



A big vision for Little Free Library

BY DANIELE BERMAN

BOOK HARVEST

The Downtown Durham Rotary Club has put Book Harvest on the map – the Little Free Library worldwide map, that is!

Thanks to Rotary member and library builder Joe Houde, Book Harvest is among the newest stewards of a Little Free Library here in Durham. In fact, Houde is one of a group of Rotary members who have embraced the Little Free Library movement and are determined to make sure Durham is filled with opportunities for the community to “take a book, return a book.”

The Little Free Library movement began in Hudson, Wisconsin, in 2009, when Todd Bol installed a school-house model in his yard and filled it with books in honor of his mother, a teacher who loved to read. Soon, Rick Brooks, a friend at UW-Madison, combined his expertise in community development and social media marketing with Bol’s creativity and innovation, and in 2010, the Little

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Submitted photo

The Downtown Durham Rotary Club is placing these Little Free Libraries throughout Durham as part of its work to promote literacy in our community.



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Rotarian Joe Houde built this Little Free Library, now installed outside Book Harvest in Rockwood Shopping Center and open 24/7.

Free Library movement was officially born.

In 2011, Little Free Library's mission "to promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide and to build a sense of community as we share skills, creativity and wisdom across generations" hit the national media. As of June 2016, more than 40,000 neighborhood libraries were registered with the organization.

As for the local Rotary Club's participation, Houde shares that it is an obvious choice for an organization whose goal is improved literacy in our community. "Little Free Libraries can help alleviate book deserts—places in the city where access to books is challenging due to lack of book resources both public and private," he says. "My hope for the library here at Book Harvest is that it inspires people who see it to build their own and maybe build libraries for other communities in Durham that can benefit most from them."

Indeed, bringing resources to "book deserts" is exactly what Book Harvest is all about. Since its founding in 2011, the organization has rehomed more than 460,000 books with local children who do not otherwise have ready access to them. Through partnerships with dozens of public schools, social service agencies, community health clinics and other local organizations, Book Harvest brings donated books—an average of 1,500 each week—to children in the community who need them.

Book Harvest's new Little Free Library is a natural complement

to the work they are already doing, as they regularly receive donations of books that are not a good fit for the children they serve. The LFL provides a place to share those books with Durham neighbors – adult fiction, travel guides, cookbooks and all the other treasures readers around the world have learned to share with each other through these neighborhood troves.

If you're looking for the closest spot to share a book you've just finished or you're headed out on a summer road-trip and want to see if there's somewhere along the way to find your next great read, check out Little Free Library's interactive world map at littlefreelibrary.org. And make sure to visit Rotary's Little Free Library at Book Harvest's office in the Rockwood Shopping Center at 2501 University Drive.

Dnaiele Berman, Book Harvest's operations manager, is thrilled to have a Little Free Library in her own front yard. To learn more about Book Harvest, visit www.bookharvestnc.org.