



Rotary Club of Ames Morning Early Literacy Project Little Free Libraries

Little Free Libraries are weather-proof structures that make books available 24/7 to children and families. These visible libraries increase awareness of the importance of reading and provide a gathering place that helps build community relationships.

Why: Reading is fundamental, and it will help children achieve to their potential if they grow up in literacy-rich community environments. Children's reading improves when they can select books of interest to them and have these books in their homes. Children living in families with low incomes have fewer books at home and achieve at lower levels in school than students from middle class families. Often lack of transportation, limited hours, and overdue fines are barriers to using the public library. Students who don't read books in the summer return to school further behind than their peers.

What: Ames Rotarians are helping to create a network of child-friendly Little Free Libraries where children can self-select interesting books to take home and enjoy and then keep, return or exchange them. We are now designing a unique Rotary-branded Little Free Library that is a two-story unit to store children's book below and adult materials above.

When: The Little Free Library movement began in 2009 in Wisconsin with Todd Bol, who built the original library in the shape of a one-room schoolhouse in honor of his mother, a retired teacher. In 2013 we began the initiative in Story County to build Little Free Libraries that would be appropriate heights for children and conveniently located for children living in low-income neighborhoods.

Who: Members of both Ames Rotary Clubs were instrumental in getting the Little Free Library project off the ground in 2013. For instance, Bill Dryer designed and built a first unit. Bob Anderson helped build four units. Harold Pike had two units built and stored all the donated materials in his warehouse. This spring Ames Rotarians will build and install another one.

Where: A consideration in selecting sites has been to place them in locations convenient to children who likely have few books at home.

How: Rotarians can invest a few dollars and sweat equity to build and paint a Rotary-branded Little Free Library and register it on the official website: www.LittleFreeLibrary.org. Ames Rotarians are currently developing plans which will be shared with D6000. Then each Little Free Library needs a local steward to maintain the library and keep it stocked with books. Rotarians could host a book drive to get a start-up collection of gently-used books. Rotarians, stewards and other neighbors could add seating and landscaping. They could even organize a ribbon-cutting celebration and other activities in the area during the year

Story County Little Free Libraries

