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Community Read Will Educate and Inspire

Porchlight and the Madison Public Library team up for a Community Read of the *The Soloist: A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship and the Redemptive Power of Music* by Steve Lopez

Porchlight joins forces with the Madison Public Library to present a Community Read of *The Soloist: A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship and the Redemptive Power of Music* by Steve Lopez. *The Soloist* is the remarkable story of the bond between a journalist and a mentally ill, homeless, classically trained musician in Los Angeles.

The Soloist is an engaging read which illuminates the problems faced by mentally ill homeless people and those who are working to support them. Porchlight has partnered with the Madison Public Library for the Community Read in order to educate people on the complex issues of mental health and homelessness.

This Community Read celebrates the launch of Madison Cares, an initiative from Porchlight to raise funds to build housing and provide services for homeless people with mental illness.

"*The Soloist* is a great read" says Porchlight executive director Steve Schooler. "More importantly, the main characters, Nathaniel and Steve, help us understand the intertwined issues of homelessness and mental health and inspire us to care more about the people who live in our midst."

Liz Amundson, Madison Public Library Librarian says "When Porchlight recommended this book, I knew then that they were giving their stamp of approval... saying that this man's experience in Los Angeles is unique, yet universal. So often in book group discussions, readers wonder whether the situation presented in the book is accurate, or whether it is similar to our local experience. Madisonians are already interested in this book, as it is well known and widely praised. Now we can go to the next level of engagement by discussing it, and the issues it raises, as a community."

The Soloist is available both as a book and as a major motion picture starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jamie Foxx. Community members can get involved by either reading or viewing *The Soloist*. Porchlight and Madison Public Library have developed an online Community Read Tool Kit that is available to all book clubs and individuals. Members of the community are invited to read the book or see the movie, and join a discussion—either at home with friends or via the library's events.

In addition to checking out the book or movie from the library, community members can join library sponsored discussion groups at 6 different locations, check out book discussion kits to use with their book clubs, and come to a public screening of the movie. A full list of Library events can be found on the libraries' webpage and at the end of this release.

More information can be found online at:

www.porchlightinc.org/soloist

www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/calendar/soloist.html

About Porchlight

Porchlight provides emergency shelter, food, employment services, counseling, and affordable transitional and permanent housing to homeless people in the Dane County area. Porchlight's services are designed to foster independence and the transition into permanent housing and employment. For more information visit: www.porchlightinc.org

Madison Public Library Events for the Community Read of *The Soloist* by Steve Lopez

Book Discussions:

South Madison Branch

2222 S. Park St. 266-6395

April 17th 1:30PM

Pinney Branch

204 Cottage Grove Rd. 224-7170

May 25th 7PM

Meadowridge Branch

5740 Raymond Rd. 288-6160

June 2nd 6:30PM

Central Library

201 W. Mifflin St. 266-6350

July 14th 7PM

Hawthorne Branch

2707 E. Washington Ave. 246-4548

July 21st 6PM

Film Showing with Porchlight-Led Discussion Afterward:

Alicia Ashman Branch

733 North High Point Road 824-1780

May 14th 6:30 pm

Madison Public Library schedule of events for *The Soloist* Community Read is also available online:

www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/calendar/soloist.html

Community Read Tool Kit and information on the Madison Cares campaign is available online at:

www.porchlightinc.org/soloist