

Guests at Night in the Stacks having fun supporting Chicago Public Library and Foundation. Photo Credit: Tarji Smedley

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CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

BOOKMARK

At this year's Night in the Stacks we looked at Chicago – Then, Now and Tomorrow

Cracker Jack. America's first blood bank. The Ferris Wheel. A handful of seemingly unrelated inventions all hail from the "City of Big Shoulders"—our Chicago. This year's third annual Night in the Stacks was held at the Harold Washington Library Center Winter Garden on April 8, 2016. The Foundation's Junior Board along with 400 guests celebrated what was made in Chicago - and what will be made here in the future.

Thanks to the creative team at HMR, the Winter Garden was transformed into a

"mini Chicago" complete with a Chicago Theatre sign. The neighborhoods of Wrigleyville, Chinatown, Pilsen and Greektown were on display in both décor and food. Guests enjoyed delicious neighborhood-inspired fare from Jewell Events Catering.

Library fans sipped cocktails from spirits provided by Loews Chicago Hotel and Jim Beam, mocktails made with Bai Bubbles, and Chicago-brewed beers from Revolution Brewing. DJ Edwin Konzept helped the lively crowd on the dance floor show off their best

dance moves.

From technology to manufacturing, Night in the Stacks celebrated the innovations that started here. Chicago Public Library's renowned Maker Lab even made an appearance, giving guests a "first touch" experience with advanced manufacturing. Opened in 2013, the Maker Lab debuted as Chicago's first free and publicly accessible maker lab, featuring workshops in 3D printing and other digital technology tools.

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2016 Night in the Stacks By the Numbers

Our Made in Chicago theme drew over 400 guests

Junior Board raised \$167,000 for Library Foundation & Library programs

Teens launch Lit Fest and Declare their Love of Literature

When it comes to teenagers' reading styles, there are a lot of assumptions out there. If you Google, "teenagers and reading", the top search results link to articles such as "Why Aren't Kids Reading Like They Used To?" In fact, a 2014 study by Common Sense Media showed that 33% of 13-year-olds and 45% of 17-year-olds read for pleasure only once or twice a year. Well, a group of Chicago teens disagree. And they're going to prove it.

On April 15th and 16th, the Harold Washington Library and Columbia College will be full of teenage performers, poets and teens who just like to read. The inaugural ChiTeen Lit Fest is Chicago's first for-teens-by-teens literary festival. The Lit Fest was created through YOUmedia, Chicago Public Library's innovative program for teens.

"[The goal of the event] is to spread the word and celebrate the fact that teens actually like reading," said 15-year-old Iris Hastrup, a member of the Teen Advisory Committee which is in charge of planning ChiTeen Lit Fest.

"The Chicago Teen Lit Fest seeks to bring together young people from across Chicago and celebrate their talents as they express themselves through exceptional and honest art,"

according to the Lit Fest website, which was also created by teens. When asking Iris who she wants to see at the Fest, she replied, "All teens from all over the city"

A preview event for the ChiTeen Lit Fest was held on March 24th at the Chicago Poetry Foundation. The event included performances by Alex Peitryk, Kai Wright, Isaiah Flores and Kuumba Lynx Performance Ensemble. It also included a panel discussion with three writers who will be headlining at the Lit Fest - Che "Rhymefest" Smith, Erika L. Sanchez and Ben Tanzer - along with Iyanu Ogbara of the Teen Branding Team and Cristina Cass of the Teen Advisory Council.

"At 16, if I had this, I would be on the moon right now!" declared Che Smith at the preview event. "You (to the ChiTeen Lit Fest performers) are the promise of what 16 could've been for me. And when you're my age, you're going to change the world."

The preview was just a sampling of what the Teen Advisory Committee has organized for the festival. The three-day event includes a kick-off party on Friday, April 15 with food, a live DJ, photos, and live interviews. Saturday and Sunday, April 16 and 17, teens will participate in panels, workshops, and



activities such as *Storytelling in Gaming* and *Get It Covered: Publishing Your Work*.

ChiTeen Lit Fest is free. All teens ages 14 – 18 are welcome. The event will take place at Harold Washington Library Center and Columbia College. For more information on ChiTeen Lit Fest, visit chiteenlitfest.org. Per Sarah Alshukni of the Teen Advisory Committee, "It's going to be 'lit'".

