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## Little Free Libraries Added

**Moultrie, Georgia – June 1, 2022** – Thanks to a collaborative community partnership, Colquitt County families will have increased access to books this summer at six additional *Little Free Library*® sites. Known as "the world's largest book-sharing movement," the *Little Free Library* concept was founded in 2009 by Todd H. Bol as a tribute to his late mother. It has grown into a nationwide trend, with registered Little Free Libraries in all 50 states and continents except Antarctica. The libraries are simple weatherproof book boxes where you can borrow and return books or share extra books with others.

These new *Little Free Libraries* will be registered with the national organization and located at C. A. Gray Junior High School and Cox, Stringfellow, Okapilco, Norman Park, and Funston Elementary Schools. While they are located at schools, everyone in the community is encouraged to use them to share and borrow books.

"This project is a perfect example of various community stakeholders working together," said Dr. Tabathia Baldy, Multi-Tiered System of Supports Director for Colquitt County School District. "The Rotary immediately stepped up when I was looking for a sponsor, and our CTAE Department was willing to take on the building project." Other community partners include Archway Professional Sarah Adams, who connected Baldy with Rotary Club leaders, and Holman's Supply Company, who provided materials at cost for the project. "Supporting education is one of Rotary's eight primary areas of focus. It is especially important to us, as more than 775 million people over the age of 15 - nearly 17 percent of the world's adult population - are illiterate," said Jaclyn Donovan, 2021 Rotary President. "Our goal is to strengthen the capacity of Moultrie and Colquitt County to support basic education and literacy, and we can think of no better way to do so than by supporting this initiative."

This project complements the Rotary's five other book-sharing boxes at Colquitt Regional Memorial Hospital, Main Street Park, the Moultrie City Municipal Building, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Moultrie and Berlin, and The Talk Event Center on North Main Street.

A 2019 article by the School Library Journal published a map highlighting "book deserts" across the nation, a term used for geographic areas where books and other reading material are difficult to obtain. "I knew there were fewer options in our area than others, but seeing Colquitt County highlighted on a map as a 'book desert' rattled me. It doesn't have to be this way," said Baldy. "I'm happy we have so many others in our community who are passionate about increasing book access to our families."

Earlier this year, Doerun Elementary School, in partnership with Colquitt EMC, Doerun City Council, and The City of Doerun, installed three book-sharing boxes in Doerun, thanks to an EMC Bright Ideas grant, secured by Doerun teacher Ashley Pitts.

"The hope is that this initiative will continue to grow across our county," said Baldy.

If you are interested in partnering to place more Little Free Libraries in the community or to assist in maintaining the current ones, contact [tabathia.baldy@colquitt.k12.ga.us](mailto:tabathia.baldy@colquitt.k12.ga.us).

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Image: Rotary leaders pose with C.A. Gray students who built the Little Free Libraries



From Left to right: Wilson Cade Grantham, Jaclyn Donovan (2021 Rotary President), Zachary Vann, Brett Fitzgerald, Chip Blalock (Rotary Program Director), Steve Bass (CTAE Teacher), Roddrick Carter, Timothy Gage Emory, Harrison Brown, and Tabathia Baldy (MTSS Director).