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Little Free Library Promotes Equity and Inclusion by Bringing Diverse Books to Communities Around the World

Launching today, new Read in Color initiative encourages people to share BIPOC and LGBTQ books in free neighborhood libraries.

Hudson, WI (October 14, 2020) – Today the Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization, in partnership with Colle McVoy, launched **Read in Color™** a timely initiative bringing diverse books to LFL book-sharing boxes around the world. [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Kicking off in Minneapolis, Minn., the origin of social unrest this summer, Read in Color will distribute books that provide perspectives on racism and social justice, celebrate BIPOC and LGBTQ voices, and incorporate experiences from all identities for all readers.

“Little Free Library believes everyone should be able to see themselves in the pages of a book,” said LFL Executive Director Greig Metzger. “We also believe a broader awareness of the diverse life experiences in America can break down barriers and nurture a deeper understanding of our society’s inequities.”

LFL National Board Chair Anita Merina concurs: “As a first-generation Filipino American, I’ve spent my lifetime loving books but rarely seeing myself in them or hearing voices like mine until recently. And as someone who has spent my career showcasing diverse books, I am so proud that Little Free Library will be reaching readers and connecting communities in such a meaningful way with the Read In Color program.”

Equity and inclusion are long-held values at LFL, but following George Floyd’s murder in Minneapolis—not far from LFL’s Hudson, Wis. office—the nonprofit vowed to do more to raise awareness. This summer LFL held book giveaways, highlighting diverse authors; hosted inclusive celebrity story-time videos with PBS Kids; and promoted stewards filling little libraries with diverse books, like Sarah Kamyra in Arlington, Mass.

[Read in Color](#) extends these efforts through four key components:

- **Read in Color pledge.** LFL stewards and patrons worldwide can [sign a pledge](#) to read and share diverse books. Pledges have access to resources, including bookmarks, stickers, social media badges and a Read in Color sign for Little Free Library doors.
- **Free diverse books.** LFL stewards can apply to receive free diverse books. LFL will purchase books from independent bookstores, BIPOC-owned when possible, or source from publishers. This opportunity is currently available to Twin Cities–area stewards only, but everyone is invited to [enter](#)

[a giveaway](#) to win one of 200 copies of *All Because You Matter* by Tami Charles and Bryan Collier, sponsored by Scholastic.

- **Recommended reading lists.** Book lists representing Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian/Pacific Islander, Muslim and LGBTQ communities are available for readers of all ages. Advisors including We Need Diverse Books; The Brown Bookshelf; indigenous scholar Debbie Reese; and author and LFL steward Roxane Gay helped shape these lists.
- **Little Free Library installations.** LFL will establish new LFL book-sharing boxes filled with culturally relevant books in high-need communities, beginning in the Twin Cities and expanding nationally. The first of these libraries was unveiled on Oct. 14 at Urban Ventures, a Minneapolis nonprofit working to end poverty.

"We are excited to partner with LFL and Read in Color as we look forward to aligning our mission around literacy," said Benny Roberts, Urban Ventures' VP of Youth Development. "We'll have community members seeing themselves as protagonists in books, parents reading to their children and kids practicing reading. It's a beautiful thing to envision having books that reflect the community they're in."

LFL received invaluable support from Minneapolis-based creative agency Colle McVoy to develop and launch the Read in Color initiative.

"We are incredibly proud to partner with Little Free Library on this wonderful project, which developed from the pain and heartache we felt after the death of George Floyd in our community," said Christine Fruechte, CEO, Colle McVoy. "We want to be a force for change by helping provide reading material to people who want to expand their knowledge on racial justice, and promote inclusivity through access to diverse perspectives and experiences."

LFL anticipates distributing 5,000 diverse books in the Greater Twin Cities, with additional cities to follow. Titles include *The Undeclared* by Kwame Alexander for kids, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika L. Sánchez for teens and *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo for adults. LFL is buying from local independent bookstores like Birchbark Books, owned by Native American author Louise Erdrich, and Black Garnet Books, Minnesota's only Black-owned bookstore. They are also working directly with publishers like Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, which donated hundreds of books for distribution.

With more than 100,000 LFL book-sharing boxes in urban, suburban and rural locations in all 50 United States and beyond, LFL believes Read in Color will help amplify diverse voices at a grassroots, community level.

Get involved: To sign the Read in Color pledge, apply to receive free diverse books, donate to support the program or learn more, visit LittleFreeLibrary.org/Read-In-Color.

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Images available via [Dropbox](#).

About Little Free Library: Little Free Library® (LFL) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that inspires a love of reading, builds community and improves book access by fostering neighborhood book-exchange boxes around the world. LFL received the 2020 World Literacy Award and has been recognized by the Library of Congress, the National Book Foundation and others for its dedication to expanding book access for all. There are more than 100,000 registered Little Free Library book-sharing boxes worldwide in all 50 states and in 108 countries; through them, more than 165 million books have been shared. Learn more at LittleFreeLibrary.org.