

# The Bandera PROPHEET

April 9, 2022

Lakehills Little Free Library a community-wide effort; books in Braille available

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The Bandera Prophet

Becoming part of a movement that has brought their family enjoyment all over the country, Simon and Brandy Gonzales are the latest to install a Little Free Library in Bandera County.

“Little Free Libraries have been a family favorite for years. Before moving to Bandera County, we traveled to many of the towns in the Texas Hill Country while trying to decide where we wanted to move to and frequently came across LFLs. We looked into the LFL and found there were libraries worldwide and we kept a look out for more as we continued to travel,” the couple said. “Our daughters really enjoyed browsing through the books to see if there were any they were interested in and they would take one and read it during the road trips.”

The family moved to Lakewood Estates in Lakehills in 2018. Seeking ways to become more involved with their neighborhood Home Owners Association, Simon Gonzales decided to embark on a project that would soon become a community-wide endeavor.

“He always wanted to build something once he retired he thought about doing a Little Free Library. So, we started researching what it would take to get involved,” Brandy Gonzales said. “In order to build the library, Simon drew up plans on what he wanted it to look like and then he would go to new home building sites in the area and ask builders if they had any scrap wood they were going to use. While certain things had to be purchased, like the hardware for the library, he made it a point to try and use material that was already available as much as

possible. Even the roof shingles were donated by a friend in the neighborhood.”

Brandy researched ways to collect books, browsing social media. Members of the community donated boxes and boxes of books, including an elementary school teacher, a local family hosting a yard sale, non-profit organizations and other avid readers.

“The generosity of the community and organizations donating to offer reading material is very heartwarming,” she said.

Notably, Simon contacted the National Federation of the Blind and asked if any books in Braille were available for donation.

“They responded and will be sending us some books for the library,” he said.

A handful of LFLs are registered in the county (Bandera and Pipe Creek), and the Gonzales’ is the first in Lakehills - installed by the Lakewood Estates neighborhood mailboxes, off of FM 1283. The Little Free Library is a nationwide movement embracing the “take a book, share a book” principle. Based in Hudson, Wisconsin, the non-profit vision is to have these “libraries” in every community “and a book for every reader...not limited by time, space or privilege.”

“While taking a book does not require that you donate a book, all that is asked is the next time you visit a Little Free Library you share a book as well...even if it is not the same LFL you got one from,” Brandy and Simon said. “Our hope is that it will inspire even those who don’t really have an interest in reading to take a look in the library and see if there is anything that grabs their attention.”

To learn more about the Little Free Library, and to see a map of little library locations, go to [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org).