



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 1, 2016

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Political Scientist Robert Putnam to Speak in Riverside March 11

Author of “Bowling Alone” will discuss new book, “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis”

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, dubbed “the most influential academic in the world” by the Times of London for his research on social capital, will present a free talk on March 11 in Riverside. The event is sponsored by the Riverside Public Library in collaboration with the UCR School of Public Policy. Free copies of the book are available.

Putnam, author of the critically-acclaimed “Bowling Alone,” which chronicled increasing isolation in society, will speak on his most recent book, “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis.” The book examines America’s growing inequality gap, why fewer Americans today have the opportunity for upward mobility, and what communities, parents, families and schools can do about it.

“Riverside is blessed to have a Library that can bring such a distinguished speaker to our city,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “‘Bowling Alone’ is required reading for anyone interested in the decline, and the potential rise, of community in the United States. I look forward to reading the same level of scholarship and academic inquiry in Putnam’s latest work.”

The event is scheduled for 2-3 p.m. on Friday, March 11, in the Art Pick Council Chamber at Riverside City Hall, 3900 Main Street. The event is free and open to the public. Attendees are invited to bring school supplies for donation to underserved youth. School supply donation is optional and not required to attend the event.

Putnam also will speak the same day at UC Riverside, which is paying the costs associated with the visit to Riverside. The UCR event is at 4:30 p.m. at Highlander Union, Building 302. It also is free, but seating is limited. RSVP at putnam.eventbrite.com.

The Riverside Public Library is encouraging the community to get involved with the event by offering free copies of “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis.” The free books – one per customer -- are available at all city libraries.

The free books were made possible by a Book to Action grant, which supported the purchase of 175 copies for community distribution. The grant to the Riverside Public Library was funded by the Library Services and Technology Act administered by the California State Librarian.

“The Book to Action program has been a very generous supporter of our efforts to bring Robert Putnam to Riverside,” Riverside Public Library Director Tonya Kennon said. “I am thrilled we are able to not only have him here as a distinguished speaker, but also to provide copies of his work to the public free of charge.”

Robert D. Putnam is the Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard and has served as Dean of the Kennedy School of Government there. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a Fellow of the British Academy, and past president of the American Political Science Association.

Putnam is a past winner of the Skytte Prize, the top honor for a political scientist. He received the National Humanities Medal, the nation’s highest honor for contributions to the humanities, in 2012.