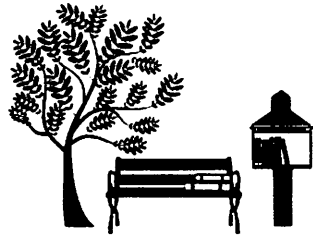




LITTLE FREE LIBRARY.ORG[®]
TAKE A BOOK • RETURN A BOOK



Steward's Guide



LITTLE FREE LIBRARY.ORG[®]
TAKE A BOOK • RETURN A BOOK

Welcome!

This guide has the items, ideas and instructions you need to maintain a successful Little Free Library for years to come. We treasure your participation.

If you have purchased a Little Free Library Original or received a sponsored Library, the official charter sign and number and this guide have been included with the Library itself. There is no additional charge to register on the World Map, so don't wait! It helps your neighbors, visitors and the media find your Library and tell others.

If you built your own Library and have just now received your official charter sign and number, Congratulations! Your charter number and sign entitle you to register your Library's photograph, story and location on the World Map. You're now part of a worldwide group of stewards and friends who share the benefits and recognize the value of playing an active part in the mission of this rapidly growing movement.

Your First Steps

- 1. Make sure your official charter sign is on your Library,** then it's time for "show and tell." Register on the map! It's easy. Go to the Get Involved section on the littlefreelibrary.org main menu. Click on the title Register Your Library on the Map. Everything you need to do is listed there. You just fill out the form, attach one or two digital photos of your Little Library (with the charter sign showing!) and click the Submit button. We'll have your Library on the Map as soon as possible.
- 2. Read On!** The following pages contain advice and techniques from the experience of stewards who have been successfully maintaining Little Libraries for years.

Don't forget that activity ideas and other promotional tools are available at littlefreelibrary.org. Look for resources, tips and "How-To" information in the *Stewards and Friends* section. Stay current through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram and the Little Free Library blog.

- 3. Consider contributing to support the exciting vision of Little Free Library!** As a nonprofit, we rely on contributions to help bring the joy of a Little Free Library to as many people as possible. Learn more in the GIVE section of littlefreelibrary.org, and use the Donate button. Thank you.

Locating Your Little Free Library

Where to Install It

Follow the first principle of real estate: location, location, *location*. Whether on public or private property, the Library is its own best advertising.

If people walking or driving by can see it they may stop. If possible, try to have the Library illuminated. Lighting from a streetlight may be perfect.

Install the Library inside the sidewalk, by your home, not on the boulevard or apron of the street. It also helps if you can directly view the Library from a residence or business.

Keep In Mind:

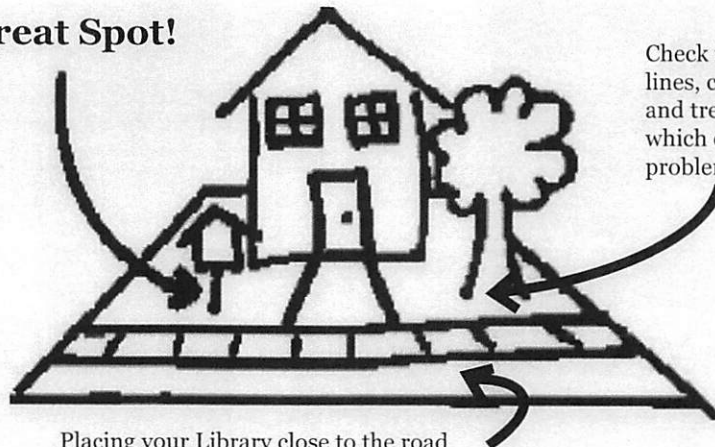
- Plan for peoples' right of way - both legal and actual. Examples: bike riders, lawn mowers, snowplows, walkers. Give them space.
- Determine the process for physical maintenance in case of damage as well as normal wear and tear. Be sure to review the FAQs page of www.littlefreelibrary.org for recommended Library maintenance and solutions to common library issues like leakage and condensation.
- Frequently review the appropriateness of books for all (children, youth and adults).
- Liability insurance - most stewards don't need this but it's a good idea to consult with a lawyer if you think it may be an issue.
- Your Library can be installed any time of year. In cold weather pouring very hot water where you plan to dig can make the job easier.

