

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Two writers are better than one **Metro Edmonton Libraries announce new Writers in Residence**

EDMONTON, AB, December 9, 2012 – Local writers welcomed the Edmonton area’s two new Writers in Residence at Jocelyn Brown’s final event as the Edmonton Public Library (EPL) Writer in Residence.

Along with University of Alberta Writer in Residence Marina Endicott, Brown introduced Omar Mouallem and Natasha Deen as the 2013 Metro Edmonton Federation of Libraries Writers in Residence.

As the EPL Metro Edmonton Writer in Residence, Mouallem will be based at the downtown Stanley A. Milner Library, where he will support aspiring and established writers through individual manuscript consultations, public readings and talks, information on the publishing process and connections to Edmonton’s writing community. An award-winning creative nonfiction writer, he has contributed to some of Canada’s top publications including *The Globe and Mail*, *Alberta Venture*, *enRoute* and *Eighteen Bridges*. Most recently, Mouallem was an associate editor at *Avenue* magazine and has released three hip hop rap albums under the moniker A.O.K.

“I am thrilled about my new role and the opportunity to help writers develop their ideas and manuscripts,” said Mouallem. “Through my music, creative writing and journalism, I’ve met young people in the inner city with artistic aspirations, so I’m looking forward to continuing down that path at the library.”

Deen is multi-published author whose novella *What Happens in Vegas* won the 2012 International Digital Book Award. Her novel *Ethan’s Chase* was nominated for a 2008 CAPA Award for excellence in romance. She has worked as a writing instructor with the Young Alberta Book Society, Edmonton Public Library, Metro Continuing Education, WordsWorth Writing Camp, Writers Guild of Alberta and YouthWrite. Deen will spend four months at the St. Albert Public Library, four months with the Strathcona County Library and two months at the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library.

“Excited doesn’t even begin to describe how I feel about being the Regional Writer in Residence!” said Deen. “I hope to create a safe, welcoming environment where writers can share their work and ask questions to help them learn and excel in both the artistic and business sides of the writing field.”

Spread the words.

The Metro Edmonton Federation of Libraries is made up of four libraries – Edmonton Public Library, St. Albert Public Library, Fort Saskatchewan Public Library and Strathcona County Library – that collaborate on programs, projects and events.

“The Writer in Residence program is a great example of how the public libraries in the Edmonton area are working together to enhance our customer service,” said Pilar Martinez, EPL Executive Director of Public Services. “By collaborating on programs, events and staff training, we share best practices and learn from each other.”

Libraries in the Federation have shared methods to help customers learn to use eReaders and download eBooks, and supported the Edmonton International Literary Festival (LitFest) by contributing ideas and hosting events at their venues.

“The Writer in Residence program is just the beginning for us,” said Lori Purvis, Community Librarian with Strathcona County Library. “We’re excited about exchanging ideas, sharing expertise that each library brings and discovering other ways we can work together.”

Both Writers in Residence will begin their terms on January 3, 2013.

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About the Edmonton Public Library

The Edmonton Public Library (EPL) carries everything you care about. We are Edmonton's largest lender of all manner of information and entertainment. Our professionally trained staff take you beyond Google with the knowledge, discernment and desire to help you navigate a universe of information. The second most visited place in Edmonton, every year we host over 14 million in-branch and online visits across our 17 branches and website. We deliver our incredible content to you everywhere - in the library, at home or on your handheld device. Unmatched access and unrivalled value - that is today's EPL.

Spread the words. www.epl.ca

About the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library

The Fort Saskatchewan Public Library serves the reading and research needs of adults and children through its print and electronic collections, and the wide range of programming and services offered. The Library is currently undergoing an important transformation as work continues on a 6,000 sq. ft. expansion, which is expected to open in mid-2013. Watch for larger collections, more computers, more study space and more social areas for library users of all ages. Together, with community members, we are “Building a Better Future.” www.fspl.ca

About the St. Albert Public Library

St. Albert Public Library is a vital part of the community, consistently rated as one of the key strengths of the city. It is a place where people learn, meet and share ideas, and enjoy leisure time. Community is at the core of St. Albert Public Library, working to improve citizens' lives through core services focused on learning, leisure and community life - the Library cultivates community, as important for what it does, as for what it has. About 300,000 people visit in-person each year and almost as many visit our website. One of the busiest mid-sized libraries in Canada, and the most visited place in downtown St. Albert, patrons borrow almost 900,000 items annually and attend close to 1,000 programs. www.sapl.ab.ca

About Strathcona County Library

Strathcona County Library is located in the heart of Sherwood Park but serves the entire Strathcona County, an area of 1265 square km, through the services of a Bookmobile and a partnership with Fort Saskatchewan Public Library. In Nov 2010, we opened the doors to our newest home in the Strathcona County Community Centre. Spread out over 64,000 square feet on two floors, our main branch houses a 200,000+ collection that includes books, ebooks, audiobooks, DVDs, CDs, newspapers, magazines and databases. We also host several hundred programs each year, ranging from early literacy development with infants to travel insurance for seniors. Strathcona County Library – your place for literacy, learning and leisure. www.sclibrary.ab.ca

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