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Little Free Library Announces 2025 Todd H. Bol Awards for Outstanding Achievement

From brothers in New York to an antiracist steward in Alabama, winners of the seventh-annual awards share an abundance of book joy



St. Paul, MN (May 13, 2025) –The Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization is proud to announce the recipients of the seventh annual **Todd H. Bol Awards for Outstanding Achievement** honoring six exceptional individuals and organizations that exemplify LFL's mission to build community, inspire readers, and expand book access for all. This announcement coincides with **Little Free Library Week**, a global celebration taking place May 11–17.

Since its founding, Little Free Library has inspired thousands of volunteers around the world to become stewards—dedicated caretakers of book-sharing boxes who champion literacy and connection in their communities.

“Volunteer stewards are the heartbeat of the Little Free Library network,” said LFL Executive Director Greig Metzger. “They are literacy champions, community builders and beacons of generosity who

transform simple book-sharing boxes into powerful symbols of hope and connection. The Todd H. Bol Award for Outstanding Achievement honors those whose extraordinary efforts uplift neighborhoods and ignite a lifelong love of reading.”

The winners are:

Irene Barton and Cobb Collaborative of Smyrna, Georgia, who partnered with community organizations, faith communities, schools, municipalities, scouts and neighborhoods to install more than 70 Little Free Library book-sharing boxes across Cobb County, Georgia. “We transfer stewardship to a hyper-local representative when we can,” said Barton, “but are so pleased to serve as stewards for these libraries. Our community partners know that they can always call upon us if needed to help with a repair, replenish books or answer questions.”

Kristen Berthiaume of Homewood, Alabama, who launched the Antiracist Little Free Library to raise racial-violence awareness after the murder of George Floyd. Although Berthiaume is often asked if she receives negative feedback from fellow Alabama residents, the response has been largely positive. “We believe strongly in the power of education and self-reflection to help us develop empathy, grow in understanding of ourselves and the world around us, and provide a pathway towards a more racially just future,” Berthiaume said.

Katie Frazier of Warwick, Rhode Island, a former Roger Williams Park Zoo employee who established a Little Free Library as part of the zoo’s nature playscape. The zoo is in a low-income area, considered a book desert, so it offers monthly free-admission days for city residents. “I’ve noticed a record number of books taken on the Free Day, in comparison to any other day of the month,” Frazier said. A Little Free Library steward and connoisseur, she has visited more than 3,750 libraries in 48 U.S. states and has shared more than 4,200 books.

Ethan and Jackson Levenstien of Dix Hills, New York, brothers who started the “Little Lev Library” to address the lack of book access for children from financially struggling families in their community. Ethan (13) and Jackson (11) coordinated a book drive that collected more than 2,000 books and won a \$500 grant to start the Little Lev Library. “Its name holds a special meaning to us,” said Ethan. “‘Lev,’ in addition to being short for our last name, means ‘heart’ in Hebrew, and it fills our hearts when we read and share with others.... We love books and believe reading should be for everyone.”

Reyna Macias of East Los Angeles, California, who launched *Casita Tiahui Library* with her family during the pandemic to foster community in a time of profound isolation. The library, adorned with hand-painted designs inspired by Mexican tiles and inscribed with bilingual quotes, has become a powerful symbol of connection in East Los Angeles. “I’ve seen children rush over after school, grandparents bring their grandchildren during quiet afternoon walks, and neighbors—both familiar and new—stopping to chat when I’m outside,” Macias said. *Casita Tiahui* doesn’t just offer books—it offers a sense of belonging.”

Madison Reading Project of Madison, Wisconsin, an organization that offers free books and literacy resources that ignite a love for reading and reflect the diversity of young readers. The Madison Reading Project works with partner organizations to help install, stock, and steward a network of Little Free Libraries and credits their volunteers with keeping the program running. The org recently installed a Little Free Library of their own at their book center. “It has been such a joy to watch community members spot it from across the parking lot and change their course to select a book.”

The Todd H. Bol Awards for Outstanding Achievement—part of the Little Free Library Week celebration—are named for LFL’s founder, Todd Bol, who created the first Little Free Library book-sharing box in 2009 in Hudson, Wisconsin, and passed away unexpectedly in 2018. This is the seventh year the awards have been presented, and LFL will continue to honor Bol’s memory for years to come.

Before his passing, Bol said: “I really believe in a Little Free Library on every block and a book in every hand. I believe people can fix their neighborhoods, fix their communities, develop systems of sharing, learn from each other, and see that they have a better place on this planet to live.”

Read more about this year's Todd H. Bol Award winners and see their photos:

LittleFreeLibrary.org/todd-bol-awards

Learn about Little Free Library Week, May 11-17: LittleFreeLibrary.org/lfl-week

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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 200,000 registered Little Free Libraries worldwide in all 50 states, in 128 countries and on all 7 continents. Through them, over 400 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.



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Irene

Barton and Cobb Collective



Reyna Macías



Madison Reading Project



WE'RE CELEBRATING

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY WEEK!

LittleFreeLibrary.org/LFL-Week