The ChiTeen Lit Fest is brought to you by Chicago Public Library, Columbia College Chicago, Poetry Foundation, UIC-College of Education, After School Matters, Center for College Access and Success, with sponsorship from Allstate, Jewel Catering, Chicago Tribune, and Kuumba Lynx.

The event is supported by the Chicago Public Library Foundation and the Hive Chicago Fund for Connected Learning at the Chicago Community Trust.

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"We are thrilled by the popularity of Night in the Stacks, and thankful to our Junior Board members for organizing such a successful event," says Rhona Frazin, President & CEO of the Chicago Public Library Foundation.

As with previous years, tickets to Night in the Stacks sold out. This year's event raised \$167,000 with proceeds benefitting the Chicago Public Library Foundation and innovative Library programs like the Maker Lab,

CyberNavigators and Teacher in the Library.

The revelry at Night in the Stacks was made possible thanks to the generosity of presenting sponsors BMO Harris Bank, BlackEdge Capital, and Jewell Events Catering.

Additional sponsors of the event include: The Sidley Austin Foundation, Advanced Resources, Bob & Susan Wislow/CBRE and SocialLife Chicago.

Additional support came from Ernst & Young, Jones Day, HMR, Linda Filler, TBS, Inc., U.S. Foods, The Donnelley Foundation, Leonard Goodman, Paul Dysktra & Spark Cremin, Clarity Partners, Hamilton Video Production, Jesser Ravid Jason Basso and Farber, Katz & Stefani, KPMG, Linda Johnson Rice, Opternative, Revolution Brewing, RPM Advertising, RR Donnelley, and Sound Investment.

From YOUmedia to HBO: The Story of Brandon Towns

High school student and budding videographer Brandon Towns has been awarded \$5,000 from HBO's "Everyday Heroes" program to go toward a nonprofit of his choice. His chosen recipient? The Chicago Public Library Foundation, with the funds designated to YOUmedia.

"I really had no idea I was recommended until I got a call from HBO saying that I won," Brandon recalled.

A student at King College Prep Academy, a magnet academy of Chicago Public Schools, Brandon has been making movies since he was 10. He visits YOUmedia nearly every day to help hone his skills and build his portfolio.

Jeremy Dunn, Director of Teen Services at CPL, notes that Brandon is a typical YOUmedia user in some ways and atypical in others. "[Brandon] exemplifies the epitome of an individual leveraging the opportunities [offered by YOUmedia]. He has become so accomplished that even before graduating high school he is starting to operate as a professional. This is the direct result of the skills he's gained and connections he's made with the help of a trained YOUmedia mentor," notes Jeremy

One of the greatest assets YOUmedia provided Brandon - and provides teens at all of its 12 locations - is free and open access to professional-grade tools and software systems. YOUmedia is fortunate to have industry-standard design software, such as Adobe Suite, professional grade photography equipment, hobbyist-grade 3D printers, and even a recording studio with sound equipment.

Brandon started visiting YOUmedia in 2013, when he was just a freshman in high school. "That was a rough year for me," he said. "[YOUmedia] really helped me get out of a slump and express myself as an artist."



YOUmedia is so popular with teens that many of them are willing to travel considerable distances to get there. According to a 2013 study conducted by the Consortium for Chicago School Research, about half of the students who visit YOUmedia live more than five miles from Harold Washington Library Center, which houses the oldest, and largest, YOUmedia program. The study also found that 88% of YOUmedia users attend Chicago Public Schools, and about one-third of those are students at selective enrollment high schools.

Jeremy Dunn reports that the YOUmedia staff team had several conversations with Brandon about the best use of this fantastic donation. After much deliberation they finally settled on photography equipment, including a professional grade green screen, lighting and specialized lenses, which will be available for YOUmedia participants to use.

"The big message here is that there are endless opportunities available for kids to explore their interests and discover new skills. It's all about



finding ways to express themselves while developing a skill set," said Jeremy.