Public or Private?

Many people wonder why government has so many policies, rules and regulations; why it seems to make it so hard to do something nice. Stewards and supporters of Little Free Libraries want to know: *is it okay to put a Library on public property?*

The answer is yes, probably. The key step is to do your homework and understand who you need to speak to before you install. Even if the Library will be on private property, property managers, Home Owners Associations (HOAs), and city councils may have rules.

Great Spot!



Placing your Library close to the road may be a problem with snow plows or permits.

Check for gas lines, cables and tree roots which can cause problems.

To Make it Even Better

And When the Library is Installed:

- Plant flowers or create some landscaping around it.
- Consider adding a bench so users can sit and read.
- Keep it clean, inside and out.



Other Ideas:

- Put the Library on a wall or fence, or next to a garden.
- Have it be part of a rest stop or shelter; or next to a bench that is already there.
- Place it inside a common area that many people use.

Installing, Celebrating and Taking Care of Your Library

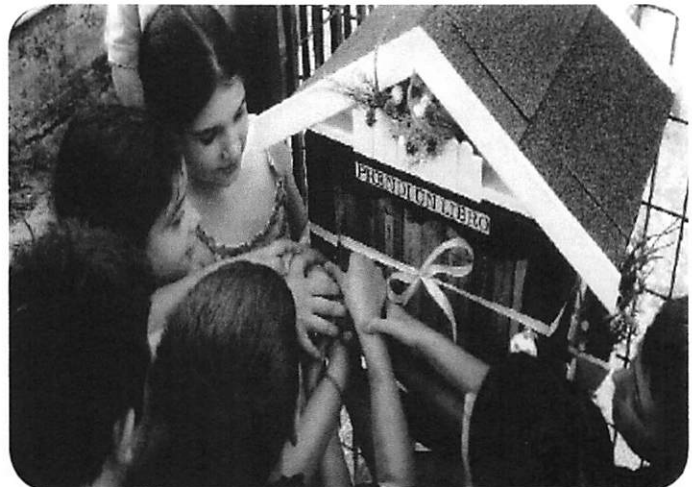
It's time to celebrate your hard efforts. You have installed your Library and now is the time to announce its arrival! Invite people to come see it and select or donate a book or two. Hold an event like a book reading or potluck to meet and greet neighbors. Many stewards have grand opening ceremonies where they gather family, friends and neighbors, provide snacks and have a ribbon cutting event.

If you want lots of people to attend, the best way is to invite people in person. You could also try leaving a handwritten note on your neighbor's doors or sending out special postcards or fliers.

The Role of the Steward

Finding a passionate person to act as the main steward is important for the overall care of each Little Free Library. The steward is the key local contact for users, donors and the Little Free Library movement and support system.

It is not the steward's responsibility to keep the Library full at all times. Instead, the goal is to welcome participation, create and maintain a friendly place in and around the Library, and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to share. Other successful stewards have told us that they actively engage their neighbors and frequently ask for help in the care of their Library.



We encourage you, as a Little Free Library Steward, to:

- Be aware of opportunities to promote reading and literacy. Participate on behalf of your Library whenever you can, or find others who will.
- Make sure your Library is orderly, in good repair, fun and interesting. Communicate with your neighbors and others to get advice and share ideas.
- Stay up-to-date on Little Free Library activities, resources and initiatives through Little Free Library's website, blog and social media.
- Stay in touch with other stewards. If you don't know any others in your area, use our world map (www.littlefreelibrary.org/ourmap/) and reach out to them.
- Be available to speak with local media to help positively promote the exciting Little Free Library movement!
- Keep littlefreelibrary.org informed about how things are going. Use *Facebook*, *Pinterest*, *Twitter*, our *blog* or the *contact us* page.

