



## CITY OF SAINT PAUL

*Mayor Christopher B. Coleman*

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LibraryAware Community Award  
Library Journal  
123 William St., Suite 802  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to recommend the Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL) for the LibraryAware Community Award.

Education has been one of my highest priorities since I was elected. It is at once my crime prevention, neighborhood development, workforce development, and economic development strategy. SPPL, whose guiding principle is to embed its work in community networks, is central to our education efforts.

SPPL has been integral to the development of Sprockets, our out-of-school network committed to all Saint Paul youth thriving. Sprockets is a collaboration of the City, the school district and community- and faith-based organizations. The Library has been part of the leadership team for Sprockets, and is also a participant, along with over 40 other organizations. It continues to expand its high quality youth-driven learning opportunities, including the opening in 2014 of the Createch Studio and a digital badges pilot project for our youth job corps students at Parks and Libraries.

The Library has also been a leader, along with the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium (SPCLC), on basic digital literacy and workforce skill building. Among other initiatives, the Northstar Digital Literacy Project grew out of a grassroots collaborative convened by the Library and the SPCLC. The Project's on-line assessments are now used by 165 organizations in 23 states, including 17 organizations in Saint Paul.

Achieving racial equity is an overarching initiative for all our work in the City which I have been leading in partnership with our school district and our county. The Library is one of the leader organizations in this effort in part because of their history of innovations in program and workforce to address racial equity and cultural competence. Because SPPL began community-based world language services four years ago, the face of the Library - in the community and in libraries - has changed. Library staff from multiple racial and cultural communities now connect with those communities in dozens of community places, and the staff of the Library been significantly diversified.

The Library's deep connection with community was brought home for me in 2014, when we opened three new or renovated libraries in three very different neighborhoods. The extensive community engagement undertaken by the Library in all three projects from planning to design to opening celebrated the Library's commitment to neighborhood involvement in Saint Paul. In particular, Library and Parks staff tried new and creative approaches in one racially divided neighborhood to connect with voices not heard in our typical community engagement processes. That 50% of the funding for two of the projects came from private fundraising underscores the fundamental connectedness of Library in the community.

The Saint Paul Public Library, at the heart of our achieving our most important goals, couldn't be more deserving of the LibraryAware Community Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher B. Coleman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher B. Coleman  
Mayor