

Rotary Little Free Library Dedication Ceremony (7/9/19)

Welcome and Introduction by **Mike Downey**

Rotary has made its mission to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through our fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders by promoting peace, fighting disease, providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, saving mothers and children, supporting education, and growing local economies.

Megan:

Information about literacy and the importance

Rotary District 5440 emphasized the importance that literacy plays in our world in so many things and how it is the basis for peace. Literacy helps with better understanding the world around us. If one can read, they have the power to gain knowledge on any topic. In 2018 Rotary District was offering a matching grant for a literacy project and our Scottsbluff/ Gering rotary club started looking around at how we may use a literacy grant in our community.

One of the options that came up was Little Free Libraries. The concept of a Little Free Library was started in 2009 in Hudson Wisconsin by a Rotarian, Todd Bol, who placed a little free library in his front yard in memory of his mother, a teacher. The concept was, "Take a book, share a book," and the idea took off and an organization was founded in 2012 to spearhead the movement. Today there is 75,000 LFLs, in 88 countries around the world. Before his passing in 2018 he said,

"I really believe in a Little Free Library on every block and a book in every hand. I believe people can fix their neighborhoods, fix their communities, develop systems of sharing, learn from each other, and see that they have a better place on this planet to live."

This concept goes right along with our mission as Rotarians. So we began making partnerships with others in the community to get a feel for interest in the project. Both city's libraries and city administrations were behind the project, as well as Scottsbluff High School. With the money from Scottsbluff and Gering Rotary and a matching grant from Rotary District 5440 we purchased all the materials, which then Scottsbluff High school was able to use to not only build the little free libraries but was able to use to improve their carpentry skills. Thanks to the help of the Scottsbluff schools assembling the libraries from scratch we were able to assemble 6 libraries as opposed to the 4 we would have been able to make from kits.

The libraries will be located at:

Westmoor Pool, 27th Street, and on East Overland at the Lakota Lutheran Center In Scottsbluff

And McLellan Park (476 D Street), Hampton Park (5th & S St), Johannes Park (Hackberry Dr)

in Gering.

The librarians helped us to select areas in each of their communities that would best meet the needs of the citizens of Scottsbluff and Gering. The librarians have also committed to be stewards of the Little Free Libraries and to helping upkeep the little free libraries.

Thank you's

So thank you to Rotary District 5440, Scottbluff High School, Scottsbluff Lied Library, Gering Public Library.