How to Build and Sustain Support

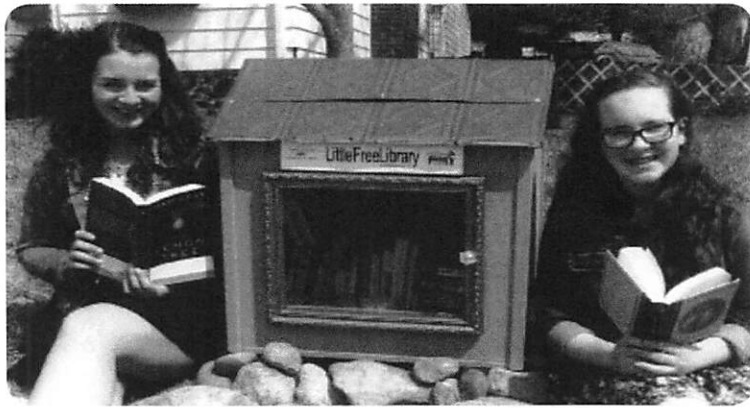
People support that which they help create.

Ownership. If a leader does it for them, rather than with them, the responsibility tends to fall on the leader. The key is to create as many opportunities as possible to engage people of all ages and backgrounds. Here are several strategies to make that happen:

1. **Communicate from the start that this is an effort for the common good;** that giving offers as much satisfaction as taking.
2. **If your Library is “off the beaten path,” move it.** Put the Library in a place where you will have lots of pedestrian, bike or vehicular traffic. If your public library or school is the steward, don't put it right outside the building. Instead, plant it several blocks away as an outreach strategy.
3. **Tell everyone and contact the media.** The more people you can tell in-person, the better. Newspapers, TV and radio stations, websites and organizational newsletters all have an interest in Little Free Libraries and good news. Send them short messages that include your contact information and Library location.
4. **Make sure to start off with lots of stakeholders** and lots of people sharing the pleasure and rewards. That's why having a Library building event or grand opening ceremony can be so valuable. A picnic or block party, for example, offer a chance for everyone to contribute something.
5. **Welcome participation in all ways.** Thank people in writing and in person. Keep a notebook in the Library so that anyone can offer suggestions, comments, recommendations or requests. Remember, it's not just the content of books but the memories and thoughts that books generate that matter.
6. **Build a backup reserve of books by involving book lovers** --book clubs, discussion groups and people who have big home libraries--but also Friends of Libraries, used book stores and folks who will thoughtfully patronize Goodwill and St. Vincent de Paul.
7. **Keep in mind that this is not a government program or a consumer-driven business.** It's just regular people who want to be involved in promoting a sense of community, reading for youth, literacy for adults and book exchanges around the world. Success is not defined by the volume of books, but it's important to pay enough attention that the Library isn't empty for long periods of time.
8. **Don't burden Little Library users with lots of rules.** Accept the fact that all people are not always respectful. But if you have enough good people involved from the beginning, you will have established the norm of respectful Library use.
9. **Respect freedom of expression and diversity.** Keep a balance of books available. If a Little Library becomes source of religious and political rants, you could lose a lot of interest.



Vandalism: How to Prevent it and What to do if it Happens



“Won’t someone vandalize my Little Library?” The answer is...maybe, but probably not. With thousands of Libraries around the world, we have found that less than 1% are vandalized. But you can lower the odds even more.

For every story of damage to Little Free Libraries we’ve heard, there are hundreds of others that inspire us. Wounded Libraries are mysteriously repaired or replaced, or neighbors rebuilt them. And in one case, the perpetrator wasn’t kids or gangs. It was Mother Nature herself! The lightning that struck a Little Free Library covered with metal keys affirmed Ben Franklin’s electrical experiments hundreds of years ago.

How To Prevent It

The more mischief makers believe they might be caught, the less likely they are to do damage. Try answering these questions about your Little Library:

1. Will you (or someone else) be able to see acts of vandalism? Good lighting is key. Make sure your Library is under a streetlight, near your front porch or where passing traffic can see it.
2. Is your Library easy to break or take? Glass can be broken; Plexiglas is a better choice and easy to replace. If it has artwork or hardware that can be removed, you are tempting fate.
3. Does anybody really care? If it looks like nobody cares and your Library isn’t clean and well-maintained, someone will be more likely to do damage.

