The Ferguson Library and Aspen Institute
Explore American Values and Identity in Unique National Project

STAMFORD, September 2, 2016 — What are the ten things every American should know? The Ferguson Library is one of seven libraries nationwide selected to take part in an important national program this fall to investigate this question of American civic and cultural identity.

“What Every American Should Know,” a project of the Aspen Institute’s Citizenship and American Identity Program, explores how this country can cultivate a sense of shared destiny and common civic purpose in this age of increasing diversity and widening inequality. The program is collecting a crowd-sourced national list of terms and references every American should know in order to be civically and culturally literate. Individuals can submit top 10 lists of what they think every American should know at www.WhatEveryAmericanShouldKnow.org. All submissions are then combined in an aggregated national list.

“Now more than ever, a diversifying U.S. needs a shared base of knowledge,” says executive director of the Citizenship and American Identity Program, Eric Liu. “But a 21st century sense of civic and cultural literacy must be as intentionally inclusive as possible.”
“We are honored to be part of this important project, which has both a national and local scope,” says Alice Knapp, President of The Ferguson Library. “Stamford’s diversity is one of its strengths, and it will be fascinating to explore what our community feels are the most important things Americans should know in 2016.”

The Ferguson Library will host a series of programs this fall as part of the project, culminating with a public dialogue on October 26.

**An Evening with Ari Berman, author of Give Us the Ballot**
Wednesday, September 14 at 7 p.m.
Main Library, Third Floor Auditorium
In this groundbreaking narrative history of the Voting Rights Act, political reporter Ari Berman charts both the transformation of American democracy under the Voting Rights Act and the counterrevolution that has sought to limit voting rights, from 1965 to the present day. Co-sponsored by the Stamford League of Women Voters.

**An Evening with Lauren Leader-Chivée, author of Crossing the Thinnest Line**
Thursday, October 6 at 7 p.m.
Main Library, Third Floor Auditorium
Issues of race, gender, difference and identity are at the heart of our most challenging and intractable battles as a nation. Author Lauren Leader-Chivée tackles why diversity is our most important, yet undervalued, national asset and argues for how we can do better. Co-sponsored by the Stamford League of Women Voters.

**Get in the Way: The Journey of John Lewis**
Thursday, October 13 at 6 p.m.
Main Library, Third Floor Auditorium
Screening of new documentary about civil rights icon John Lewis. *Get in the Way*, directed by Kathleen Dowdey, is the first biographical film about Lewis, a respected U.S. congressman and elder statesman who continues to practice nonviolence in his determined fight for justice. The film is a riveting portrayal of Lewis’ personal journey of courage, searing disappointments and hard-won triumphs over the decades as he inspired others to stand up and Get in the Way.
p.m. reception, followed by film and Q & A. Co-sponsored by the Urban League of Southern Connecticut and 100 Black Men.

**Public Dialogue**
Wednesday, October 26 at 6:30 p.m.
Main Library Third Floor Auditorium
Community discussion to bring this national conversation to a local level and to collect these ideas in an aggregated list of What Every American Should Know. Panelists include Stamford Mayor David Martin; Earl Kim, Superintendent of Stamford Public Schools; Michael Hyman, Executive Director of Chester Addison Community Center; Wendy Skratt, President of the League of Women Voters of Stamford; and Anka Badurina, PhD, Skills Development Director, Neighbors Link Stamford.

**The Ferguson Library** is Stamford’s public library system, consisting of the Main Library, DiMattia Building; the Harry Bennett Branch; the Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch; the South End Branch and a traveling Bookmobile. It provides free and equal access to information, ideas, books and technology to educate and enrich the Stamford community.

**The Aspen Institute** is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. It also has offices in New York City and an international network of partners. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).