



# *News Release*

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs, 517-241-4395  
Bill DiSessa, Spokesperson, 517-335-6649

## **ORION TOWNSHIP LIBRARY RECEIVES 2015 LIBRARY OF CONGRESS LITERACY AWARD**

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LANSING – The Orion Township Public Library in metro Detroit is winner of the 2015 Library of Congress Literacy Award for helping children learn to read, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) announced today.

“An emphasis on third-grade literacy is part of an MDE and State Board of Education effort to become a Top 10 education state within 10 years,” said State Superintendent Brian Whiston. “So it is important to recognize outstanding efforts in this area.”

At a recent Orion Township Library board of directors meeting, the Michigan Center for the Book (MCB), in conjunction with the National Center for the Book, presented the first-ever such award in Michigan to Debra Refior, the library’s head of Youth Services, and her team. Refior wrote the winning application.

The library won \$500 and a child-friendly tablet device.

The award was open to any public library or friends of a public library group serving elementary school children in Michigan.

MCB Coordinator Edwina Murphy explained, “We wanted to provide the winning library with the tools to help meet the needs of children now. Logically, that would include classic books and electronic content.”

The Orion Township library was selected by peer libraries and MCB affiliates. It edged out other applicants for having consistently excellent programming, a partnership with local schools, and pairing of innovation with technology. A librarian liaison is assigned to each school in its district, and they help to fulfill requests from teachers and students during the school year.

The library’s array of programs includes Literacy Night, and Battle of the Books. The facility strives to maintain a family-friendly atmosphere with a dedicated early literacy area and a children’s iPad bar.

The Library of Congress' Center for the Book was established by law in 1977 to promote books, reading, literacy and libraries, as well as the scholarly study of books. Since its founding, the Center has established affiliate centers in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The MCB is one of 80 Center for the Book reading promotion partners in the USA and abroad. MCB's board of directors is composed of affiliate library members from around the state. Each year the organization provides grants to libraries, takes part in book festivals, and supports Letters about Literature, a school-age writing contest.

“Developing a culture of reading in the state hinges on getting children reading at an early age” said State Librarian and Michigan Notable Book Coordinator Randy Riley. “Public libraries throughout the state are fundamental players in the promotion of reading.”

Follow the MCB on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/MichiganCenterfortheBook>.

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The Library of Michigan – Michigan's official state library agency for more than 175 years – is part of the Michigan Department of Education. To learn more, visit [www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan](http://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan).