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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Cecil County Public Library Wins State-level Customer Service Award**

On Wednesday, May 8, Cecil County Public Library was awarded the inaugural Maryland Library Association President's Customer Service Award. The award was bestowed upon Cecil County Public Library and its Small Business Information Center for its far-reaching impact in the greater community. The award was inspired by the library's work with a local business that is saving lives world-wide, Operative Experience, Inc., of Elkton, Maryland.

After retiring from a successful surgical career, Dr. Buckman visited the Cecil County Public Library's Small Business Information Center for help and guidance on the key steps to starting a business. In the ensuing years, he started Operative Experience, Inc., and began production of innovative surgical teaching simulators to save wounded soldiers in the field.

While developing his business, Dr. Buckman's wife Marie, an avid library user, borrowed an audiobook called Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide, by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. The book documents the risks of childbirth in third world countries and oppression of women worldwide. Mrs. Buckman was so inspired she challenged her husband to develop a humanitarian application for his teaching simulators. Dr. Buckman and his company responded by creating teaching simulators to train healthcare providers in underserved areas to perform emergency cesarean sections. The simulators were so revolutionary that the company was selected as one of nineteen seed grant recipients in the international *Saving Lives at Birth* grand challenge competition in 2011.

Operative Experience, Inc. clients now include the US Army and Air Force Special Operations Commands, and its partners include USAID and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In a recent interview, Dr. and Mrs. Buckman charted the beginning of their company from visits to the Cecil County Public Library Small Business Information Center, and proceeded with a discussion of Operative Experience's work in Tanzania where he is working to apply his life-saving technology to help women in childbirth.

Operative Experience, Inc. is just one of many businesses and entrepreneurs that seek guidance at the Cecil County Public Library and its Small Business Information Center. “Our mission is to promote individual and community success,” stated Denise Davis, CCPL Director. “We know that librarians are uniquely qualified to offer reliable business data and research right in the community—and customers trust and respect librarians. The Buckmans, and all our customers, truly inspire us with their innovation and achievements!”

Since 2003, CCPL’s Small Business Information Center has worked with aspiring and experienced entrepreneurs to establish and grow their businesses. CCPL’s Small Business Information Center was recognized at the county and state level in 2011 and 2012 respectively, by the Cecil County and Maryland State Chambers, with the Non-Profit Partner in Business Awards. CCPL is the only library to ever win either of these awards.

**The Cecil County Public Library** operates seven branches located throughout Cecil County, MD. The library serves over 50,000 registered borrowers. The mission of the Cecil County Public Library is to provide access to educational and cultural resources for all and to promote individual and community success.

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