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**INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION EXPLORES THE TRANSFORMATIVE
POWER OF LITERACY AT THE 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
IN ST. LOUIS THIS JULY**

Basketball legend Shaquille O’Neal and Academy Award-winning actress Octavia Spencer to speak about their efforts to bring literacy to youth worldwide

January 27, 2015 (Newark, Del.) – The International Literacy Association (ILA), a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all, will host its 2015 Annual Conference July 18–20, 2015 in St. Louis, Mo. With the theme “Transforming Lives Through Literacy,” the conference will bring together more than 6,000 literacy educators and experts from around the world to explore ideas, best practices and resources for literacy education and advocacy.

Among the celebrated speakers to participate in the conference, basketball legend and author Shaquille O’Neal will speak about how his passion for learning transformed his own life and inspired him to pursue a doctorate degree and become an author. In addition, Octavia Spencer, best known for her critically acclaimed performance as Minny in the film *The Help*, will share the story of her struggle with dyslexia and how her passion for mystery novels encouraged her to take up reading and inspire others to do the same.

“This year’s conference marks a turning point for the International Literacy Association,” explains Marcie Craig Post, ILA Executive Director. “Now more than ever we stand behind the need to advance literacy as a whole, not just reading. Literacy educators and leaders are the foundation of this vision, and for that reason, we are honored to be able to provide the forum to advance the dialogue on literacy in our effort to make literacy accessible to all.”

The conference will feature more than 300 sessions on key topics affecting literacy educators today, including content literacy, children’s literature, classroom engagement, innovation, international literacy instruction and professional development. In addition, the revamped Teaching Edge series will pair some of the brightest minds in the field for an engaging look at the latest literacy topics, as well as practical ideas and resources for the classroom and beyond. Attendees will also have the opportunity to test new tools and technologies from more than 120 companies in the ILA 2015 Exhibit Hall.

For more information, or to register for the conference, visit ilaconference.org.

Note: The conference is open to news media at no cost with proper registration through ILA’s media relations contact.

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators and experts across 75 countries. With 60 years of experience in the field, ILA believes in the transformative power of literacy to create more dynamic societies, prosperous economies and meaningful lives. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students and inform policymakers. The International Literacy Association publishes several peer-reviewed journals, including *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and *Reading Research Quarterly*. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.

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