

How To Spread The Word, Build And Sustain Support

Here's the best way to start building awareness: let people see your Street Library! Install the Library in a place where as many people as possible will notice it. They will be curious, look inside and tell their friends and family what they saw. So be sure that they can find very good books from the very first day.

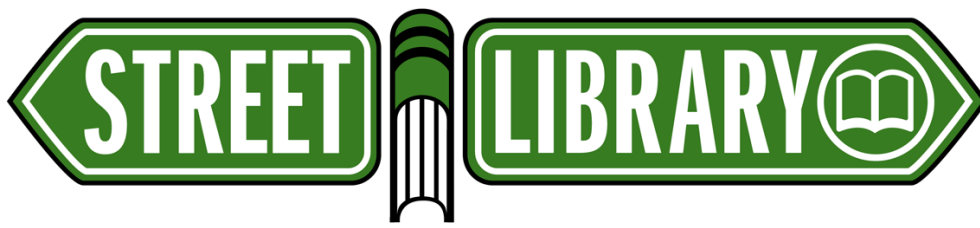
Spread The Word

Gathering a network of neighbors and friends who are invested in the well-being of your Street Library is key to your long-term success. Start by spreading the word. Remember, you don't need to wait until after your Library is installed to start promoting it.

- **Share the work.** Ask for friends to share the librarian-ship duties and help to spread the word. Recruit help for keeping the Library stocked with good books and well maintained. Help children, youth and adults get involved.
- **Have a welcome party, a potluck supper or a picnic.** Let everyone know that the Library belongs to the neighborhood, not just you, have several neighbors co-host the gathering. Invite your neighbors a week or two in advance, and be sure to have it at a time when kids and adults can attend. Ask them to bring "a buck and a book" or see if they will bring a little food to share.
- **Invite people in print.** By far the most effective way is to leave a handwritten invitation or flier at the front door of everyone you want to invite. An "evite" with RSVP can work, too, and newsletters (online or print). Emails or Facebook posts can help, but don't rely on just one medium. And don't worry about looking "professional." Remember, friendly faces and friendly places are what these StreetLibraries are all about. Tell community media. Newspapers, TV and radio stations, websites and organizational newsletters. Send them short messages that include your name, Library location, the names of people who can talk about the Library and what they like about it, and how others can participate. Be sure to include the correct website address: www.streetlibrary.org.au Tell your neighbors in person and ask them to tell others.
- **And finally...Register on the map!** Take lots of photographs, not only of the Library but also the people around it. Visit streetlibrary.org.au to register your Library's location to let people know you're accepting donations. Plus, book lovers around the world use the map to find Street Libraries in their travels!

Build And Sustain Support

Most Street Libraries don't sustain themselves in the long run. That's why having a dedicated team of librarians is so important! Being a librarian means being a long-term literacy and reading advocate through your Library.



After the initial excitement and rush of book donations wears off, what can you do to keep people interested and keep your Library full of books?

1. **Communicate from the start that this is an effort for the common good;** that giving offers as much satisfaction as taking.
2. **If one person or organization buys or starts the Library, make sure that the stakeholder base starts off with lots of people sharing the pleasure and rewards.** That's why having a Library building event or welcoming party can be so valuable. Like a potluck supper or block party, such events offer a chance for everyone to contribute something.
3. **Follow the key principle of real estate: location, location, location.** Put the Library in a place where you will have lots of pedestrian, bike or vehicular traffic. Have a sign that says "This is a gift from the Library staff and Friends to the neighborhood. If for some reason the Street Library doesn't work as you would like, move it.
4. **Welcome participation in all ways.** Thank people in writing and in person. Keep a notebook in the Library so that anyone can offer suggestions, comments, recommendations or requests.
5. **It's not just the content of books that matters,** but also the memories and thoughts that books generate. Keep your Street Library clean and inviting; create positive interactions and people will keep coming back.
6. **Build a backup reserve of books** by involving book lovers --book clubs and discussion groups, and people who have big home libraries as well as friends of public libraries and used bookstores.
7. **Other sources of books: nearby Street Libraries!** It's fun to make the occasional rounds of Libraries to see what they contain. Anyone can move books from one to the other. You don't have to ask permission.
8. **Don't burden Library users with lots of rules, do's and don'ts.** Accept the fact that all people are not always respectful and some vandalism may occur. But if you have enough good, caring people involved from the beginning, you will have established the norm of respectful Library use. Your friends and neighbors will support you if you ask for help.
9. **Respect freedom of expression and diversity.** But also feel free to keep a balance of books available. If a Library becomes source of religious proselytizing and political rants, you will probably lose a lot of interest.
10. **Have a good librarian who is not afraid to encourage others to pitch in.** The librarian is not supposed to do all the work. In fact, in some neighborhoods, the best insurance for success and sustainability is recruiting kids or adults to be neighborhood Library champions. They can provide a valuable service and build self esteem by visiting and checking the Libraries regularly.