

# NEWS RELEASE



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## **Main Street in Metuchen welcomes first ever Central NJ Little Free Library**

*Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey* in conjunction with *Build with Purpose* has installed the first Little Free Library in Central NJ. In the heart of Metuchen on Main Street, the miniature house sits outside the Metuchen Nonprofit Center, inviting passerby to take or donate a book. The idea not only promotes literacy, but also community, becoming a literary meeting place for the neighborhood. *Little Free Library* was started in 2009 and since then has seen over 2,500 libraries pop up around the U.S. and overseas. Interested community “librarians” can order a “library” from the website which comes pre-assembled with instructions on how to install, or they can download the free plans and build their own.

The philosophy behind the Little Free Library “to promote literacy and the love of reading” fits nicely with LVNJ’s mission, “promoting greater communication and action on the literacy needs of New Jersey.” The hope is that neighbors will embrace this idea and feel encouraged to read while also getting to know their neighbors at LVNJ and Build with Purpose.

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Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey is the only statewide, nongovernmental volunteer-based literacy organization in New Jersey. Based in Metuchen, the agency provides professional development, technical assistance, training, financial support and other services to a network of 22 community-based organizations in 19 counties. Last year the network provided 105,000 hours of free instruction to 5,000 adults.

Nationwide, about 32 million adults, or 14 percent of the population, have “very low” literacy skills, according to the U.S. Department of Education. In New Jersey almost 1 million adults over the age of 25 do not have a high school diploma. In the state's urban school districts, between 40 and 60 percent of students drop out of school with reading levels well below ninth grade.

Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey was established in 1979 to support and promote quality adult education programs throughout the state. These organizations recruit, train, and match volunteers with adults who need to improve their basic reading, writing and math skills, or their ability to understand and speak English.

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Build with Purpose is a nonprofit real estate development and consulting firm with a focus on community and economic development.

Build with Purpose helps to build strong vibrant and healthy communities by providing real estate services to organizations and communities that lack in-house capacity. However, understanding real estate alone does not change communities or lives, their Approach to Social Change uses real estate to build knowledge and shape healthier and greener communities.

Build with Purpose directly and indirectly develops a host of real estate projects including schools, affordable housing projects and nonprofit centers. Their work is holistic and goes beyond “bricks and sticks” to build knowledge and greater impact and social change across the communities they serve.

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**The Metuchen Nonprofit Center opened** in May 2010 with Build with Purpose, Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey and Women Helping Women sharing space in the same building. Located at 224 Main Street in Metuchen, the facility includes individual office space for the nonprofits as well as shared space including a conference room, a lounge area and a kitchen. Shared resources include printers and photocopiers, administrative staff and volunteers. Build with Purpose is working to create nonprofit centers in other areas in New Jersey. As one of the first nonprofit centers in New Jersey, Build with Purpose is proud to lead the way and to allow their own experience to shape the way they develop nonprofit centers in the future.