

# Little Free Library takes off at DK's Market in Hamel

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**HAMEL** - Little Free Library locations are popping up all over the country and because of the ingenuity of a woman at DK's Market in Hamel, one is now in front of their store.

The store is located at 225 State St. in Hamel. **Sandy Weinacht** is the architect behind the concept in Hamel with her husband, Kerry, who built it. Recently, there was a ribbon cutting for the new concept and so far, it is off to a terrific start. There are benches close to the Little Free Library in Hamel where people can sit and read. From there, the books can be given to someone else or recycled at another Little Free Library location, which are available on the web.

The Little Free Library is part of about 40,000 such mini-libraries now all over the U.S. In 2009, Tod Bol of Hudson, Wisc., built a model of a one-room schoolhouse as a tribute for his mother, then positioned it with books and from there the concept took off.

Sandy Weinacht said kids and adults love the concept of the Little Free Library in Hamel.

“People love the idea of books and are free to take a walk and go to the nearby park and read,” she said. “It has been very well received so far. It is for everybody from kids, teenagers to adults. The books are free to promote the love of reading. If someone has a book at home they can drop it off, like a book exchange.”

Weinacht said they do take book donations and they have quite a few so far, but are in need of children’s books.

“Some people have been bringing boxes of books up,” she said. “If you just have a single book or a couple, just open the box and take a book and leave one or some.”

There are other Little Free Libraries in Edwardsville. There is one on Hale Street close to Leclaire Park, Edwardsville Township Park has another and there is one at Watershed Nature Center.

Sandy’s husband, like Todd Bol, built her shelf for the Little Library and made it into a four-shelf book stand with a plexiglass front door on it.

“There is a journal inside to leave a comment or suggestion if you are looking for a particular book,” Sandy said. “People travel across the nation, sort of like geo cashing, and you can go on the web and it shows all the Little Free Libraries across the country. We have already had notes from people in other states. We had a note from someone from Minnesota, Arkansas and I am sure we will have many more.”

Hamel is right off Illinois Highway 140 and U.S. Highway 55, so it is a travel drop-off point for many.

“We are only a half mile off the interstate,” Weinacht said. “We already have a lot of

traffic flow. I think it is a wonderful thing for the community. The kids and adults get a book. There is no other place other than an elementary school or public library where you can get books like this. We wanted to do it and give it to the community and offer it.”