Brandon prepared the following thank-you speech for a recognition event at YOUmedia:

"Thank you, YOUmedia, for changing my life and giving me the opportunity of becoming the person I am today. Specifically, thank you to the YOUmedia team: Jennifer Steele, Avri Coleman, Jeff Lassahn, Taylor Bayless,

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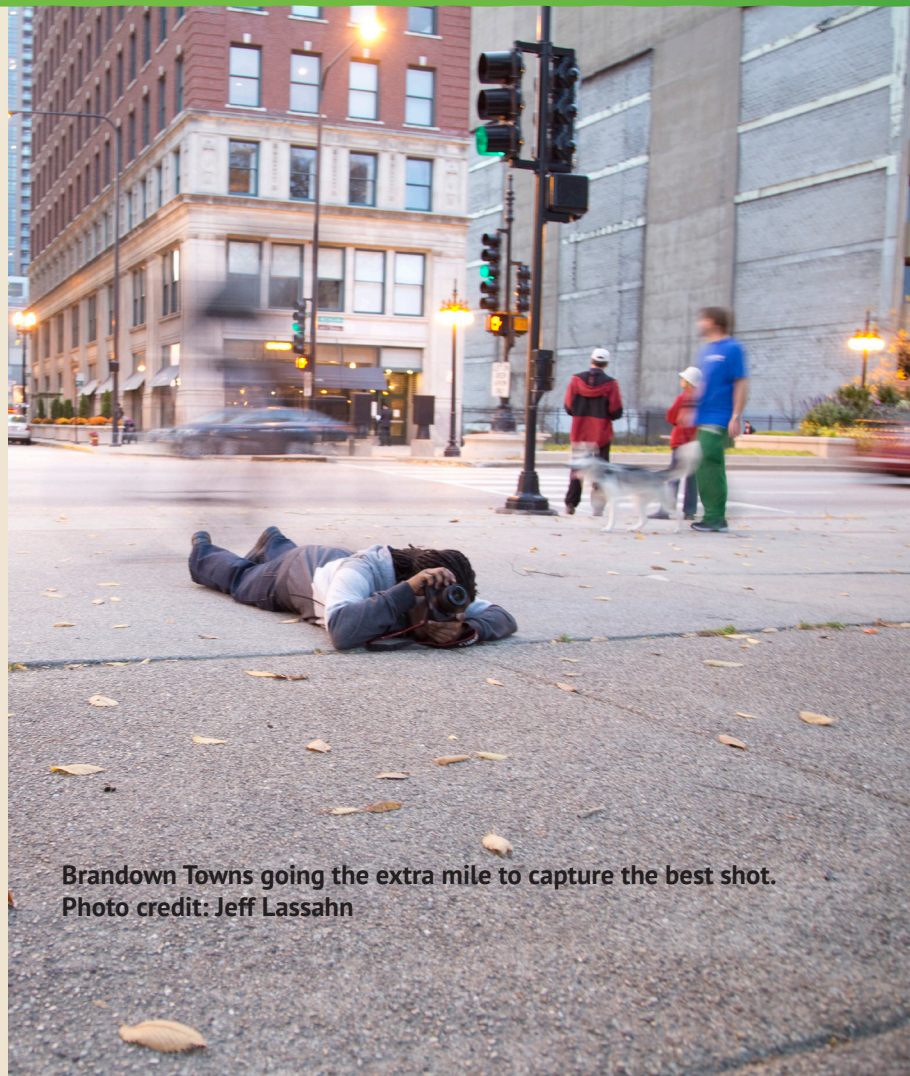
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From YOUmedia to HBO: The Story of Brandon Towns

Marshall Caal, Matt Jensen, Adrienne Strock, Marcus Lumpkin, Marcellous Lovelace and the late Brother Mike Hawkins.”

Chicago Public Library Foundation is deeply grateful for both Brandon’s unexpected gift, and for the many years of generous funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, whose support has made YOUmedia possible from the very beginning.

Currently sponsored as well by Allstate Insurance Company, YOUmedia has benefitted from past support from Boeing, Motorola Solutions Foundation, Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, Pearson Foundation and the Albert Pick, Jr. Endowment Fund and the Kathy and Grant Pick Fund at the Chicago Public Library Foundation. The City of Chicago has provided generous funding for YOUmedia expansion and staffing.



**Brandon Towns going the extra mile to capture the best shot.
Photo credit: Jeff Lassahn**