

Greater Lowell Tech students create Little Free Libraries in sending communities



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TYNGSBORO — Students from several different pathways at Greater Lowell Technical High School teamed up to build, paint and install nine Little Free Libraries in the school's four sending communities.

Little Free Library is a nonprofit organization based in Minnesota whose mission is to be a catalyst for building community, inspiring readers and expanding book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Libraries.

Reading teacher Kara Tansey-Theall first learned of the Little Free Library movement during a trip to California in 2022, and returned to GLTHS with a mission to purchase two kits that incoming ninth-graders could build.

One of those libraries built by ninth-graders last year was placed in front of the home of Design and Visual Communication instructor Sonia Dickson.

“That summer, I was able to experience the joy of stewardship,” said Dickson. “I met many families from my neighborhood and they were excited and happy about having the little library as a place to bring their children to get them excited about books.”

This year, Dickson began working with Tansey-Theall and other faculty members to have an interdisciplinary team of students build even more libraries from scratch using all donated materials.

The project began with a survey of faculty and staff at GLTHS to see who would be willing to be a steward for a Free Little Library, and nine members of faculty and staff signed up to host a library. Those staff members are Tara Sarmiento, Megan Sun, Azar Zanelotti, Michael Stack, Jennie Flood, Sarah Samaros, Andrea Ramirez, Carol Fine, and Lauren Chenelle and Lynn Jablonski.

Carpentry students built the wood frames of the libraries, which have cedar shingles, magnetic doors and two shelves for books. Painting and Design students painted each library colors chosen by stewards, and Design and Visual Communications students created artworks for each of the nine libraries, which were selected by stewards via a "Little Free Art Show" that was held at the school.

Over 1,000 books for the libraries were collected via a book drive held through English classrooms at the school.

The libraries were completed and installed in May, and a grand opening was held on May 30 at the Little Free Library at 915 Varnum Ave. in Lowell. Each of the libraries is registered with Little Free Library, and includes a small plaque noting that the library was built and installed by GLTHS students.

Other Little Free Libraries built by GLTHS students are located at:

- 94 Berkeley Ave., Lowell
- 376 Butman Road, Lowell
- 66 Jefferson Road, Dracut
- 329 W. Meadow Road, Lowell
- 116 Coburn Road, Tyngsboro
- 915 Varnum Ave., Lowell
- 50 Malwood Ave., Dracut
- 38 Laplume Ave., Lowell
- 240 Thorndike St., Dunstable
- 126 7th Ave., Lowell

"It is our hope that the Little Free Libraries provide more children and adults in our communities with easy access to books and this encourages reading and learning," said Superintendent Jill Davis.