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*Young readers celebrate the launch of Read in Color at Bookworm Gardens in Sheboygan, Wis.*

**‘Read in Color’ Program Grants 30 Little Free Libraries and \$30,000 in Diverse Books to Inaugural Cohort Cities**

***Grantees include organizations in Baltimore, Sheboygan, Wis. and Jacksonville, Fla.***

Saint Paul, Minn. (September 27, 2023) – The Little Free Library (LFL) nonprofit organization was delighted to grant 30 Little Free Library book-sharing boxes and \$30,000 in book support to the members of their inaugural Read in Color cohort, active Fall 2023. Cohort members include the **Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools** of Maryland, which serves the 22nd largest school system in the nation; **904WARD**, a Jacksonville, Fla, nonprofit that creates racial healing and equity in their community through conversations and collective action; and **Bookworm Gardens**, a Sheboygan, Wis. nonprofit botanic garden inspired by children’s literature. Each cohort organization will receive 10 Little Free Libraries and \$10,000 in diverse books.

LFL’s Read in Color diverse books program provides Little Free Libraries and inclusive books to partner organizations across the country. To date, there are 15 participating cities from New York to Portland. More than 50,000 books have been distributed to provide perspectives on racism and social justice, and to celebrate

BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other marginalized voices. The new cohort cycle was developed to invite collaboration between community partners and launch the project in new locations in an efficient and meaningful way.

“From the start of the project, our inaugural Read in Color cohort members have brought passion, enthusiasm, and camaraderie which has really enriched all of our work together,” said Lexie Neeley, LFL’s Read in Color Program Manager. “In each of their respective communities, our community partners are dedicated advocates for increasing access to books that reflect and affirm community members. It has been so rewarding and exciting to see the Read in Color program take shape in our launch cities, guided by the community leaders at 904WARD, Bookworm Gardens, and the Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools.”

The Fall 2023 Read in Color cohort organizations have already begun using their grants to share diverse books in their communities.

**Baltimore:** “We couldn’t be more ecstatic to have been selected as one of three global ambassadors for the Read in Color initiative by the Little Free Library organization,” Dr. Heather Wooldridge, the Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools’ associate director, said in a [statement](#). The foundation has [announced](#) the future locations of the 10 Little Free Libraries they received. All will be placed at local schools.

**Jacksonville:** 904WARD has been busy installing Little Free Libraries—which they call “Little Free Diverse Libraries”—in the Jacksonville community and filling them with multicultural, inclusive books for readers of all ages. They hope to expand their efforts to supply communities with diverse stories in cities throughout Florida.

**Sheboygan:** Bookworm Gardens recently hosted a [Read in Color launch event](#) in Sheboygan, distributing more than 250 diverse books. Cate Tinker, Director of Education and Community Programming, explained that “the Gardens believe diverse books, like diverse ecosystems, lead to a better understanding of the world around us. We are thrilled to be planting 10 book sharing boxes throughout the Sheboygan community filled with culturally relevant books to increase access to diverse literature!”

**Are you interested in bringing Read in Color to your community?** The Spring 2024 Read in Color cohort application is open now through October 3. [Learn more and apply](#) at [littlefreelibrary.org/programs/read-in-color/get-involved/](http://littlefreelibrary.org/programs/read-in-color/get-involved/).

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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 Library book-sharing boxes. There are more than 170,000 registered Little Free Libraries worldwide in all 50 states, in 120 countries and on all 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](http://LittleFreeLibrary.org).

**Editors: Additional images are available and interviews are welcome.**