



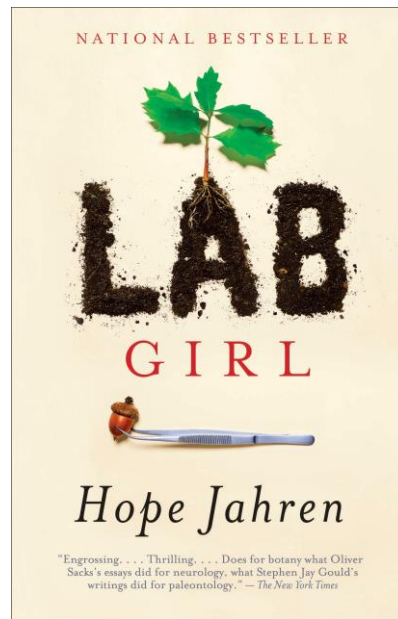
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Erin Sullivan, Public Relations Administrator
407-835-7480
sullivan.erin@ocls.info

Orange County Library System one of 84 organizations nationwide to receive a National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grant

Orange County Library System to Read and Celebrate Lab Girl Spring 2021



NEABig Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest

October 16, 2020—Orange County Library System is a recipient of a grant of \$15,000 to host the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read in Orange County, Florida. An Arts Endowment initiative in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our

communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. Orange County Library System is one of 84 nonprofit organizations selected to receive an NEA Big Read grant to support a community reading program between September 2020 and June 2021. The NEA Big Read in Orange County will focus on *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren, and activities will take place during Spring 2021.

“We have become even more aware this year of the important ways the arts help us connect with others, and how they bring meaning, joy, and comfort to our lives,” said Mary Anne Carter, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “By bringing the NEA Big Read to Orange County, Florida, The Orange County Library System will provide opportunities for deep discussion and ways to help us better understand one another.”

The NEA Big Read offers a range of titles that reflect different voices and perspectives, aiming to inspire conversation and discovery. The main feature of the initiative is a grants program, managed by Arts Midwest, which annually supports dynamic community reading programs, each designed around a single National Endowment for the Arts Big Read selection.

“We are honored to continue our partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts on this incredible program,” said Torrie Allen, president & CEO of Arts Midwest. “For more than 14 years this national effort has invested in communities as they gather to discuss the stories and ideas that connect us to one another. We are especially inspired by the projects and organizations that are finding new, virtual ways of creating those connections with their communities and are thrilled to support them at this critical time.”

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,600 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$22 million to organizations nationwide. Over the past thirteen years, grantees have leveraged more than \$50 million in local funding to support their NEA Big Read programs. More than 5.7 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, approximately 91,000 volunteers have participated at the local level, and 39,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible.

For more information about the NEA Big Read, including book and author information, podcasts, and videos, visit arts.gov/neabigread.

LEARN. GROW. CONNECT.

####

About the National Endowment for the Arts

*Established by Congress in 1965, the **National Endowment for the Arts** is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit arts.gov to learn more.*

Arts Midwest promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 35 years. For more information, please visit artsmidwest.org.