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### In the Bay Area, Thousands of Diverse Books Flood Little Free Libraries

*Little Free Library book-sharing boxes in San Francisco and Oakland offer books that amplify marginalized communities, in partnership with Access Books Bay Area, the African American Parent Advisory Council and the Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation.*

San Francisco (March 31, 2022) – Finding inclusive, culturally relevant books to read just got easier in the Bay Area. Today the national Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization introduced its **Read in Color** diverse-books initiative in San Francisco in collaboration with Access Books Bay Area and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) African American Parent Advisory Council. Through the initiative, 10 new Little Free Library book-sharing boxes will be established in high-impact areas and more than 2,000 diverse books will be distributed to promote understanding, equity and inclusion.

"Access Books Bay Area is very excited to be partnering with Little Free Library and the SFUSD African American Parent Advisory Council to bring Read in Color to San Francisco!" said Amanda Collins, Executive Director, Access Books Bay Area. "San Francisco is an incredibly diverse city, so this opportunity to bring books that actually represent the lives and experiences of our students directly to their communities and neighborhoods is invaluable to us."

Don't be fooled by San Francisco's affluent reputation, Collins says; access to diverse books is sorely needed.

“Despite being in a city with great wealth and opportunity, many of our families—and especially our families of color—get left behind, and our organizations are united in our efforts to ensure that every child in this city gets the access to high-quality reading materials that are culturally relevant and engaging to read that they deserve,” said Collins. “Thank you so much to Little Free Library for helping us bring this great resource into our communities here in San Francisco!”

The first of San Francisco's Read in Color libraries, pictured above, stands at Bessie Carmichael Elementary, located in San Francisco's Filipino cultural district. The school is home to the city's only Tagalog language and Filipino culture immersion program. It serves 479 students, over 70% of whom are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 89% of whom are children of color.

“Books provide access to possibility. They allow you an opportunity to see the world and all of its majestic beauty while also igniting curiosity for what is possible,” said Laticia Erving, African American Parent Advisory Council Program Manager. “Oftentimes the books our children have access to tell stories that don't reflect them or their experiences, making it difficult for them to connect or even participate in the wonder that awaits them.”

“For the past six years the African American Parent Advisory Council has committed ourselves to diversifying the literary offerings of our young people and their families,” Erving continued. “Teaming up with the Little Free Library Read In Color Initiative, Access Books Bay Area and community partners across San Francisco, we just took our efforts to the next level! It's time to tell our stories, celebrate diverse identities, and inspire young people to not only read in color, but live in color too!”

To date the Read in Color initiative has launched in 11 U.S. cities, from New York and Washington, D.C. to Atlanta and Phoenix, with plans for greater expansion this year. More than 150 Read in Color Little Free Libraries and 30,000 diverse books celebrating Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, LGBTQ+ and other important voices have been shared so far. Learn more at [LittleFreeLibrary.org/read-in-color](https://LittleFreeLibrary.org/read-in-color).

## **Diverse Books Arrive in Oakland, Thanks to Stephen and Ayesha Curry**

Over the next year, the Eat. Learn. Play. (ELP) Foundation—brainchild of Stephen and Ayesha Curry—is establishing 150 “Little Town Library” book-sharing boxes in under-resourced areas across Oakland. More than 50,000 high-quality, inclusive books will be shared annually throughout the community libraries to help foster a love of reading.

The first four Little Town Libraries were unveiled today at Franklin Elementary, Oakland Housing Authority, Room to Bloom, and Libration Park.

The project is truly a community effort. In attendance at the Franklin Elementary kick-off were the Currys, Little Free Library Executive Director Greig Metzger, the Oakland Literacy Coalition, Oakland Public Library, Black Cultural Zone, Good Tidings Foundation and other local partners. Each of the ELP Little Town Libraries will be registered with the LFL organization.

“It is an honor to be working with such great partners here in Oakland and across the Bay Area to expand book access, especially access to diverse and inclusive books,” said Metzger. “Our goal at Little Free Library is to build community, inspire readers and broaden book access. Only by walking hand in hand with community-based partners can this be achieved.”

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## **About Little Free Library**

Little Free Library® (LFL) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that builds community, inspires readers and expands book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Libraries. There are more than 125,000 registered Little Free Library book-sharing boxes worldwide in all 50 states, 112 countries and seven continents. Through them, over 250 million books have been shared since 2009. LFL received the 2020 World Literacy Award as well as honors from the Library of Congress, National Book Foundation and others. The organization grants Little Free Libraries full of books to underserved areas through its Impact Library Program and champions diverse books through its Read in Color initiative. To learn more, visit [LittleFreeLibrary.org](https://LittleFreeLibrary.org).

### **About Access Books Bay Area**

Access Books Bay Area is a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides high quality, high-interest, culturally relevant books, and a transformed school library space to low-income schools where at least 80 percent of students live at or below the poverty line. Since our inception in 2016 through our school library refurbishments grants, Little Free Libraries, and community book give-away programs we have provided over 42,000+ books to 18,668 children living in the Bay Area's underserved communities. We work to level the literacy playing field for K-8 students. To learn more about our work please visit [AccessBooksBayArea.org](https://AccessBooksBayArea.org).

