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‘Read in Color’ Launches in Ferguson, Missouri, to Share Diverse Books in Little Free Libraries

The Ferguson Public Library, City of Ferguson, Ferguson Youth Initiative and Little Free Library nonprofit are collaborating to distribute books that amplify diverse voices.

Ferguson, Mo. (September 22, 2021) – Today the Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization brought their **Read in Color** diverse books initiative to Ferguson, Mo., in partnership with the City of Ferguson, Ferguson Youth Initiative and Ferguson Public Library. Through the initiative, the partners will establish four new Little Free Library book-sharing boxes in high-impact areas, and distribute roughly 700 diverse books to promote understanding, equity and inclusion.

Watch the Ferguson Read in Color launch video [here!](https://bit.ly/39nFp2K) (<https://bit.ly/39nFp2K>)

Ferguson’s first three **Read in Color** Little Free Libraries can be found at Dade Park (414 S. Dade Ave.), Northwinds Apartments (9547 Glen Owen Dr.) and Wayside Dog Park (1026 Chambers Rd.), with a fourth location to come. Each library is filled with books that provide perspectives on racism and social justice; celebrate BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other important voices; and incorporate experiences from all identities for all readers.

“As a librarian, I know it is absolutely vital to literacy and learning that all of us find ourselves and people like us in the books we read,” said Scott Bonner, Library Director of the Ferguson Municipal Public Library District. “We know what is possible when we see it.”

Bailey Mitchell, Community Development Coordinator for the City of Ferguson shared: “The residents of Ferguson, Missouri, come from all walks of life. If you ask anyone who has lived in Ferguson at one point in their life what they love most about the city, nine times out of ten they will say ‘the community’. The Little Free Library Read in Color initiative gives our community another opportunity to come together and learn about ourselves and others within our community. The perspective and sense of empowerment gained through these diverse reading options will reverberate through future generations of Ferguson residents.”

LFL’s national **Read in Color** initiative was introduced in Minneapolis last year in response to the murder of George Floyd. It has since been adopted in Washington, D.C., Tulsa, Oklahoma, Boston, New York, Detroit and now Ferguson.

“We are proud to partner with the Ferguson Youth Initiative, the Ferguson Public Library, and the City of Ferguson in an effort to improve book access and build community through the sharing of diverse books in Little Free Libraries. It has been incredible to see these organizations come together to support not only the initiative, but also one another,” said Shelby King, Director of Programs at LFL. “It is our hope that through these new libraries, books that provide a multitude of perspectives will make their way into the hands and homes of people all over the city.”

LFL also worked with independent bookstore EyeSeeMe, based in University City, to purchase books for the initiative. EyeSeeMe is the only children’s bookstore devoted exclusively to promoting African American culture.

“We are excited and honored to participate in this initiative and help contribute to diverse literature in Ferguson,” said Jeffrey Blair, co-founder and -owner of EyeSeeMe. “Representation matters, and it’s vitally important that people of color can see themselves in the books that they read. Moreover, as a diverse community in a diverse region it is equally important that non-people of color are exposed to diverse literature as a way to learn about each other and dispel negative stereotypes. Providing the community diverse literature helps reinforce the understanding that despite our many differences all people share common feelings and aspirations, and we have a lot that we can learn from one another.”

The collaborative effort was welcomed by Aaron Harris, Executive Director of the Ferguson Youth Initiative, who said, “I’m proud to be a part of a team with the City of Ferguson, the Ferguson Library and EyeSeeMe Bookstore to provide free access to books where the authors and/or characters are reflective of the community surrounding it.”

LFL’s national **Read in Color** initiative has four key components:

1. **Little Free Library installations** full of culturally relevant books, placed in high-need communities.
2. **Free diverse books** for applying LFL stewards, purchased from independent and BIPOC-owned bookstores when possible.
3. **Recommended reading lists** representing Black, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Latinx, Muslim, LGBTQ+ and other communities.
4. **Read in Color pledge**, allowing everyone to show their support for diverse books and to access downloadable resources.

Get involved: To learn more and sign the Read in Color pledge visit
LittleFreeLibrary.org/Read-In-Color.

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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. LFL received the 2020 World Literacy Award as well as honors from the Library of Congress and National Book Foundation. There are more than 125,000 registered Little Free Library book-sharing boxes worldwide in all 50 states, 110 countries and 7 continents; through them, more than 200 million books have been shared. To learn more, visit LittleFreeLibrary.org.