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Media Contact: Margret Aldrich / 715-690-2488 x805 / [maldrich@littlefreelibrary.org](mailto:maldrich@littlefreelibrary.org)



## **Little Free Library Announces Indigenous Library Program**

***The initiative will increase book access in Indigenous and tribal communities to help improve literacy outcomes and ignite a love of reading***

Saint Paul, MN (June 6, 2023) – The Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization is thrilled to announce the launch of its [Indigenous Library Program](#), which grants Little Free Library boxes and books where needed most in Indigenous communities and on tribal lands in the United States and Canada. Working with Indigenous community leaders, LFL provides book-sharing boxes to locations where book access is key to improving literacy.

The initiative is led by LFL Program Manager Talia Miracle (Ho-Chunk tribe of Winnebago) and supported by an advisory group that includes Valarie Janis of the Lakota College Woksape Tipi Library (Bay Mills Anishinaabe), LFL national board member and fiber artist Margaret Wood (Navajo and Oklahoma Seminole), and others who belong to or serve Indigenous communities.

“Little Free Library book-sharing boxes on Indigenous land in the U.S. and Canada can be significant to enhancing the education of Indigenous students and residents,” said Wood. “Indigenous reserves and reservations are huge ‘book deserts’. There are few tribal libraries and usually that means one for the entire reserve/reservation.... Having access to books year ‘round will be a game changer for residents of Indigenous lands.”

The Little Free Libraries and books are granted through an [application process](#), with priority given to organizations and individuals with long-term ties to Indigenous communities. In recent years, LFL has granted libraries to Indigenous communities via its general Impact Library Program, and previously through a Native Library initiative. Today’s Indigenous Library Program launch initiates an expanded commitment to making Little Free Libraries available in high-need locations serving Indigenous people.

“We are aiding in literacy efforts within our communities one book at a time,” said Janis, a 2023 [Todd H. Bol Award](#) winner who stewards 11 Little Free Library boxes placed throughout the vast Pine Ridge Reservation. (It takes Janis two five-hour days of driving to check and fill each of the boxes.) “The libraries that I am a steward of have opened doors to storytelling and imagination, as well as other cultures and communities by providing books that cover a variety of topics,” she added.

## Reading Native Voices

Studies show that [book access is vital to improving literacy](#), and reading culturally relevant books can be [equally important](#). The Indigenous Library Program grant packages come with two starter sets of books: one with 25 BIPOC-centered titles and the other with 25 books specifically focused on the Indigenous experience.

“Story and storytelling have always been honored and celebrated by the Indigenous peoples of this continent, but only now are our children and teens seeing young heroes like themselves respectfully reflected in books,” said author Cynthia Leitich Smith (Muscogee), curator of the [Heartdrum](#) imprint at HarperCollins Children’s Books. “We couldn’t be more delighted that Little Free Library is welcoming our kids into the world of readers by making available an excellent array of resonant, page-turning titles to be shared with Native families and communities.”

LFL’s Talia Miracle invites everyone to participate in the Indigenous Library Program launch. “Together we can create much-needed book access in Indigenous communities and celebrate books about the Indigenous experience.”

## How to Get Involved

1. [Apply for an Indigenous Library Program grant](#) if you live in or serve an Indigenous community in the U.S. or Canada.
2. [Support Indigenous readers](#) by making a donation to the program.
3. [Share books by Indigenous authors](#) in Little Free Libraries; find one near you with [LFL’s mobile app](#).
4. [Enter the giveaway](#) to receive a selection of Indigenous titles generously provided by Heartdrum and HarperCollins; or a gift basket from Birchbark Books, an Indigenous bookstore owned by author Louise Erdrich.

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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 160,000 registered Little Free Library book-sharing boxes worldwide in all 50 states, 120 countries and seven continents. Through them, over 300 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 and Indigenous Library Programs and champions diverse books through its Read in Color initiative. To learn more, visit [LittleFreeLibrary.org](#).





Photo caption: White Earth Nation members Lila Berry (left) and Hannah Otto (right) with a young reader at a Little Free Library granted through the Indigenous Library Program, outside the White Earth Indian Health Services building. Courtesy of Little Free Library.





Photo caption: LFL Indigenous Library Program Manager Talia Miracle drops off an Indigenous-authored book in a Little Free Library book-sharing box in St. Paul. Courtesy of Little Free Library.





Photo caption: LFL Indigenous Library Program Manager Talia Miracle (left) and Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan (right) at the 2023 National Congress of American Indians Annual Conference in Prior Lake, MN. Courtesy of Little Free Library.





Photo caption: A Little Free Library book-sharing box was granted to the Wind River Reservation in 2021 through LFL's general Impact Library Program. Courtesy of Little Free Library.