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Extra Credit Union Installs Five Small Community Libraries in Macomb County Parks

Little Free Libraries offer free financial literacy, diversity, equity & inclusion resources to community

Members of the community in and around Warren, Center Line, and St. Clair Shores will have access to free books promoting financial literacy lessons, as well as diversity, equity, inclusion, self-confidence, showing kindness and other uplifting subjects when they visit one of five new Small Community Libraries dedicated to the cities by Extra Credit Union in Warren.

Extra Credit Union is dedicating one of Warren's Little Free Libraries during a Summer Reading Program Kick-off Celebration at noon on Saturday, June 19 at Veterans Memorial Park. There will be crafts, activities, popsicles, and giveaways for kids available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Members of the Library Commission will be in attendance, as well as officers from the Friends of the Warren Public Library. Interested attendees can RSVP to the library by calling (586) 574-4564.

Access to books and libraries is important in every community to encourage the love of reading for residents of all ages. The addition of Little Free Libraries in the City of Warren will provide our residents access to free reading materials and encourage reading and sharing of books in our community. Children will enjoy visiting the local parks of Warren and finding a new book to read during their visit.

Each of the libraries, which resemble a large wooden bird house on a post, holds dozens of books. The idea is for visitors to take a book of interest and to bring it back or pass on to friends or family who would also enjoy reading it. Members of the community can also bring their own books to share by placing them in the library for others to take home.

"Extra Credit Union was started by a group of teachers in Warren more than 65 years ago, so it's important for us to continue to give back to our local community, while also holding true to that legacy," said Ruthann Varosi, Assistant Vice President of Marketing at Extra Credit Union. "Credit Unions are all about people helping people and this is another way for us to help educate those young and old with financial literacy and other important life lessons, as well as building their character and helping them to develop a love for reading."

The libraries were placed in locations where members of the local community may not have easy access or a means to get to a local library branch. Locations include: Veterans Memorial Park and Wiegand Park in Warren; Lions Park in Center Line; and Kaufman Park and Kyte Monroe Park in St. Clair Shores.

The Small Community Libraries project was a true community effort organized by the credit union. The effort began with a grant for \$1,750 from the Michigan Credit Union Foundation, then the commissioning of a Center Line High School teacher, Jaime Bellos, to create the libraries, and working with each city to determine locations and city librarians to offer their expertise in book titles.

The libraries, as well as brand new books to fill each, cost approximately \$3,900. Varosi said Extra Credit Union plans on expanding the project by adding a few more libraries in various locations throughout the local community each year.

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Extra Credit Union (www.extracreditunion.org) was founded in 1954 by a group of educators with \$856 in assets. Today, with a full-service branch in Warren, Mich., Extra Credit Union (ECU) has nearly 20,000 members and \$290 million in assets. Extra Credit Union works with the local community and educators to provide hands-on learning, financial fundamentals, and customized services to help students and educators make good financial decisions. In addition, ECU provides solution-based lending and credit education programs to open lending possibilities to people of all credit backgrounds in the state of Michigan. Deidra M. Williams serves as President/CEO, leading the credit union in its mission.