



Mechanics' Hall
News Release
Embargoed February 9th, 2021

**MECHANICS' HALL ANNOUNCES "SHARE THE LOVE,"
a free membership program for Portland Public School staff members.**

Portland, Maine: Mechanics' Hall, in partnership with the Foundation for Portland Public Schools, has announced a new initiative to provide free membership to all Portland Public School staff. Called "Share the Love", the program gives any staff member who chooses to participate a free one-year membership, which includes access to the organization's borrowing library, events, and educational programs.

"The past 12 months have been some of the most difficult for our community. And still, many - including Mechanics' - have experienced incredible generosity, showing us how fortunate we are here in Portland, Maine," said Executive Director Annie Leahy. "The kindness shown to us by members, patrons, and new friends has been tremendous. Even in this tough economic climate for non-profits, we wanted to find a way to share that and give back. As the parent of two elementary-age children, I've seen up close what our teachers, administrators, school nurses, and more have done and continue to do for our students, families, and community each day. It's nothing short of astounding. We hope this program offers a small respite."

Launching February 9th, Mechanics' Hall will offer free, one-year individual memberships to Portland Public School staff - teachers, administrators, nurses, social workers, ed techs, custodial staff, and more. Sign up is available at mainemechanics.org/sharethelove until April 30th and will be good for one year from the signup date.

Mechanics' Hall is partnering with the Foundation for Portland Public Schools to ensure that all Portland Public School system staff members are aware of and will have access to this program.

"Over the last few weeks, I've had the privilege of joining meetings at schools across the district to hear first hand about teachers' experiences," said Andi Weisman Summers, Executive Director of the Foundation for Portland Public Schools. "I'm thrilled to help Mechanics' Hall make their generous offer a reality and provide PPS staff with access to a restorative, vibrant community resource as a gesture of acknowledgment of their hard work and dedication."

"There's such a natural affinity between libraries and schools, and I'm so grateful that we can give back in this way to our educators," said Julie Olson, Mechanics' Hall Librarian. "This has been an incredibly tough year for everyone, and this is our way of saying thank you, and we are here for you. Mechanics' Hall is a Portland treasure, and we're excited to be able to share that with our community partners."

Membership at Mechanics' Hall will give PPS staff borrowing privileges from their extensive library collection, access to materials through their curbside pickup program, free admission to all of Mechanics' Hall ticketed programs (currently all virtual), including their partnership programs with the Membership Library Group, author talks, and panels on contemporary and historical issues, and restorative events, including virtual visits to artist studios, book clubs, and craft programs.

Recent book acquisitions available for curbside pick up/borrowing include Barack Obama's *A Promised Land*, Susan Conley's *Landslide*, Peter Guralnick's *Looking to Get Lost*, Jenna Rainey's *Everyday Watercolor*, and many more.

Upcoming programs include a conversation with writer and professor Michelle Duster on the life and legacy of Ida B. Wells (February 11th), studio talks with Portland artist and muralist Ryan Adams on February 24th, and pastry chef Briana Holt on March 31st,

ABOUT MECHANICS' HALL: Mechanics' Hall is committed to the innovative vision of our founders, the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association: to make knowledge, ideas, and arts accessible. We engage our community through cultural events, educational programs, and affordable instruction. We are stewards of a landmark building that houses the 8th oldest membership library in the country and a grand ballroom. We continue to guide the historic preservation of the Hall as a place to gather, celebrate, and learn.

More information available at mainemechanics.org and mainemechanics.org/sharethelove

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