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### **“Geek the Library” Campaign Now Available to All U.S. Libraries**

Awareness campaign aims to build support for public library funding across the U.S.

Dublin, Ohio – August 23, 2010 – Geek the Library, a community-based public awareness campaign, is now available for adoption by any U.S. public library. The campaign is designed to highlight the vital role of public libraries in today’s challenging economic environment and to increase local library support. Geek the Library has proven ability to improve public perceptions about local library funding needs in test communities. Details about how libraries can use the campaign to increase local support are available at [www.get.geekthelibrary.org](http://www.get.geekthelibrary.org).

“We conducted a pilot campaign in two library communities last year and we know that an awareness campaign like Geek the Library can positively impact public perceptions of libraries and library funding,” said Cathy De Rosa, global vice president of marketing for OCLC. “People saw Geek the Library out in the community, connected on a personal level and took actions to engage with others to increase support and funding for libraries. The campaign has the potential to increase long-term funding for libraries and we are pleased to be able to make the campaign available to any public library in the United States.”

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, OCLC helped libraries in central Iowa and southern Georgia pilot the campaign from June through December 2009. Nearly 100 libraries and library systems participated. Four additional library communities tested the campaign on a more abbreviated calendar and budget: Milwaukee Public Library in Wisconsin; Piedmont Regional Library System in Georgia (covering Banks, Barrow and Jackson Counties); Shelbyville-Shelby County Public Library in Shelbyville, Indiana; and Zion-Benton Public Library in Zion, Illinois.

“It has made a lot more people aware that the library needs more funding,” noted Patty R. Wilson, branch manager for Glennville Public Library in Glennville, Georgia.

Pilot libraries used the campaign to position the library as a critical asset—for individuals (e.g., to find jobs, re-educate themselves and enhance literacy) and for the community (e.g., access to technology, continued education and economic benefits). The campaign served as a springboard for initiating and expanding relationships with influential members of the community and the media, and for starting important local library funding discussions.

“Libraries adopting the program will benefit from the knowledge gained during the pilots. Combined results from field surveys, one-on-one library meetings, and qualitative and quantitative research indicate awareness and positive shifts in community perceptions,” said De Rosa. “Library leaders can visit [www.get.geekthelibrary.org](http://www.get.geekthelibrary.org) to learn more about the program and how it can benefit their communities. The site explains what the program is, how it works, and the time and resource commitments to implement the programs.”

Interested libraries can register on [www.get.geekthelibrary.org](http://www.get.geekthelibrary.org) for more information about executing the campaign locally. Libraries and library systems that meet minimal commitment requirements for implementing Geek the Library will receive full access to all campaign material and initial campaign training from dedicated field managers. This team will focus on supporting participating libraries through the planning and launch stages, but will provide ongoing guidance, as needed.

“The campaign has been very good for public awareness. We have lots of support from people who say they love the campaign and that continues to be the case,” said Jan Kaiser, marketing manager for Des Moines Public Library in Des Moines, Iowa.

### **About OCLC**

Founded in 1967 and headquartered in Dublin, Ohio, OCLC is a nonprofit library service and research organization that has provided computer-based cataloging, reference, resource sharing, eContent, preservation, library management and Web services to 72,000 libraries in 171 countries and territories. OCLC and its member libraries worldwide have created and maintain WorldCat, the world’s richest online resource for finding library materials. Search WorldCat.org on the Web at [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org).

OCLC advocacy programs are part of a long-term initiative to champion libraries to increase their visibility and viability within their communities. Programs include advertising and marketing materials to reinforce the idea of the library as relevant, and market research reports that identify and communicate trends of importance to the library profession. For more information, visit [www.oclc.org](http://www.oclc.org).

### **About Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. Learn more at [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org).

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