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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Metropolitan Transportation Authority Announces Launch of Third Annual 'Subway Reads' Promotion

Program Offers Free E-Books, Celebrates Wi-Fi and Cell Connectivity in all 281 Underground Subway Stations

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Transit Wireless and Literacy Partners today announced the launch of the third annual "Subway Reads" campaign, a special six-week joint promotion to provide e-short stories, poems, essays and extensive excerpts from full-length books for riders to enjoy on their commutes. Subway Reads celebrates the availability of free wireless connectivity in all underground subway stations, the historic relationship between riding the subway and reading, and the important work that Literacy Partners does throughout New York City to advance family reading.

Starting today, MTA customers in underground subway stations can connect to free Transit Wireless WiFi™ through their network settings, and click on the subwayreads.org prompt to start reading.

This year's campaign also includes a social media selfie competition in which subway riders can win prizes by using the hashtag #SubwayReads.

"With Literacy Partners on board and 13 publishers providing access to some really great reads, our third annual celebration of reading in the subway is set to be the best ever," said MTA Chairman Joseph J. Lhota. "I am thankful that our friends at Transit Wireless made this celebration possible, and for keeping our customers connected while they ride. Literacy Partners should be commended for the great work they do, as should the publishers who have shared so much wonderful material for our customers to read."

Essays and Stories

For this year's Subway Reads campaign, Literacy Partners has teamed up with 13 publishers to provide full-length short stories, essays, and poems, including *The Comforts of Home* from *The Complete Short Stories of Flannery O'Connor* from Macmillan; *The Alienable Rights of Women*, an essay from *Bad Feminist* from HarperCollins; and *Everybody Wraps Meat in Flatbread*, an essay from *You and I Eat the Same* from Workman Publishing; *Gay MacDougall: An Oral History* from *Lighting the Fires of Freedom: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement* by Dr. Janet Dewart Bell from The New Press.

Poetry

Included are Walt Whitman's classic poem, *Song of Myself*, courtesy of Penguin Random House, and selected poems from *The Best of Poetry in Motion* from WW Norton & Company were also included. The latter celebrates the [MTA's long-running poetry series](#). Included in that collection are poems from Claude McKay, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Robert Hayden, Langston Hughes, Nina Cassian, Major Jackson, John Keats, Stanley Kunitz, Patrick Phillips, Ntozake Shange, W.B. Yeats, and others. The inclusion of these works coincides with the [New York Transit Museum's Poetry in Motion at 25](#) exhibit, currently on display at Grand Central Terminal through October 28. The exhibit features a broad range of the original Poetry in Motion car cards that have appeared in the New York City Transit system over the last 25 years.

Excerpts

The Subway Reads program also includes excerpts from more than 200 books. Participating publishers include Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins Publishers, Harvard Business Review, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Random House, Phaidon Press, ProLiteracy, Simon & Schuster, The New Press, Workman Publishing Company, World Education, W.W. Norton & Company. Excerpts from a wide array of genres and styles are available, including fiction, nonfiction, poems, and essays about New York, sports, social justice, travel, immigration and more.

"We're thrilled to be able to offer our customers free e-reads for the third year in a row, and we're delighted to be working with Literacy Partners for this year's program," said MTA Managing Director Veronique "Ronnie" Hakim. "Literacy Partners makes reading a family affair by working with underserved parents to develop literacy and language skills, and then by helping those same parents boost their children's early reading and school readiness. Introducing the entire family to the power of the written word opens up new worlds of possibility for both generations."

"As New York City's premier reading promotion organization, Literacy Partners is thrilled to be working with the city's leading publishers, an amazing group of authors, the MTA, and Transit Wireless to host this summer's 'Subway Reads' campaign and bring the joy of reading to millions of commuters," said Anthony Tassi, Chief Executive Officer, Literacy Partners. "Reading brings people together and opens the world to them. With short samples from best-selling books on a wide array of topics from Girl Power to Immigrant Stories to Sports to Food, and even easy-to-read stories for the many New Yorkers of all ages who are learning to read, there is truly something for everyone."

"Literature should be accessible to all. The Subway Reads program offers reading entertainment which is a great way to end the summer break and start the school year," said Melinda White, CEO of Transit Wireless. "We're proud to work with Literacy Partners in continuing this annual tradition with the MTA."

"Subway Reads is a fun way to give our customers access to a wonderful collection of essays, short stories and poems, while at the same time

celebrating the work we've done to keep our customers connected," said Andy Byford, President of MTA New York City Transit.

Past Campaigns

This year's Subway Reads campaign builds on the MTA's successful 2017 campaign with the New York Public Library, which gave customers access to a wide range of titles, as well as a 2016 promotion with founding partner Penguin Random House, which gave subway customers the opportunity to read free short stories and novel excerpts from a wide range of Penguin Random House titles. Earlier this summer, Grand Central Terminal and Penguin Random House launched Grand Central Reads, which celebrated connectivity in Grand Central Terminal.

#SubwayReads Social Media Contest

Transit Wireless will be running a social media selfie contest in tandem with the "Subway Reads" campaign. Subway riders can submit photos of themselves near in-station posters, then tag @TransitWireless and @LitPartners and use the hashtag #SubwayReads on Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram for a chance to win prizes. The contest runs from August 21 – September 27 and prizes will be awarded every two weeks. Prize packages include Kindle Paperwhites and book bundles from the publishing partners.

Underground Connectivity

The construction of the Wi-Fi and public safety network began in 2011 with the connection of six underground stations in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood, and was slated for completion in 2018. However, at the direction of Governor Andrew Cuomo, the process was accelerated, with Wi-Fi connectivity and cell service made available in all underground subway stations by January 2017.

About Transit Wireless and Transit Wireless WiFi™

Transit Wireless was selected by the MTA to finance, design, build, operate, and maintain a shared wireless infrastructure in all underground stations of the New York City subway system, providing commercial services for AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon Wireless. As a result of this public-private partnership and Transit Wireless' \$350 million investment, the network was built at no cost to taxpayers or subway customers. The company's wireless network operates on all primary licensed cellular bands, public unlicensed bands, and the 4.9 GHz public safety band, and supports consumer, business, and transit communications services. The Transit Wireless WiFi™ network was recognized as the "Best Wi-Fi Deployment to Connect the Unconnected in an Urban Environment" by Wireless Broadband Alliance, a 2018 Honorable Mention in the MTA's Genius Transit Challenge and was a 2018 IDC Digital Equity and Accessibility Winner. Transit Wireless' quality management system is ISO 9001:2015 certified by American Global Standards LLC.

Find out more about Transit Wireless at transitwireless.com.

About Literacy Partners

Literacy Partners strengthens families through a two-generation approach to education. Through free classes, low-income parents in New York City develop the literacy and language skills they need to succeed in today's world. By focusing on parent education, Literacy Partners is closing the achievement gap among low-income and immigrant children. Its research-based curriculum also incorporates child development and parenting support to help parents boost their children's early reading, school readiness, and social-emotional growth. Literacy Partners is New York's premier organization advancing family literacy.

Find out more at literacypartners.org.