FERGUSON LIBRARY CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL PROJECT TO RE-ENVISION PUBLIC LIBRARIES

STAMFORD, September 22, 2015 – As part of a nationwide effort to re-envision public libraries in the 21st century, The Ferguson Library has been selected to participate in a pilot project to understand the library’s role in the community, how the library engages with the public and how it can best meet the needs of its constituents in the years to come.

The project was developed by the Aspen Institute, an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, D.C. It grew out of a 2014 report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, available for download at [http://as.pn/libraries](http://as.pn/libraries). The pilot project includes 23 library systems of varying sizes, which serve diverse populations around the United States.

“This is an exciting opportunity to move the library forward as a center of learning, creativity and innovation for the 21st century,” said Alice Knapp, President of The Ferguson Library. “In our digitally connected and interdependent society, libraries have emerged as vital learning institutions and engines for individual and
community development. This project will help us learn how best to engage with the community as it decides what it wants its public library to be.”

“We are indebted to our pilot participants,” said Amy Garmer, Director of the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries. “The involvement of these public libraries is so important as we move forward with our goal of helping public libraries to engage more deeply with their communities and inspire action to re-envision public libraries as key partners in all aspects of community life in the digital age.”

The pilot is designed to take place over 10 weeks and librarians can opt for a structured process or a self-paced initiative. Ferguson staff will examine different aspects of public service each week, including jobs and economic development, library as literacy champion and engaging community leaders.

The pilot will conclude in mid-November, and feedback from librarians and library directors will be incorporated in the final action guide and web site that will launch in early winter.