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## Scouts Build A Little Free Library In Pompton Plains



By Henry M. Holden

Nicole Liccardo discovered a unique way to teach and instill leadership with her Girl Scout Troop 96490; build a library.

Not just an ordinary library, but one that would build community, spark creativity and inspire readers. The girls were thrilled with the idea.

"We have about 15 girls in our troop," said Liccardo. "I asked each girl to go into their private stash of books at home and donate three to four books each that they

no longer read and that they would like to pass on and donate.

"The idea is for a person to take a book home, read it and they can either bring that book back or bring another book in its place," he said. "It's all about taking and leaving."

The North Boulevard School in Pompton Plains has a library, but Liccardo worked very closely with the principal Loeffler, and he was thrilled to be part of the project.

"This is all about the girls doing this  
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## Scouts Build...

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service project by themselves, then donating their time and books that they used to read," he said. "We didn't want to take anything from the school we wanted to give something back. This was a Girl Scout event, something they could contribute to the school.

"Our troop bought a "Little Free Library." It was pre-fabricated and then the girls painted it."

Liccardo was the leader (or steward) and she had four other coleaders. They all oversaw the project.

"When we were painting it everyone took a role, opening and stirring the cans of paint or actually doing the painting."

Her co-leaders are all moms, Jenean Carlon, Stephanie Stoudt, Melisa Daken, and Carrie Canavan.

"The nine-year-old girls

were pretty independent," said Liccardo. "The girls colored bookmarks, wrote a little description of what the book is about, and included in the note 'please return it or another book in its place.' It was all about them doing and being hands-on."

The library opened with more than 25 books in the inventory and they have room for growth. The girls are responsible to check the books regularly, and if they see that they are running low to notify one of the co-leaders who will send out emails to the troop requesting more donations.

"The next step is for us to register our Little Free Library on their website so that when any of the girls travel they can punch in the area code and the website will tell them where the nearest Little Free Library is in that area," she said.

"We had an informal opening and decorated it with some flowers, and invited the principal," she said. "We even put a stake in the ground with the sign "Little Free Library Give a Book Take a Book. Then we had a group photograph taken.

"I emailed the principal asking him to send a note to all parents explaining the new little free library to them and explaining that the Brownie troop did it so that they get some recognition. They spent a lot of time on it.

"I am delighted to see the response before we even opened," she adds. "We had our meeting and the girls then went on the playground and noticed three kids reading books already, before we even had our grand opening."

The Little Free Library Sharing Network is more than 65,000 Little Free Libraries strong! To see ready-to-assemble kits or a variety of pre-built designs, go to <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>.



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