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Portland Welcomes ‘Read in Color’ Initiative Sharing Diverse Books in Little Free Libraries

Eleven new Little Free Library book-sharing boxes in Portland offer diverse books celebrating Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, LGBTQ+ and other marginalized voices.

Portland (November 9, 2022) – The international Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization is thrilled to bring diverse books and Little Free Library book-sharing boxes to Portland through their [Read in Color](#) initiative, in partnership with Positive Charge! PDX (PC! PDX), a nonprofit striving to amplify kindness and build community. The two organizations hosted a launch event on November 5 to celebrate 11 new Little Free Library installations throughout the Portland metro area.

"We are proud to work alongside such a community-centered organization like Positive Charge! PDX to improve book access and build community through the sharing of diverse books in Little Free Libraries," said Shelby King, Director of Programs at LFL. "It is our hope that through these new libraries, 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 will make their way into the hands and homes of people all over the city."

Through its Read in Color initiative, LFL donated the new Little Free Libraries—and 2,200 books to stock them—to PC! PDX's Compassion Through Literature project. In total, Read in Color has shared 200 diversity-focused little libraries and nearly 40,000 diverse books across the country. Portland is the 13th city to bring Read in Color into the community.



"Compassion Through Literature began with a simple idea: To encourage people to take a walk in someone else's shoes, by sharing and reading diverse books in little lending libraries," said Sallie Cohen of Positive Charge! PDX. "Our goal is to open hearts and increase understanding, compassion and tolerance for each other."

The Read in Color launch event was held at family-friendly Leikam Brewing—the site of one of the new libraries. Other locations of the Read in Color Little Free Libraries include Congregation Shaarie Torah; Gresham Fire Department Station 72; Milieu Collective; Puppennickel, A Dog BaRkery; and several local residences.

Speakers included Valarie Pearce, an author, educator, and literacy activist who works as a WITS (Writers in the Schools) Teacher for Literary Arts; Sister Shiso Panda, a fully professed member of The Portland Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, The Order of Benevolent Bliss; Stephen Green, COO of A Kids Company About, and Shelby King of LFL.

Rebecca Swindle, PhD, PFLAG Newberg, one of the new Little Free Library stewards, said, "Newberg youth deserve to be celebrated for their unique and colorful backgrounds, attributes, and qualities. We are so grateful to be chosen as recipients for CTL/Read in Color libraries and can't wait to share diverse literature with our residents of all ages. We will continue to fight for equity and inclusion in Newberg, and we know that diverse books can be vital tools in helping young people feel connection, support, and pride."

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 150,000 registered Little Free Library book-sharing boxes worldwide in all 50 states, 115 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.

ABOUT POSITIVE CHARGE! PDX

Positive Charge! PDX is a 100%-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, open to everyone, with a mission to make a positive impact on a collective scale by doing good deeds, sharing good news, and building community. Founded in 2016, PC! PDX operates under the belief that it takes community to heal a community. The politically and religiously neutral organization tackles a range of issues including homelessness, natural disaster assistance, and food insecurity—neighbors making a difference together.



Author Valarie Pearce read her book A Bucket Full of Dreams.





Stephen Green, Valarie Pearce, and Sister Shiso Panda.