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## Winners Announced in 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Berks County Public Libraries Virtual Awards Celebration

*For immediate release*—On February 1, Berks County Public Libraries honored leadership and service excellence during its 19<sup>th</sup> annual awards celebration, this year held virtually on Microsoft Teams. The event marked the first time since early 2020 that members of the Berks County library community were able to recognize individuals and organizations for their support and contributions to public libraries in Berks County.

“While we had hoped to hold this year’s awards in person, the current COVID-19 situation caused us to shift to a virtual format,” said Amy Resh, system administrator for Berks County Public Libraries.

After canceling the previous awards ceremony due to the pandemic’s winter surge, event organizers were determined to resume the annual awards regardless of venue. 41 total nominations were received in categories such as Outstanding Local Business, Trustee of the Year, and the Chet Hagan Memorial Public Relations Award, among others. The Berks County Public Libraries Advisory Board considered nominations from either of the last two years and announced the category winners during the ceremony.

“The pandemic may have caused us to cancel the 2020 awards, it didn’t stop libraries from achieving great accomplishments that year,” stated Resh. “We wanted to recognize and honor some of the outstanding individuals who helped serve our community during the height of the pandemic.”

The awards served as a testament to the strength and unrelenting commitment from those who helped keep library services operational over the last two years.

The award recipients from the 19<sup>th</sup> annual awards celebration are as follows:

- Dreisbach Award for Exemplary Service — Jennifer Smilko, former administrative assistant for the Berks County Public Library System
- Linda Baer Friend of the Year — Jean Davis, Fleetwood Area Public Library
- Trustee of the Year — Paul Hoh, Reading Public Library
- Outstanding Community Organization — Exeter Township Public Works Department
- Outstanding Local Business — Boscov's Department Store, LLC
- Outstanding Elected Official — Leesport Borough Council
- Outstanding Library Director — Natasha Donaldson, Mifflin Community Library
- Outstanding Library Staff Member — Stacy Laucks, Fleetwood Area Public Library
- Outstanding Fundraising Effort — Country Cruise, Kutztown Community Library
- Outstanding Program — StoryWalk, Boyertown Community Library
- Chet Hagan Memorial Public Relations Award — Kutztown Community Library
- Certificate of Merit — Sylvia Shaner, Muhlenberg Community Library volunteer

For more information about each award and this year's recipients, please visit our website at [www.berkslibraries.org/19th-annual-awards](http://www.berkslibraries.org/19th-annual-awards).

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*For more information and for photo requests, please contact Emily Orischak at (610) 378-5260 ext. 2504 or [emily.orischak@berks.lib.pa.us](mailto:emily.orischak@berks.lib.pa.us).*

**About the Berks County Library Systems:** The Berks County Public Library (BCPL) System is a department of the County of Berks, serving 411,442 county residents across 866 square miles and 72 municipalities since 1986. Through the support of the Berks County commissioners, BCPL staff aids in strengthening the Berks County community by providing centralized support for the 19 full-service member libraries and four branches. For more information, please visit [www.berkslibraries.org](http://www.berkslibraries.org).