

■ Deepening International Exchange and Promoting Understanding: NCL Sets up a Taiwan Corner in the Chicago Public Library's Main Branch

To help people overseas come to understand the Taiwan's cultural and natural beauty, as well as to promote international cultural exchange and interaction, the National Central Library donated a Taiwan Corner with 70 books to the Chicago Public Library. Director-General Han-Ching Wang met with the Commissioner of the Harold Washington Library Center on March 15, 2024. Chicago Public Library Commissioner Chris Brown received the donation. The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago's Education Division Head Hsu-hua Chu was also in attendance to witness the exchange.



NCL Director-General Wang, Commissioner Chris Brown, and Hsu-hua Chu posing in front of the display

Director-General Han-Ching Wang stated that the Taiwan Corner is an important brand for NCL in deepening international exchange and promoting understanding, something NCL promotes to the world. It aims to inform people on Taiwan history and customs, and to market cultural ideas and knowledge about Taiwan. NCL also adjusts the content of the Taiwan Corner display based on local needs, picking themes that are appropriate but also diverse. It functions well as a start for library patrons overseas to begin learning about Taiwan. Chicago is an ethnically diverse place, with Asians accounting for 7% of the population. Consequently, NCL wanted to set up this Taiwan Corner to allow more of the local community to draw closer to Taiwan and know it better. This book donation included illustrated children's books, pop-up books, and

maps of Taiwan, as well as other books on a variety of subjects regarding Taiwan—such as history and customs, books and museum artifacts (such as paintings and calligraphy), its natural environment, and contemporary literature and art.

As a model large library system, Commissioner Brown has a mission to ensure library information is fair and egalitarian. He also wants to redefine the benefits that libraries can bring to communities. The Chicago Public Library is one of the largest public library systems in the world, with over 81 branches throughout the city. It provides readers from different ethnicities with a pleasant reading environment and a place to engage in lifelong learning. It supports education, the development of reading abilities, digital literacy, and media literacy. It also promotes social interest in literature and reading, as well as preserving local cultural assets. The main branch views libraries as open gathering places for communities, a place where individuals can enjoy life and interact with others. These concepts happened to coincide with the direction that libraries have been moving in Taiwan in recent years. It signals that under the freedom of a democratic system, both parties have settled on the same development track and share related ideas. This serves as a helpful base in our interaction.

After the ceremony, Commissioner Brown and some of his staff took Director-General Wang and her group on a tour of the library to better understand its space arrangement, reading promotion, digital resources, various services, and its practical operations.



Commissioner Brown showing Director-General Wang around the library