

LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES



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Tiny Library, BIG IMPACT



Children gathered around a Little Free Library

In 2009, Todd Bol of Hudson, Wisconsin, built a model of a one room schoolhouse. It was a tribute to his mother; she was a teacher who loved to read. He filled it with books and put it on a post in his front yard. His neighbors and friends loved it, so he built several more and gave them away.

UW-Madison's Rick Brooks (retired from Little Free Library 2014) saw Bol's do-it-yourself project while they were discussing potential social enterprises. Together, the two saw opportunities to achieve a variety of goals for the common good.

They were inspired by community gift-sharing networks, "take a book, leave a book" collections in coffee shops and public spaces, and most especially by the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

Around the turn of the 20th century, Carnegie set a goal to fund the creation of 2,508 free public libraries across the English-speaking world. That goal inspired Brooks and Bol to set their own goal of surpassing 2,508 Little Free Libraries by the end 2013. They wound up exceeding that goal in August of 2012, a year and a half before their target date.

By 2010, the name Little Free Library was established and the purpose of these Little Free Library book exchanges became clear: to share good books and bring communities together. As Bol and Brooks continued to give away Little Free Libraries with wooden charter signs, engraved with official charter numbers, curiosity and demand for more Libraries grew.

More than just books

Literacy

We are facing a growing literacy crisis. Today in the United States, more than 30 million adults cannot read or write above a third-grade level. Studies have repeatedly shown that books in the hands of children have a meaningful impact on improving literacy. The more books in or near the home, the more likely a child will learn and love to read.

Inclusivity

Through Little Free Library book exchanges, millions of books are exchanged each year, profoundly increasing access to books for readers of all ages and backgrounds.



Community

Little Free Library book-sharing boxes play an essential role by providing 24/7 access to books (and encouraging a love of reading!) in areas where books are scarce. At the Little Free Library nonprofit, we're working to fill book deserts and grant libraries to underserved communities through our Impact Library Program.

We embrace working with Little Free Library volunteer stewards, as well as local and national partners, to build community and improve book access together. As Bol and Brooks continued to give away Little Free Libraries with wooden charter signs, engraved with official charter numbers, curiosity and demand for more Libraries grew.

We are committed to integrity and accountability in how we manage our assets, and we are proud to have earned Platinum GuideStar status.

We value all people and communities, and we respect their wisdom in using Little Free Libraries in a meaningful, individualistic way



Miami, Florida Little Free Library

Starting Your Own

If you want to start a Little Free Library book exchange, you're in the right place. We're excited to have you join the network—now more than 200,000 Little Free Libraries strong! Watch the 30-second video to see how Little Free Libraries work and learn how you can start a little library, too.



Little Rock, Arkansas Little Free Library

1. Identify a Location & Steward

First decide where you can legally and safely install the library. The location should also have a lot of foot traffic and be highly visible to anyone nearby.

2. Get a Library

You can build your own Little Free Library following any design you like; find someone locally to build one for you; or purchase a library through Little Free Library's online store.

3. Register Your Library

Register by purchasing an official charter sign. If you buy a Little Free Library from our online store, it will automatically come registered with a charter sign included.

Get your community involved! Tell your friends, family, and neighbors in person. Use social media to engage your community. Hold a Grand Opening Ceremony and invite your neighbors to kick off the library in style with a ribbon cutting, snacks, and books freely exchanged! Contact the local paper, radio, and TV stations. Send out a press release. The more people who know about your library and support it, the better.



What's on the shelf?

Today, more than 30 million adults cannot read or write above a third-grade level. Books in the hands of children have a meaningful impact on improving literacy.

Studies prove that the more books in or near the home, the more likely a child will learn and love to read. Little Free Library book exchanges are an excellent vehicle for areas without easy access to books.

Through the Impact Library Program, we provide no-cost Little Free Library book exchanges to communities where books are scarce.

Expanding access to books is at the heart of our mission. The rise of book bans in America goes against our organization's core values — especially when the bans overwhelmingly target BIPOC and LGBTQ+ authors. When these voices and perspectives are erased through book bans, our world becomes a less informed, less empathetic, and less inclusive place.

Over the last several years, an unprecedented number of books have been banned or challenged in U.S. schools and public libraries, from classics like *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee to contemporary titles such as *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas and *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson.



Stack of books with open pages



Changing lives,



iPROMISE Village Little Free Library

Read Across America Day inspired two special Little Free Library book-sharing boxes this year. A little library was unveiled at the LeBron James Family Foundation's (LJFF) I PROMISE Village, a family-first community that serves as transitional housing for I PROMISE families in Akron, Ohio. The project was a team effort carried out by LJFF, the Little Free Library nonprofit organization, JOANN, and WKYC Studios.

Little Free Library's late founder, Todd H. Bol, believed strongly in the power of individuals to change the world through acts of kindness. The winners of the 2021 Todd H. Bol Awards for Outstanding Achievement include Sarah Kamyra, the New York City school counselor on a mission to share diverse books, and Dr. Russell Schnell, an atmospheric scientist who brought the first Little Free Library to Antarctica.



Dr. Russell Schnell



Wind River Indian Reservation

A very special Little Free Library arrived at the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming this year. We were thrilled to grant the 125,000th Little Free Library book-sharing box to Wind River through our Impact Library program, which offers Little Free Libraries full of books at no cost to selected applicants. The Wind River Indian Reservation is home to the Eastern Shoshone and the Northern Arapaho tribes.

One book at a time

Building Lifelong Readers

How little free libraries help foster a love of reading

A new study shows the significant influence of Little Free Library book-sharing boxes on children's reading habits. Led by Pier Partners consultancy group in collaboration with The Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS), the research confirms that Little Free Libraries help children read more.



92%

Percent of children that reported having more access to books because of Little Free library Book Sharing Boxes

49%

Percent of children that reported reading more frequently since they began using a Little Free Library.

88%

Percent of children that said they now keep more books at home, helping them build personal

63%

Percent of BIPOC students that reported reading more in weeks that they visit a Little Free Library.

Join the Movement!

Your contribution will help build community, inspire readers, and expand book access for all.

Donate

Your gift to Little Free Library supports our mission to be a catalyst for building community, inspiring readers, and expanding book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Libraries.

Volunteer

Team LFL is the volunteer engagement initiative of Little Free Library. Team LFL connects both individual volunteers and community groups with opportunities to support the network of Little Free Libraries and programs. You can make a difference by expanding book access in your community. Join the team to help us achieve our vision of a Little Free Library in every community and a book for every reader!

Honor Wall

Honor your loved one by making an honorary or memorial gift to Little Free Library! When you make an honorary gift of \$50 or more, you may share a story on the Honor Wall below. It's a lasting and heartfelt way to pay tribute to someone special, and it will support Little Free Library's mission to build stronger communities, improve literacy, and expand book access for all



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