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Celebrate Minnesota Public Radio's 50th Anniversary at *Book It to the Parks* on June 21

The Minneapolis Foundation to gift more than 50 Little Free Libraries to Minneapolis parks at midsummer read-a-thon in honor of MPR's 50th

MINNEAPOLIS – Love reading, summer, Minneapolis parks, and MPR? This anniversary gift to the community is perfect for you! Join The Minneapolis Foundation on Wednesday, June 21 at Book It to the Parks, a midsummer read-a-thon at which park recreation centers all over the city will “unwrap” more than 50 new Little Free Libraries—a gift from the Foundation to Minneapolis families and children in honor of Minnesota Public Radio's 50th anniversary. Kids, adults, and bookworms of all stripes are invited to check out the new libraries by heading to story time at local parks, which will hold more than 50 fun reading events throughout the day, from morning 'til night on summer's longest day. Bring a book to donate to your neighborhood's newest Little Free Library and Book It to the Parks!

To promote literacy and recognize Minnesota Public Radio's anniversary, The Minneapolis Foundation is partnering with the Minneapolis Parks Foundation and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to bring these new Little Free Libraries to public parks. “Communities thrive when residents are informed and energized about what's going on in the world,” said R.T. Rybak, President and CEO of The Minneapolis Foundation. “By providing listeners with high-quality news and entertainment for half a century, Minnesota Public Radio has strengthened our community enormously. That's worth celebrating!”

“We are so thrilled to partner with these great, community-strengthening organizations to inspire readers of all ages as part of our 50th anniversary celebration,” said Ali Lozoff, director of MPR's 50th Anniversary. “We are so honored that The Minneapolis Foundation is supporting this endeavor that will spark the imagination of families from neighborhoods all over Minneapolis. This project speaks directly to our mission, and we are so grateful to share it with so many people.”

Dozens of authors, civic leaders, and community volunteers will join a day-long read-a-thon by reading a children's book at one of 50 Minneapolis recreation centers that will be unveiling new Little Free Libraries on June 21. Guest readers at Book It to the Parks include:

- Minnesota Public Radio hosts and staff members, including Steve Seel and Julie Amacher of Classical MPR, Euan Kerr of MPR News, Jim McGuinn of The Current, and Molly Bloom and Marc Sanchez of “Brains On!”
- Margret Aldrich, author of *The Little Free Library Book*
- Rapper Carnage the Executioner (Terrell Woods)
- Minnesota Twins catcher Jason Castro
- Ed Graff, Superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools
- Jayne Miller, Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
- Lea B. Olsen, FOX sports commentator and former Gopher basketball player
- Kristi Pearson, Executive Director of Friends of the Hennepin County Library
- Children’s author Phyllis Root
- R.T. Rybak, President & CEO of The Minneapolis Foundation

For more information and a full schedule of read-a-thon events on June 21, go to www.minneapolisfoundation.org/BookIt.

Little Free Libraries are “take a book, leave a book” free book exchanges. Most of the new Little Free Libraries in Minneapolis parks are wooden boxes that will be installed outside, but keep an eye out for a few mobile libraries. Lake Nokomis even has a Little Free Library made out of a kayak!

“Our neighborhood recreation centers are often the ‘hubs’ that connect community members with one another,” said Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Superintendent Jayne Miller. “Having Little Free Libraries in our parks gives Minneapolis residents of all ages another great reason to come together and develop a lifelong love for reading.”

“Books, like parks, have the power to transform human life. Now, parks visitors can drop by any Minneapolis recreation center and discover new stories to captivate their imagination and expand their horizons,” said Tom Evers, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. “We believe parks are common ground and we’re excited to help make it easier for community members to share a common love of reading through Little Free Libraries at every recreation center.”

Members of the public are encouraged to bring a new or used book to donate to the Little Free Library in their neighborhood park. In addition, every new library will be seeded with children’s books donated by The Minneapolis Foundation, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation and other community partners.

“Literacy is a cornerstone of healthy communities, and Little Free Libraries are a fun, visible expression of the joy, learning, and relationships that blossom when kids and families read,” Rybak said. “Book It to the Parks is just one of the ways that we’re working to promote literacy and bring neighbors together.”

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About The Minneapolis Foundation: For more than 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to improve lives in Minnesota and beyond. The Foundation manages more than \$700 million in assets, providing customized and tax-smart giving solutions that result in the average annual distribution of more than \$50 million in grants. The Foundation brings

people together to unite behind common goals and spark positive change in our community.
www.minneapolisfoundation.org

About Minnesota Public Radio: Minnesota Public Radio® operates a 45-station radio network serving nearly all of Minnesota and parts of surrounding states. Reaching 1 million listeners each week, MPR and its three regional services—[MPR News](#), [Classical MPR](#) and [The Current](#)®—produce programming for radio, digital and live audiences. MPR marks its first half century of public service in 2017 with broadcast programming and special events on air, online and in person across the state. Details at [MPR50.org](#). Programs produced by MPR’s national programming division, American Public Media®, reach more than 20 million listeners via 1,000 radio stations nationwide each week. APM is one of the largest producers and distributors of public radio programming in the world, with a portfolio that includes A Prairie Home Companion®, BBC World Service, Marketplace®, and the leading classical music programmer in the nation. APM also offers a diverse array of podcasts featuring the best in food, culture, entertainment, business and investigative journalism. For more information on MPR, visit [minnesotapublicradio.org](#). For more information on APM, visit [americanpublicmedia.org](#). *Source: Data are copyright Nielsen Audio. Data are estimates only.*

About the Minneapolis Parks Foundation: *The Minneapolis Parks Foundation transforms human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision. The Parks Foundation co-leads the RiverFirst Initiative with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and is responsible for private fundraising and implementation of the Water Works and Great Northern Greenway River Link projects. The Parks Foundation also supports innovative Minneapolis parks projects through equity funding and champions world-class design through its Next Generation of Parks™ Event Series. Learn more at [MplsParksFoundation.org](#).*

About the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board: *The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is an independent, semi-autonomous body responsible for the Minneapolis park system. With 179 park properties totaling 6,804 acres of land and water, the Park Board provides places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community and the environment. Its Grand Rounds Scenic Byway, neighborhood parks, recreation centers and diversified programming have made the park system an important component of what makes Minneapolis a great place to live, play and work. More than 22 million annual visits are made to the nationally acclaimed park system, which was named the number one park system in the nation in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 by The Trust for Public Land’s 2016 ParkScore® Index.*

About Little Free Library: *Little Free Library is a nonprofit organization that inspires a love of reading, builds community, and sparks creativity by fostering neighborhood book exchanges around the world. Since the first Little Free Library was built by founder Todd H. Bol in 2009, the number of registered book exchanges has grown to more than 50,000 worldwide. Millions of books are shared annually through the book exchanges that are individually managed by volunteer stewards in all 50 states and 70 countries. In its short history Little Free Library has received recognition from the National Book Foundation, the American Library Association, and the Library of Congress, among many others. To obtain a Little Free Library and learn more, visit [littlefreelibrary.org](#).*