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Author Carl Hiaasen to speak to 600 middle and high school students this Friday
Students each to receive Hiaasen’s new teen fiction novel

COLUMBUS—Author Carl Hiaasen will be the featured speaker for the Columbus Metropolitan Library Foundation’s 23rd annual Celebration of Learning this Friday evening. However, that morning, Hiaasen will speak to approximately 600 local middle and high school students about his career and his writing. Students will also have an opportunity to ask the author questions during a Q-and-A session at the end of the program, and will each receive a copy of his newest teen fiction novel, Skink – No Surrender, thanks to a generous gift by Lynne and Martyn Redgrave. Lunch is also provided to students thanks to generous gifts, including: Davis Family Foundation, Battelle, Nationwide Foundation, Siemer Family Foundation and the Glimcher Family in combination with WP Glimcher.

The program will take place at 10 a.m. this Friday, Oct. 30 at Columbus Metropolitan Library’s Whitehall Branch at 4445 E. Broad St. Members of the media are welcome to attend.

The students will represent nine central Ohio middle and high schools: Africentric Early College, Columbus Downtown High School, Cristo Rey Columbus High School, Dominion Middle School, Independence High School, Marion-Franklin High School, Metro High School, New Albany High School and Walnut Ridge High School.

The student event is made possible, in large part, by Tony Brown, Celebration of Learning committee member and former Independence High School teacher.

Celebration of Learning, the CMLF’s annual fundraiser, is usually held in the atrium and stacks of Main Library. However, with Main Library closed for renovations – expected to be completed in summer 2016 – this year’s gala will be held at CML’s new Whitehall Branch (4445 E. Broad St.), which opened on April 11.

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The annual event features remarks from an acclaimed author and the presentation of The Julian Sinclair Smith Award for Lifelong Learning to a Columbus resident who has demonstrated dedication to reading, education and lifelong learning.

Hiaasen (see photo below) is a bestselling novelist, columnist and investigative reporter.

Born and raised in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Hiaasen attended Emory University and the University of Florida, writing satirical columns for both universities’ student newspapers. After graduating, he reported for Cocoa Today (Cocoa, Florida) for two years before joining the Miami Herald, for which he still currently writes columns.

Hiaasen has written books for kids, teens and adults alike, including Star Island, Hoot, Skink – No Surrender and his newest novel for adults, 2013’s Bad Monkey. His literary style – referred to as “Hiaanesque” – combines wild plot lines, offbeat characters and an affectionate nod to life in South Florida.

He lives with his family in Florida.

Columbus Metropolitan Library has served the people of Franklin County, Ohio for 142 years. With its Main Library and 21 branches, CML is well known for signature services and programs like Homework Help Centers, Reading Buddies, Summer Reading Club and the Ready to Read Corps. The library’s Strategic Plan supports the vision of “a thriving community where wisdom prevails,” which positions CML to respond to areas of urgent need: kids unprepared for kindergarten, third grade reading proficiency, high school graduation, college readiness and employment resources.

CML was named a 2011 National Medal Winner by the Institute for Museum and Library Services for work in community service, the highest honor for libraries and museums. In 2014, Columbus Metropolitan Library became the only large public library in the country to be rated a 5-Star Library for all seven years of Library Journal’s industry standards rating program.

*Following image is available electronically upon request.*