

# Little Free Library

## Monte Vista Elementary

### Spring 2016

Going into the 2015-16 school year, I knew I wanted to put a Little Free Library on the campus of Monte Vista. At first, I didn't plan for it to be a Service Learning project. I started thinking about it as a way to help our school community at large, and not just the students currently attending Monte Vista. From anecdotal evidence, I knew that many students starting kindergarten at Monte Vista were not prepared to read and had a hard time catching-up to their peers--and that some would never do so. As a class, we researched and came up with a plan to help the incoming students--using the Little Free Library as a the medium through which the help would be given.

We watched TED talks, read journal article abstracts, and looked for scholarly websites on the effects of reading and interacting with your child from an early age. We practiced these strategies with our kindergarten reading buddies once a week for six months. Once we had finished our research, the students wrote informational flyers that would be placed with the Little Free Library. The goal was to provide information to parents on the positive effects of reading to and interacting with your child from a young age (about 6 months). They also told parents the best way to read to their young children and what types of books to pick. Because we have many parents who do not speak or read English, all of the flyers are in English and Spanish. The students translated their own and their classmates' flyers.

In order to pick the location for the Little Free Library, the students broke up into groups based on their preferred place. They then created Google Slides presentations to present to Mrs. Smith, our principal; Mrs. Smith picked the location that she thought would serve the school best. Robert Crowell built the Little Free Library for the students. Before it was installed, the students

submitted ideas for how it should be decorated. We decided on our favorites, and the students got busy painting it.

Before the Little Free Library's official 'grand opening,' the students created two Google Slides presentations--one for upper grade and one for the primary grades. The presentations covered the same information, but at different levels. Teachers signed up for time slots to have the students come present to their classes. The presentation covered what a Little Free Library is, how it works, and why there was one on campus. Students were also asked to donate books to the Little Free Library to keep it going.

The Little Free Library requires constant upkeep. It needs to be refilled with books and organized. Books for older students go on the top shelf and books for younger students--and younger siblings--go on the bottom shelf. The students have, for the most part, taken care of the Library without much oversight from me. Their flyers are proudly displayed and available for students and parents to read and take home. They are proud of what they did and work hard to keep it full of books and looking nice.