Make It Personal

Let anyone near the Library know that it has a steward who cares about it. Put a sign on the Library that says something like: “Thank you for protecting and loving our Library!” with photos of smiling neighbors and kids. Ask the neighborhood kids, especially those that may be in “gangs” or the stereotypical “bad kids,” to be your watchdogs and make sure the Library is always in good condition.

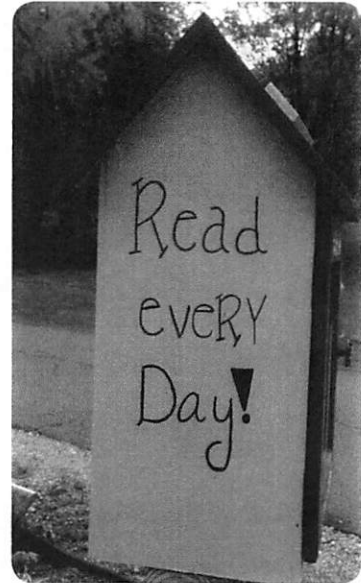
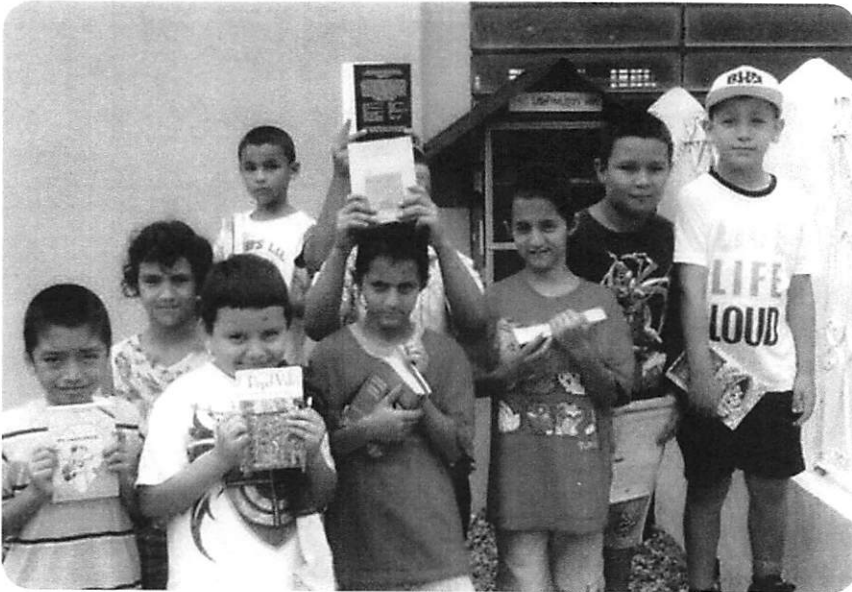
What to do if Your Library is Vandalized

Repair it or rebuild it as soon as possible...and be prepared to rebuild it yet again. Remind yourself to believe in the goodness of the vast majority of people. But don’t challenge those who did the damage to do it again by threatening or confronting them.

If the vandalism is specifically related to the books (e.g. someone is regularly clearing out the entire contents of your Library) then consider stamping each one and putting a book label on the spine. Don’t put large batches of new books in your Library, either; seed them in slowly and at different times of the day.

Let it be known in a positive way that a precious neighborhood resource has been damaged. Ask for help; it is amazing what people will give if you are willing to ask.

Tips from the Field



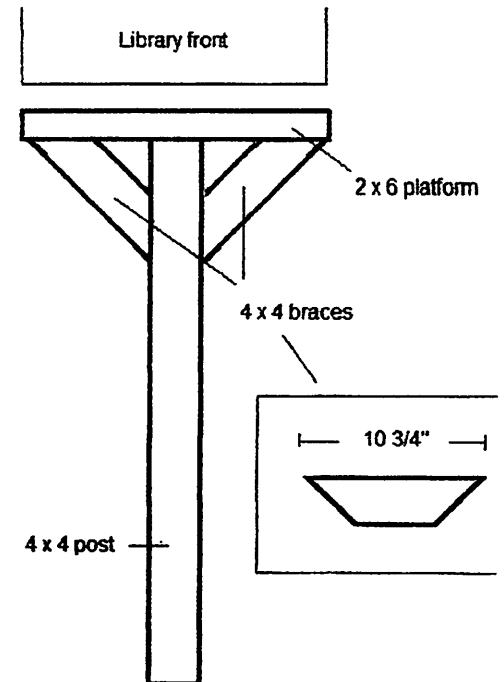
Here is what stewards suggest:

