LIBRARY NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

AIR QUALITY SENSORS AVAILABLE AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Lafayette, LA (July 29, 2016) – Learning about the quality of the air you breathe should be as easy and inexpensive as borrowing a book from a library. And in Lafayette Parish, it now is! Thanks to Carnegie Mellon University researchers, the Lafayette Public Library System now has 12 Speck air quality monitors available for free checkout at four of its locations.

The Speck sensors detect particulate air pollution in the home. Developed by CMU's CREATE Lab and provided by spinoff company Airviz, Specks are easy and simple to use and available now at the Main Library in Downtown Lafayette, the East Regional Library in Youngsville, the North Regional Library in Carencro and the South Regional Library on Johnston Street in Lafayette. Library card holders can check out the sensors for three weeks at a time to try in their homes.

"We have too many communities where the air is hazardous from time to time, yet people can't readily find out what they are breathing in their own homes," said Illah Nourbakhsh, head of the CREATE Lab, which develops innovative robotic technologies for the public good. "This is the air quality you can actually do something about — if you know that a hazard even exists. That's why it is so important that people of all income levels have access to a sensor such as Speck."

"We are making these Specks available in our libraries to give the tools to our patrons to make better decisions in their homes and, hopefully, make their home environments healthier," said Teresa Elberson, Lafayette Public Library Director. "We're excited to partner with Carnegie Mellon and Airviz to make this possible."

The CREATE Lab and Airviz introduced the Speck personal air quality monitor a year ago at the SXSW Interactive Festival in Austin, Texas. Speck uses a low-cost infrared sensor to detect pollutants and CREATE Lab developers were able to boost its accuracy by employing machine learning algorithms that recognize and compensate for spurious "noise" in each detector.

Speck is designed for use indoors, helping users realize when polluted outside air is coming into the house, or to recognize pollution sources within the home. It is also Wi-Fi-connected, so air quality data can be uploaded and shared, via the Internet. For more information on how the sensors work and how to use them, visit LafayettePublicLibrary.org.

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Contact:

Beth Chiasson, Community Services Coordinator
Lafayette Public Library System
(337) 261-5783
beth.chiasson@lafayettepubliclibrary.org