### **About African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPAC)**

AAPAC is a parent-led organization established in 2013 in San Francisco, CA. In partnership with San Francisco Unified School District's African American Achievement and Leadership Initiative, AAPAC provides a forum to hear the concerns, ideas and experiences of the families of SFUSD's 4960 Black identified students. We respond to those ideas by educating and informing families of district resources, policies and programs while also providing the skills and support needed to advocate for a high-quality educational experience for all Black children. AAPAC is an umbrella organization for over 25 site-based affinity spaces throughout San Francisco working to strengthen home to school partnerships and increase the sense of belonging felt by Black families. To learn more about how we Listen, Educate and Advocate with and for families of Black students in SFUSD, visit us at [sfusd.edu/aapac](https://sfusd.edu/aapac).

### **About Eat. Learn. Play.**

Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation is an organization dedicated to unleashing the potential of every child, paving the way for amazing kids and opening doors to bright futures. Founded by Stephen and Ayesha Curry in 2019, Eat. Learn. Play. launched in San Francisco with a focus on improving the lives of kids and families in Oakland, the Bay Area and across the country. Rooted in three of the most vital pillars for a healthy childhood—nutrition, education, and physical activity—Eat. Learn. Play. is working to ensure that every child in Oakland has access to the nutritious food they need to be healthy and thrive; resources to learn and love to read; and safe places and equitable opportunities to play. The organization, which is anchored around the message that children are our future, is committed to developing partnerships and initiatives that make a positive impact for generations to come.

### **PHOTOS**

All photos were taken at the Read in Color Little Free Library at Bessie Carmichael Elementary School in San Francisco. They are cleared for your use with the credit "Courtesy of Access Books Bay Area and Little Free Library."

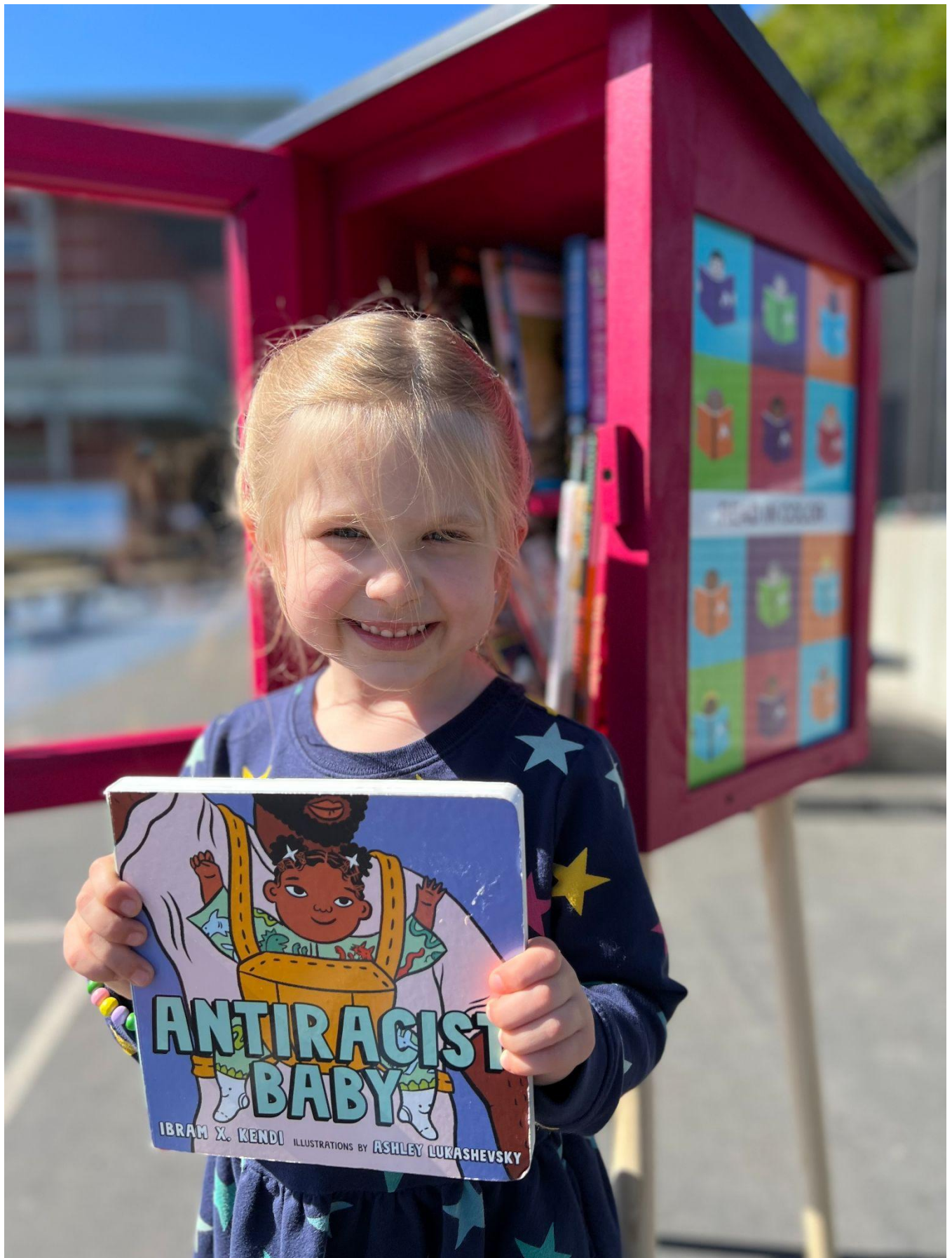
















Statement from Catherine Calimquin, pictured holding the book *We Are Water Protectors*. Calimquin is the steward of the Read in Color book-sharing box at Bessie Carmichael: "The Little Free Library is going to be a great resource for our students. A number of our students love to read, and so having access to more books, the better, as it supports literacy for our students. Thank you very much! We are so very grateful!"