

StoryWalk

A StoryWalk® is a fun activity that engages families in literacy and getting active. Pages from a children's book are printed and placed in displays along a walkable path at a park, school, neighborhood or even a city's downtown area. Families have fun reading aloud together and building children's interest in reading while enjoying the health benefits of exercise.

The StoryWalk project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library. Visit KelloggHubbard.org/StoryWalk for loads of resources on creating a StoryWalk of your own!



How Do StoryWalks Support Literacy?

Reading aloud 20 minutes a day to babies, toddlers and preschoolers exposes them to 1.8 million words each year, and helps build strong literacy and language skills. Early literacy skills develop most effectively in real-life settings through positive interactions with literacy materials and other people. Too many children – especially those from low-income families – often aren't exposed to consistent interactions that foster language development. Participating in a StoryWalk with a parent or caregiver gives children the opportunity to learn new words, describe things and events, enjoy and tell stories, learn how to follow a sequence and hear and play with sounds and letters in words.

Steps Your Club Can Take to Establish a StoryWalk

1. Establish a budget.
2. Select a location for your StoryWalk.
3. Select a book to feature.
4. Decide on the design and materials for your page displays.
5. Build and install your StoryWalk.
6. Make it fun! Host a kick-off event with community partners to announce the opening of the StoryWalk.
7. Develop a plan for ongoing stewardship and maintenance for your StoryWalk.

Budget Items & Costs to Consider

- Materials – wooden stakes, Plexiglas, lamination, etc.
- Labor Costs
- Three Copies of Each Book – Two for mounting and one in case of damage to repair or replace
- Consider the cost to refresh your StoryWalk monthly or quarterly

Selecting A Location

Collaborate with community organizations to determine the best place for your StoryWalk and ensure families with young children have easy access. Potential partners can include libraries, museums, schools, housing authorities, hospitals and family health centers, parks and recreation departments and more. Potential StoryWalk locations include:

- Parks

- Neighborhoods
- School grounds
- Playgrounds
- Churches or Synagogues
- Urban areas – on a fence or downtown storefronts
- Library grounds
- Indoor venues including store windows, malls or long hallways in a public building

Books that Work The Best Have...

- Minimal text. You want to keep families moving!
- Single-page illustrations that don't cross the center of the book.
- Stories that build excitement for what is going to happen next.
- Twenty to 30 pages, max.

Make It Fun!

- Decorate the displays for holidays, seasons and local events!
- Do a night-time StoryWalk – add lights!
- Add physical activity prompts at each display (i.e. Jump with both feet to the next page display).
- Connect your StoryWalk with key dates in the school calendar including summer vacation, winter and spring break, Kindergarten registration day, preschool registration day, Read Across America Day, etc.
- Connect your StoryWalk with other community events with high foot-traffic to maximize use.

Kick-Off Event

- Create fanfare to announce your StoryWalk.
- Integrate **Together, We Read** resources and awareness materials and messages into the Ceremony. One fun way to do this is to distribute bookmarks or reading tip sheets to attendees.
- Engage your local media to cover your event.
- Wrap the first stop on StoryWalk to unveil it to the community or place a ribbon in front of it for a ceremonial ribbon cutting.
- Invite special guests and community leaders to your event.

Ongoing Maintenance & Stewardship

Maintenance is the most crucial element to ensuring the success of your StoryWalk.

- Develop a plan to monitor your StoryWalk.
- Create a schedule to refresh your StoryWalk with new stories throughout the year.
- If your StoryWalk is outdoors, consider planting flowers or landscaping around your posts. You can even add a bench to encourage reading close by!
- Consider special events throughout the year to keep a strong focus on your StoryWalk – and to give community members reasons to come back time and time again!
- Remember to take photos and record your progress and creative ideas to share and inspire other Rotary Clubs participating in **Together, We Read**.
- Be mindful of copyright laws – you may take apart books that you purchase for a StoryWalk but pages cannot be scanned, copied, enlarged or reproduced without permission from the publisher.