



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 30, 2018
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY AND GRACIE MANSION CONSERVANCY
ANNOUNCE SEASON THREE OF “GRACIE BOOK CLUB”**

*This year’s series, “Reading to Thrive,” will begin with Author Andrew Solomon and his book **The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression.***

NEW YORK— First Lady Chirlane McCray and the Gracie Mansion Conservancy will kick off the third season of the Gracie Book Club with a discussion of Andrew Solomon’s “The Noonday Demon” on Thursday, December 6th at Gracie Mansion. Prachi Gupta, podcaster and Senior Reporter at Bustle will join the First Lady to moderate the panel.

This year’s series Reading to Thrive will focus on the cultural stigma that surrounds mental health. These discussions will be facilitated by the four books chosen for this year’s series including: *The Noon Day Demon: An Atlas of Depression* by Andrew Solomon, *She’s Come Undone* by Wally Lamb, *Willow Weep for Me: A Black Woman’s Journey Through Depression* by Meri Nana-Ama Danquah, and *The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Walls. All New Yorkers are welcome to sign up for the Gracie Book Club at nyc.gov/gracie+bookclub.

"This season the Gracie Book Club explores the pervasive culture of shame that surrounds mental illness. The books we will read together offer an opportunity for each of us to challenge our biases and stereotypes about mental health care through the power of storytelling. Readers can use this knowledge to become stewards of their own mental health and healers in their community," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**.

"Storytelling is a powerful way to break down the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction," said **ThriveNYC Executive Director Alexis Confer**. "These incredible books help us connect our work to our everyday lives. We’re proud to partner with the Gracie Mansion Conservancy on this season of its book club."

"Reading to Thrive is a perfect opportunity for people from diverse experiences and backgrounds to more readily understand how people are coping with their mental health challenges or mental illness," said **Dr. Aletha Maybank, Deputy Commissioner and Director of the Center for Health Equity at the NYC Health Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene**. "The power of storytelling and immersing ourselves into inspirational human stories also allows us to gain

comfort in knowing we are not alone. We are proud to partner in fighting stigma and elevating mental and emotional wellness.”

“The abundance and diversity of great writing today about mental health in America extends across genres, including: fiction, memoir, and scholarship in an array unprecedented in world literature. The third season of Gracie Book Club, Reading to Thrive focuses on four books that together frame a canon ready to serve as a beacon of hope for all New Yorkers. This season of the Gracie Book Club proposes reading as a quiet, therapeutic communion with fine authors, whose experiences and insights offer pathways to recovery,” **Paul Gunther, Executive Director of the Gracie Mansion Conservancy.**

The 2018-19 Gracie Book Club Season Features:

***The Noon Day Demon: An Atlas of Depression* by Andrew Solomon**

Professor Andrew Solomon is a New Yorker who teaches clinical psychology at Columbia University. His memoir, *The Noon Day Demon* is an unflinching look into his personal experience with depression -- which considers: science, stigma and narrative. *The Noon Day Demon* won a National Book Award for Non-fiction as well as a Scribner Award. The book was named a notable book by *The New York Times* and American Library Association and was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

***She's Come Undone* by Wally Lamb**

Wally Lamb's 1992 novel, *She's Come Undone*, is a riveting coming of age story that grapples intimately with personal and familial mental health challenges. In this story set in the 1950's the protagonist navigates: school, body image and romance with wit and humor.

***Willow Weep for Me: A Black Woman's Journey Through Depression* by Meri Nana-Ama Danquah**

Meri Nana-Ama Danquah's memoir is an intimate journey through discovering and overcoming her depression. In her memoir Danquah enters a dialogue about black womanhood and the challenges of all women who suffer mental health challenges in silence. *Willow Weep for Me* is a testimony to the power of recovery.

***The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Walls**

Jeanette Wall's memoir *The Glass Castle* is a *New York Times* best seller that recounts her life in a dysfunctional family. Her thorough memoir recounts her family's experiences with poverty, addiction and mental illness. Jeanette's story is one of triumph.

###