- **Leave room for people to give books.** Books will come back around, but only if there is space in the Library. A smaller, thoughtful collection trumps an overflowing mass of throwaways. It wordlessly communicates to others that your Library is cared for, respected and it encourages high-quality book donations.
- **Have a “featured” book or two; you can add a special shelf in the Library or on the side of it for themed or specialty books that you want to highlight.** The easiest way to do this is to pick a few books and place them in the Library so that their front covers face out and are visible through the door...then watch as the next person who passes by the Library is magically drawn in.
- **Promote your public library and befriend the librarians.** Let them know where your Little Library is and offer to advertise public library events and resources. Ask if they would be willing to donate excess books to stock your Little Library – most public libraries have book sales throughout the year and they donate or recycle the extras, so take advantage of that!
- **Consider maintaining a Facebook or other social media page for your Library, but only if you regularly update it.** Post every time there are hot new books in the Library or let people know when you're running low. Update people on upcoming events or special resources (e.g. bookmarks, storytime for kids, treats for pets, etc.). This is a great way to help friends and neighbors stay up-to-date and remind them to stop by.
- **Be discerning and send books to their recycling grave if that's what needs to happen; don't think that someone might read this old textbook from 1975.** That book is just taking up space and devaluing the other books in the Library.
- **People like pretty, shiny, well-kept books...not outdated, yellowing, mass-market paperbacks.** Even if it is an excellent title, if it looks bad, it will linger in the Library. Remove it, at least temporarily; if you really think it is worthwhile, try sneaking it back in when you have a particularly nice selection of high-quality books inside. People are more likely to give it a chance when they see that the rest of the collection is carefully curated.
- **Try Bookcrossing.** Never heard of it? It's a great way to not only share books, but then track their progress around the world with a unique book label and ID number. Check out www.bookcrossing.com to get started. As an added benefit, this also discourages people from re-selling books.

Mounting your Little Free Library

Materials and Tools Needed:

- One 4" x 4" x 8' treated wooden post (cedar or green treated)
- One 2" x 6" x 16" piece of wood for mounting platform
- Four ¼" x 3" lag bolts
- Six ¼" x 2" lag bolts
- 3" exterior wood screws
- Sandpaper (80-120 grit suggested)
- Exterior stain or paint with paint brush or roller
- Electric saw
- Screwdrivers, phillips and square drive
- T-square
- Clamps
- Cordless drill, bits and drivers
- Shovel
- Level



Assembling the Mounting Post

1. Begin by cutting a five foot length from the 4" x 4" x 8' post.
2. Cut the remaining 3' piece in half to make 4" x 4" braces. Cut 45-degree angles on each end of the two braces. (See diagram above). These pieces should measure approximately 10 ¾" on the longer sides.
3. Measure the width of your Library. Cut the 2" x 6" piece to that same width to be the platform.
4. Use exterior wood screws to attach the 4" x 4" braces to the bottom of the platform, lining up the edges evenly. Then attach the other end of braces to the post (refer to diagram). Use 3" lag bolts to reinforce the braces, platform and post.
5. Dig a hole about 24" deep and place the post in the center. Refill the hole and make sure the dirt is firmly packed around the post. Use a level to make sure the post is straight. Tamp the dirt down again using the handle of the shovel, and recheck to ensure the post is level.
6. Mark spots on bottom of Library for drilling six holes. Make sure the holes are centered over the platform. Drill holes to attach the Library to the platform with 2" lag bolts.

When you've finished installing your Library, take a picture of yourself and your Library. Send it to us at www.littlefreeLibrary.org because we'd love to see it! Then share your experience with someone else and help them assemble or build their own Little Free Library to continue supporting the literacy and well-being of your own community!