



2018 Downtown Achievement Awards: Events and Programming

Organization: Downtown Columbia Partnership

Event: Books in Bloom

About Columbia, MD: Columbia began with the simplest yet boldest of ideas: that a city could enhance its residents' quality of life. Columbia has brought that vision to life and is a flourishing community, recognized for its economic and social diversity, while undergoing a renaissance of development. Founded in 1967, Columbia was heralded for its social ideals and progressive development practices. It was called the "Next America" and studied by urban planners across the country. Its founder, James W. Rouse, attained a national reputation for his vision of Columbia – "the model city." Nearly 50 years have passed since people started settling in Columbia's villages, suburban-style communities with a variety of housing options, neighborhood schools and cul-de-sacs. The core of Columbia was dominated by Merriweather Post Pavilion and The Mall in Columbia, a popular and successful shopping center, but the rest of the downtown area was underdeveloped.

Through a public-private partnership, planning for Downtown Columbia began in 2005. After five years of community input, the Downtown Columbia Plan, an amendment to the Howard County General Plan, was unanimously approved and adopted by the Howard County Council in February of 2010, as the revitalization and redevelopment plan for Downtown Columbia. The Plan specifically addresses approximately 390 acres of property in the center of Columbia, where mixed use development will include residences, office buildings, stores and restaurants, hotels, entertainment venues, cultural and civic institutions as well as parks and other natural amenities.

The new development is projected to include:

- 6,244 residential units, including 900 units of affordable housing
- 640 hotel rooms
- 1.25 million square feet of new retail
- 4.3 million square feet of commercial/office use
- More than 20,000 permanent jobs: IT, corporate healthcare, cyber security, financial
- 2,500 spaces in the new public, structured Merriweather Post Pavilion parking garage
- The Downtown Columbia Plan calls for the realization of James Rouse's original intention that Columbia would be a "real city" and continue to serve as a model for smarter, more livable communities.

Downtown Columbia Partnership: As part of the 2010 Downtown Columbia Plan, the Downtown Columbia Partnership (DTCP) was created to provide promotion, marketing, and the provision of security, maintenance, and amenities for Downtown Columbia. DTCP is focused on creating a thriving and welcoming Downtown Columbia to the benefit of all the city of Columbia's residents, community institutions, businesses, and other organizations. We are helping raise the profile of the entire city of

Columbia as a desirable place to live, work, and play, thereby increasing economic viability, quality of life, and inclusivity. DTCP is the collective voice for Downtown Columbia. We support and promote a sustainable, walkable, remarkable place where businesses and people thrive. Our role is to foster a physical and cultural environment that will become a magnet for the creative class. Downtown Columbia's location, surroundings, schools, and overall quality of life support this.

Books in Bloom: Located in Downtown Columbia and launched in 2017, Books in Bloom is a daylong book festival featuring stages with continuous programming, including author conversations, book signings, Q&A sessions, panel discussions, and more. Throughout the event space, activations engage and educate guests of all ages, ranging from children's workshops to local author exhibitions.

Books and Bloom was envisioned to bring together the country's best and brightest literary minds for a daylong festival celebrating the joy of books and reading, Books in Bloom seeks to invigorate the community and serve as a signature event that's not only reflective of the values Columbia residents share but a celebration of literature. It is an innovative, progressive, and memorable festival, poised to be one of the premier book festivals in the region for years to come. The festival is free and open to the public.

DTCP first presented Books in Bloom in June 2017 as part of the city's 50th anniversary year. The daylong festival included readings, panel discussions, a poetry wall, children's craft area, story time corner, pop-up bookstore by Politics & Prose, and more. In partnership with the Howard County Library System, Books in Bloom launched the library's summer reading program, Summer @ Your Library, and included activities for children and adults alike. The festival was free and open to all ages. We welcomed 1,000 to 1,200 guests over the course of the day and our highest attended session involved over 400 people. The event pulled from Columbia as well as the surrounding Washington and Baltimore metropolitan areas.

Last year's festival included:

- Headlining authors: Chimamanda Adichie, David Ebershoff, and April Ryan and Michael Eric Dyson in conversation with DeRay McKesson.
- A media panel with top-tier national and regional book review editors from *NPR*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *WAMU-FM*, and *Washington Independent Review of Books*.
- Panel on Feminism in Young Adult Fiction featuring emerging authors.
- Critically-acclaimed children's authors including Debbie Levy, Mary Amato, and Jerdine Nolen.
- Interactive Poetry Wall.
- Personalized and on-the-spot poems created by the Haiku Guys + Gals.

Media Coverage: Books in Bloom was featured in *Washingtonian Magazine*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *Baltimore Style Magazine*, and *DC Refined*, along with other noted publications.

The inaugural Books in Bloom was a huge success and served to activate Downtown Columbia and engage residents as well as visitors from DC and Baltimore. Through the event, we were able to share the uniqueness of Downtown Columbia and highlight why it's an ideal place to live, work, and play. Books in Bloom will return to Downtown Columbia on June 10, 2018. We expect that it will remain as one of DTCP's signature events for many years to come.