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For Immediate Release

Community Provides Outpouring of Support During Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's First Public Town Hall Meeting

(PITTSBURGH, July 17, 2009) – More than 150 community members attended a town hall meeting yesterday to express their concerns about library funding and service. Meeting attendees responded to a brief presentation by the Library's President and Director, Dr. Barbara K. Mistick and Board Chair, Jacqui Fiske Lazo, which focused on the institution's \$6.1 million projected budget shortfall by 2014. It was clear from the comments that most attendees were unaware that founder Andrew Carnegie did not provide money to the Library for its long-term operation.

During the 90-minute meeting, the Library sought input about ways to bridge the gap between funding and expenses. Suggestions ranged from asking the City of Pittsburgh to contribute more than \$40,000 a year to developing a dedicated library endowment. Community members spoke strongly against closing neighborhood branch locations, reaffirming that Pittsburgh's libraries are community resources and social centers for all citizens. Stating that libraries offer one of the best returns on their investment, attendees agreed that their tax money would be better spent for free resources such as libraries, than for many other programs local and state tax revenue currently supports.

Additional town hall meetings, facilitated by representatives from the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh, are scheduled for Saturday, July 18 (10 am) at Carrick High School and Tuesday, July 21 (7 pm) at CCAC-Allegheny Campus, SSC Auditorium. Customers unable to attend a town hall meeting are able to provide input through the Library's Web site www.carnegielibrary.org. Detailed information about the Library's financial situation and a link to the online discussion page can be found at www.carnegielibrary.org/future.

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About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

To Engage our Community in Literacy and Learning

Established as a public trust in 1895, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serves the citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County with a distinguished history of leadership among the country's great public libraries. Through its 19 neighborhood locations, including Main Library and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region's most visited asset, with 2.6 million visitors in 2008. Each year the Library provides valuable resources, programs, classes and training opportunities that engage the community in literacy, and life-long learning.

About Libraries for LIFE

Sustaining our Future

In 2009 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh began a community dialogue to engage the region's citizens in a community process to protect the long-term sustainability of the City's library system.