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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMART Receives Walt Morey Young Readers Literary Legacy Award

Portland, Ore. – Literary Arts has named SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) the recipient of the 2017 Walt Morey Young Readers Literary Legacy Award. The award is presented to a person or organization in recognition of significant contributions that have enriched Oregon’s young readers.

“Walt Morey knew that reading is a gateway to new experiences, opportunities, and promising futures. In so many ways, SMART embodies the spirit of the Walter Morey Young Readers Literary Legacy Award,” says Oregon author Elizabeth Rusch. “As a children’s book author, a reader, a parent, and a community member, my dream for the children of Oregon is to have access to books, to have magical experiences with books, and to learn to love books. SMART makes that happen every school year for thousands of students across the state.”

This year, SMART is celebrating its 25th year of pairing adult volunteers with Oregon students for one-on-one reading time and access to books to keep and read with their families. In that time, SMART has engaged 125,000 community volunteers to read one-on-one with over 188,000 students. SMART has also given children over 2.4 million books to keep and read with their families.

“In the past 25 years, volunteers across our state have spent nearly 4 million hours developing a love of reading in Oregon’s youngest residents,” says Chris Otis, SMART Executive Director. “As we celebrate this important milestone, we are deeply honored that Literary Arts selected SMART as the recipient of the Walt Morey Young Readers Literary Legacy Award.”

SMART will be recognized at the 30th annual Oregon Book Awards ceremony on Monday, April 24 at the Gerding Theater at the Armory in Portland.

About SMART (Start Making A Reader Today)®

SMART is a statewide nonprofit organization that envisions an Oregon where every child can read and is empowered to succeed. SMART engages community volunteers to read one-on-one with PreK through third-grade children, helping strengthen literacy skills and encourage a love of reading. Children in the program receive 14 new books throughout the school year to keep and read with their families. Since 1992, SMART has paired over 118,000 volunteers to read with 188,000 children, and has put 2.4 million books in the homes of the children we serve. Visit www.getSMARToregon.org or call 971-634-1634 to learn more.

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