

## Eagle Scout project has Shores teen building dozens of little libraries



Joshua Lopetrone, 16, of St. Clair Shores works on one of 36 little libraries he's building for several schools and churches including one in Highland Park. It's all part of his Eagle Scout project. GINA JOSEPH - THE MACOMB DAILY.

06/03/17 Amazing act of service.

Highland Park will finally have a library. Make that 12 little libraries built by one ambitious teen. "I got started on this because there is one in my neighborhood," said Joshua Lopetrone, 16, of St. Clair Shores, looking at the small buildings stacked in his family's garage awaiting the next stage in their construction. As an Eagle Scout candidate, Joshua also needed to complete a project that demonstrated his leadership and organizational skills. After researching the little library in his community he decided to build his own. "It's a great idea...he will have 36 libraries for several other neighborhoods, elementary schools and churches." Among the recipients is Revival Tabernacle Assembly Church of Highland Park, whose residents have not had the luxury of free books since the McGregor Public Library on Woodward Avenue was boarded up. The goal of the Little Free Library and its nonprofit organization is to promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide. Those interested in starting their own library are encouraged to visit the website. A cadre of volunteers can provide information on how things work, blueprints for little libraries or options to purchase one already made. For more information visit [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org)

Joshua will stock the shelves with a variety of titles collected during a book drive he held over the winter. He also organized a fundraiser to cover material costs.

Also proud of her son's initiative is Joshua's mother, Nancy Lopetrone. "Hopefully it will inspire others to join scouting. Boy Scouts of America is a great organization," said Nancy, whose only concern for Joshua was getting people scheduled to take care of the libraries once they're installed.

One of the elementary schools has an art teacher who plans to maintain their libraries and parishioners at another church will oversee the care of theirs. Joshua is a sophomore at Lake Shore High School, a soccer player and a Life Scout with Boy Scout Troop 1407 out of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church. He's been teased about his passion for scouting but it has never outweighed the rewards he's experienced. "I've learned more than them," Joshua said, of his wisecracking friends. "I have met a lot of people I would have never known and I can cook." As of last November, there were more than 50,000 registered library book exchanges operating throughout the United States and more than 70 countries worldwide.