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## **D.C. PUBLIC LIBRARY UNVEILS NEW BLACK STUDIES CENTER**

*Idearc Media and the American Library Association to be  
Honored for Impressive Upgrades to African-American Studies Collection*

WASHINGTON -- The District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) today announced that it will recognize the American Library Association (ALA) and Idearc Media for giving the former Black Studies Division of the historic Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library (MLKML) its first aesthetic upgrades since the library first opened in 1972. On Sunday, Oct. 28, at 2 p.m., DCPL invites the public to celebrate the recent "Extreme Library Makeover" of this division and its new name, the "Black Studies Center."

"The special collections in Washingtoniana, the Black Studies Center and the Children's Book Illustrator Collection are really our precious gems at MLKML," said Pamela Stovall, associate director at the historic site. "We began trying to improve the conditions in Black Studies; first with the renovation of the office and some new furniture. This gift from the ALA and Idearc Media supported our mission of transforming the space." The DCPL was the second of three public libraries in the United States selected to receive Idearc's grant and volunteer support.

According to the ALA, Idearc Media, home to Superpages.com® and the Verizon Yellow Pages®, is the first corporation in the country to address a longstanding issue facing public libraries—a lack of funding and volunteers to upgrade facilities and bookshelves. Idearc Media contributed a \$20,000 grant and the help of 88 employee volunteers to renovate the Black Studies Center. The effort is part of the year-long Idearc Media American Library Association Reading Renovation Volunteer Project.

Volunteers reorganized and cleaned the 35,000 volume special collection of African American literature, materials and shelves. They also put together display cases, chairs and tables for a new reading area with computers and rare books. The grant funded the installation of end-of-stack decorative panels featuring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglas, Marian Anderson, Thurgood Marshall and other African American heroes. The Library funded installation of new light fixtures. The goal of the project at MLKML was to make the space in Black Studies more inviting to teens and young people, the center's target audience. Idearc Media graphic artists contributed original designs for the background panels of three large display boards, one of which celebrates the extraordinary lives of the Tuskegee Airmen.

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“We’re very excited about the transformation because the Center is now a better place to study, read, and do research” said Alice Robinson, manager of the Black Studies Center. “Finally we are getting some attention and I’m very happy to see it.”

A permanent exhibit dedicated to the Tuskegee Airmen will also be showcased in the hallway in front of the new Black Studies Center.

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Idearc Media supports literacy programs in communities where their employees live and work. With the nation’s capital being one of its largest business markets, the company made a request to the American Library Association to do a project in the District.