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**CITY OF ASYLUM/PITTSBURGH RECEIVES CITF GRANT
\$250,000 for Alphabet City Literary Center**

Pittsburgh, PA — June 26, 2013: The **Allegheny County Economic Development, Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund** granted \$250,000 to **City of Asylum/Pittsburgh**. The grant, which is the maximum awarded by CITF, was made for machinery and equipment for **Alphabet City**, City of Asylum/Pittsburgh's new literary center. Alphabet City is the anchor tenant in the **Garden Theater Block of the Federal-North Redevelopment** project, and it will be located in the former Masonic Temple at 12 W. North Avenue.

Co-founder and President of City of Asylum/Pittsburgh Henry Reese stated, "We are grateful to the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County for facilitating our project with this grant. We expect Alphabet City to create more than 30 jobs, both temporary and ongoing, with projects ranging from construction and installation to operation and management." He added, "The CITF grant can be used both for major mechanical systems such as HVAC, and also for IT and broadcast systems. This is an exciting prospect for us: It means that our programs can be made available to a wide audience, and that puts Pittsburgh on the map in a special way."

State Senator Wayne Fontana commented via email, "City of Asylum Pittsburgh has served the region as a first rate literary organization for years. I welcome their expansion and the development of the Alphabet City literary center in the North side Garden Theater Block of my Senatorial District. This project will be an important development catalyst for our city's Northside neighborhood."

Reese cited years of dedicated work on the part of Senator Jim Ferlo in moving the Federal-North redevelopment forward. "In 2007, Senator Ferlo made a public pledge to Northsiders that he never forgot, saying, 'We have two unbelievable institutions right down the street at Federal North: the Garden Theater and the Masonic Temple...We will make sure that we return those two major buildings into cultural institutions, not only for the Northside but for our whole region and our whole nation,'" Reese recalled, adding, "We are thrilled to be part of realizing that vision."

On learning of the CITF grant to City of Asylum/Pittsburgh, **Senator Ferlo** stated "It has been a dream come true watching the reemergence of Federal North. I am proud to be a part of this vital economic development, and I believe that we can continue to attract the best and brightest to our City through programs like the ones City of

Asylum/Pittsburgh offers. This project unites some of the initiatives I am most passionate about: economic development, the arts, and community revitalization.”

Alphabet City will be a key resource for writers and readers throughout the Pittsburgh region as well as a lively community social space. The size and location of Alphabet City are well-suited to sustainable community development: *Beyond Attendance*, a report of the National Endowment of the Arts, posits that successful cultural facilities in the future will be locally-based, discipline-specific regional hubs: “New construction of large, centrally-located arts complexes may give way to a decentralized approach to facility development (e.g., creativity centers scattered around a city or region, one focused on dance, another on digital arts, etc.), enlivening neighborhoods and engaging children and families in creative activities that will strengthen social bonds and family cohesion.”

City of Asylum/Pittsburgh has gained national acclaim for “excellent programming, socially progressive real estate development, and the ability to provide creative and economic sustenance in a community” (MetLife Foundation, when it presented City of Asylum/Pittsburgh with its Innovative Spaces award, one of only six presented in 2010). The Ford Foundation selected Alphabet City as one of 12 “exceptional examples of how art can reinvigorate a neighborhood” (out of almost 700 organizations evaluated in its Space for Change national competition).

About City of Asylum/Pittsburgh

Founded in 2004, **City of Asylum/Pittsburgh** creates a vibrant community of writers, readers and neighbors. Through writer residencies, publications, and literary programs, City of Asylum impacts people on our street, in our city, and around the world. We publish *Sampsonia Way* magazine, the online journal of free speech, literature and justice, which serves a growing global online community. City of Asylum/Pittsburgh is a model for arts-based community development, bringing writers, readers and neighbors together through literature and cultural exchange.

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