

Little Free Library benefits Ukraine, community

In a brainstorming session a few years ago, members of Trotwood (Ohio) Church of the Brethren used large sheets of paper to list ways they could be a blessing to their neighbors.

“The idea of a Little Free Library made it to the wall, and from there into our hearts!” member Paula Bowser said, speaking at a dedication for the library box during the Sunday morning church service June 12.

That afternoon, after heavy downpours that threatened more rain, the sun came out just in time to shine brightly over a festive ribbon-cutting grand opening, complete with hot dog roast, children’s story time, and other activities.

“Our Little Free Library doesn’t just belong to us, it belongs to the whole community,” library steward Peggy

Reiff Miller said. “With its ‘Take a book—Share a book’ theme, our hope is that this Little Free Library will bring a little more joy, a little more connection, and a lot of love of reading to our community.” The library is a small box on a stand located on the front lawn of the church.

The grand opening celebration also featured a fundraiser to provide Ukrainian books for Ukrainian refugee children and orphans through a project of the Ukrainian Book Institute.

“Far away from home, with little to call their own, books in their own language will provide these children a moment of peace and connection to their homeland,” Miller said. Generous donors far surpassed the committee’s hope for a couple hundred dollars, with more than \$1,000 raised for the project.

The Trotwood Church’s library was the 141,024th to register worldwide with the Little Free Library organization. To learn more about the organization go to www.littlefreelibrary.org.



Judy Gaine



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Congregations support Brethren Ukraine efforts

At a church board meeting at the beginning of April, a suggestion was made that **Free Spring Church of the Brethren** (Mifflintown, Pa.) contribute money to help those in Ukraine. The board voted unanimously to donate \$15,000 to Ukraine through Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM).

Since that time, congregation members have been making individual contributions through a weekly offering for the cause. By the following month, those offerings had already totaled an additional \$6,120. Future offerings will continue to be forwarded to BDM. “We’re thankful that the district and our General Board are also supporting this effort and we pray that the funds will be directed to be of the most effective use,” a statement from the church said.

In Virginia, meanwhile, **Harrisonburg First Church of the Brethren** planned a Fourth of July celebration and fundraiser to benefit Ukrainian children. The event, hosted by the congregation’s Praize Kids team, featured a bounce house, games, and a book and toy giveaway. Praize Kids also sold lemonade and cookies while accepting additional donations for the project. Funds are being sent to Brethren Disaster Ministries.

Do you have district or congregational stories that might be of interest to MESSENGER? Short items with a photo are best. Send them to MESSENGER, c/o In Touch, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or messenger@brethren.org.