroes Awards* is supported solely through generous sponsorships and donations from companies and individuals and all funds raised directly support literacy outreach programs offered for free to the community by West Chester Public Library. To nominate a hero, make a donation, or learn more about the event, please visit

[www.literacyheroes.com](http://www.literacyheroes.com), call **610-662.6735**, or email [mbowman@ccls.org](mailto:mbowman@ccls.org).

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