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**Norfolk Public Library awarded the RADM Ben Hacker Literacy Leadership
Award for Exemplary Program Achievement in Early Literacy**

Norfolk, VA (September 24, 2007) In recognition for exemplary program achievement in early literacy, the Norfolk Public Library was awarded the 2007 RADM Ben Hacker Literacy Leadership Award at the Literacy Partnership Annual Meeting on September 20, 2007. NPL was chosen for this award based on the multi-pronged approach it has taken in starting a family-driven literacy effort. “The variety and scope of the programming the Norfolk Public Library has developed to help families be stewards of their children’s development is awe-inspiring, innovative, and has placed the Norfolk Public Library as a steward and partner of the educational system in the City of Norfolk,” stated Denise Schnitzer, chairwoman for The Literacy Partnership, in the award letter sent to Library Director Norman Maas. During the annual meeting, Maas accepted the award on behalf of NPL and recognized the staff of the Youth Services department by thanking them for their hard work and dedication to supporting and promoting early literacy.

The Literacy Partnership was formed in 2000 to develop research and partnerships that facilitate measurable impacts on literacy rates for the City of Norfolk and Hampton Roads. The organization’s mission is to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of literacy resources throughout Hampton Roads, promote the awareness of literacy programs regionally, and advocate for economic growth in Hampton Roads through a literate workforce. Rear Adm. (ret.) Ben Hacker was a key leader in the development of the Literacy Partnership and continually sought ways to expand the reach of literacy resources for the community. In his spirit, the RADM Ben Hacker Literacy Leadership Award was created to recognize the contributions of individuals, programs, and businesses that move forward the goal of becoming a fully literate society.

The Norfolk Public Library’s early literacy initiative was strengthened in the Fall of 2005 when the Library became the first Family Place Library in Virginia. Family Place Libraries expand the traditional role of children’s services by becoming centers for early childhood information, parent education, early literacy, socialization, and family support. Family Place

programs are designed to help parents get their children ready to read and ready to learn by age six.

Since 2005 NPL has seen a significant increase in the number of families and young children using the library. NPL offers five dynamic Early Literacy programs: Babygarten, 1-2-3 Grow With Me, Alpha Seeds, Reading Rockets, and Motherread. Each program includes information on the six early literacy skills (Letter Knowledge, Print Awareness, Narrative Skills, Vocabulary, Print Motivation, and Phonological Awareness) that every child needs to get ready to read. In conjunction with these programs, NPL has created interactive Kidzones, which are Early Childhood Learning Environments where parents can engage in early literacy activities and connect with their children through play. Kidzones are where play, reading, and learning connect to help get children ready to read and to assist parents in becoming their child's first and best teacher.

For more information about early literacy programs at the Norfolk Public Library, please contact the Youth Services Department at 757-664-7323, ext. 43748, or go to our website at www.npl.lib.va.us.

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About Norfolk Public Library: The Norfolk Public Library offers equal opportunity access to information, books, programs, and online resources to meet the needs of our diverse community for life-long learning. The library system consists of one main library, 10 branch libraries, 1 anchor branch library, and a Bookmobile and Treasure Truck. Visit www.npl.lib.va.us or call us at (757) 664-READ for more information. *NPL- Creating a City of Readers.*