

# Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee: Completely inaccessible little libraries installed across Milwaukee

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**MILWAUKEE (October 6, 2017)** – Six **extra-tall** little free libraries recently appeared in downtown Milwaukee near the Milwaukee Public Market and at the Milwaukee County Zoo. These libraries, which were installed on Wednesday, October 4, continue the effort started in June when downtown Milwaukee [turned blue](#) to support the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee capital campaign efforts to raise \$70 million.

The ten-foot Little Free Libraries, which are completely inaccessible to passersby, are physical representations of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee's recent advertising campaign, "[Within Reach.](#)" The campaign focuses on the difficulty for youth to succeed in life when basic needs such as nutrition, books and safe places are out of reach to them. The libraries are a reminder that even as downtown businesses have shifted away from going blue and while the media campaign does not yet gear up again until November, that the capital campaign continues.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee's "A Club for Every Kid" \$70 million campaign quietly kicked off in 2016 and has now reached 65% of its goal through

120 major corporate, donor gifts and smaller community donations. In late June, many downtown businesses went blue for the day by displaying large blue window clings, flying blue flags, banners and signs to help raise awareness for the public fundraising campaign. Others went blue with their building lighting. More than 200 Club youth also visited supporting businesses that June day to deliver giant thank you cards to supporting businesses. Since the community-wide donation campaign launched, the public has donated more than \$5 million to the Clubs.

According to Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee President & CEO Vincent Lyles, this continuation of the campaign is to remind the public that every little bit helps. "In June, we were able to publically thank some of our supporters, but it was also about taking our plea to the streets, to the airwaves, to the Internet and beyond to raise awareness that we need everyone's help," said Lyles.

"We hope these Little Free Libraries will help remind business foot traffic and families at the zoo that everyone who contributes, large or small, helps expand our programs and services to meet the needs of local youth," added Lyles. "A contribution of \$50 buys books for students in literacy programs and \$2,500 buys a year's worth of art supplies for one club. Everyone can play a role, and we hope they will."

Through "A Club for Every Kid," BGC hopes to provide inspiration, confidence, safety and nourishment for every Milwaukee child, and show them that with the right choices and the right effort, they can expect a lot out of life. The funds raised will grow and enhance specific programs in accordance with BGC's strategic plan. According to Boys & Girls Clubs of America's 2016 Outcomes Report, high school-age Club members are more likely to abstain from high-risk behaviors than their non-Club counterparts.

"We know our approach is working; we have 51 locations across Greater Milwaukee and serve more than 41,000 children and teens annually, but we need help to continue expanding our solution," said Lyles. "Milwaukee youth need supervised, productive activities in safe places that encourage positive interests and passions and support critical needs, including nutrition and academic support."

Following the conclusion of the campaign, the Clubs hope to reconstruct the Little Free Libraries to an accessible height and utilize them in the community.

### **About Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee (BGC), one of the largest and longest youth-serving agencies in Milwaukee, offers structured after-school and summer programming to more than 41,000 children and teens each year. Within the safety of 51 locations, youth have access to free meals, academic support, role models and opportunities to build character and explore new interests. Through programs like MarVan Scholars and World of Work, the Clubs provide a structured pathway for members to thrive in all stages of their education and gain valuable job experience that will help them develop successful careers as adults.

More than 80 percent of the organization's annual budget goes toward youth programming. Charity Navigator, America's largest and most-utilized charity evaluator, has given BGCGM its highest rating. For more information, please visit [www.BoysGirlsClubs.org](http://www.BoysGirlsClubs.org).