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Media Contact: Margret Aldrich

612-203-6856/maldrich@littlefreelibrary.org



LeBron James Family Foundation's I PROMISE Village Unveils Little Free Library to Celebrate Read Across America Day

The irresistibly colorful library, designed by JOANN, provides book access and inspiration for resident families.

Hudson, Wis. (March 2, 2021) – A special Little Free Library book-sharing box made its debut on Read Across America Day 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 is a team effort carried out by LJFF, the Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization, JOANN and WKYC Studios.

The Little Free Library is located in a brand-new community reading nook at LJFF's I PROMISE Village, which provides stable housing and family programming to help kids thrive in school and beyond.

"We created the I PROMISE Village to be a safe space for families that not only gives them a roof over their head, but also life skills, unique resources and enriching programming that can help them achieve their goals," said Michele Campbell, Executive Director of the LeBron James Family Foundation. "In addition to on-site tutor and mentorship opportunities, this Little Free Library will keep our kids and families at the Village reading, which we know can open so many doors and possibilities. In everything we do at the Village, we want to engage and inspire our families to dream bigger than they ever thought possible."

The library was designed by Cleveland-based fabric and craft company JOANN with a bright and modern paint-by-numbers motif, which was finished by resident I PROMISE families. The reading nook where it is located is also decorated in a fun, colorful style, making it an irresistible destination for young readers.

"Little Free Library has been instrumental in providing reading resources and access to youth, and I PROMISE Village is an exceptional location for one of their physical libraries," said Amanda Hayes, Director, Corporate Communications, Diversity & Inclusion, JOANN, Inc. "JOANN is delighted to have designed the custom library and nook with an inspiring aesthetic to keep the youth of I PROMISE Village enthralled with books, and the imaginative journey that comes with reading. We support the LeBron James Family Foundation and commend them for the exemplary work they are doing in the Akron area for families in need."

This Little Free Library joins hundreds of others in the Cleveland-Akron area and reflects the region's commitment to creating equitable book access, building community and inspiring a culture of reading.

"Book access is a key contributor to strong reading skills, academic success and a fulfilling life," said LFL Executive Director Greig Metzger. "Little Free Library is honored to partner with LJFF, JOANN and WKYC to support a broad selection of books we hope will inspire and entertain the I PROMISE Village families."

The library will be kept stocked with books for all ages, in keeping with the LeBron James Family Foundation's whole-family approach to supporting its students. At Tuesday's unveiling of the book box, the LFL organization donated a large supply of books by multicultural authors, from its Read In Color initiative. WKYC Studios, a partner of LJFF, contributed a collection of storybooks about LeBron James – along with his New York Times' bestselling children's book *I Promise* – in honor of the grand opening, and will continue to donate books and host community book drives to keep the library filled.

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About Little Free Library

Little Free Library® (LFL) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is a catalyst for building community, inspiring readers, and expanding book access through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Libraries. 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 increasing book access for all. There are more than 100,000 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 how you can start a Little Free Library of your own or support bringing little libraries full of books to underserved communities, visit LittleFreeLibrary.org.

About the LeBron James Family Foundation

With a commitment to redefining community and building stronger families, The LeBron James Family Foundation invests its time, resources and passion into creating generational change for kids and families through a focus on education and co-curricular educational initiatives. With its foundational I PROMISE Program, LJFF serves more than 1,500 students and their entire families by providing them with the fundamental resources, wraparound supports and family programming they need for success in school and beyond. In 2018, the Foundation built all of its family-first programming and academic interventions into the groundbreaking I PROMISE School that has created a new model for urban, public education. The Foundation has layered in additional resources including higher education and family supports at the I PROMISE Institute, transitional housing at the I PROMISE Village,

longer-term affordable housing at the upcoming I PROMISE Housing, job training and financial health programming at House Three Thirty, and several hands-on supports in between. These life-changing resources, combined with the Foundation's "We Are Family" philosophy, are re-defining what a family and community looks like. To learn more about our story, visit lebronjamesfamilyfoundation.org.

About JOANN

For more than 75 years, JOANN has inspired creativity in the hearts, hands and minds of its customers. From a single storefront in Cleveland, Ohio, the nation's category leader in sewing and fabrics and one of the fastest growing players in the arts and crafts industry has grown to include 855 stores across 49 states and robust e-commerce business. With the goal of helping every customer find their creative Happy Place, JOANN serves as a convenient single source for all of the supplies, guidance and inspiration needed to achieve any project or passion. To learn more, visit joann.com.



