

FIRST LOOK: 50 Wendy's Words Libraries now established in Bakersfield

BY CHARMAINE CLEVELAND ccleveland@bakersfield.com

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The Bakersfield Californian Little library owner Bernadette Ferguson and retired teacher, Susan Reep, speak with simulcast host Scott Cox about offering free literature to children through Wendys Words Libraries.

The Bakersfield Californian

Three years after local humanitarian and children's advocate, Wendy Wayne, lost her battle to cancer, more than 50 little libraries

have popped up around town in her honor.

The libraries can be found in countless front yards around Bakersfield, looking like oversized dollhouses that add a splash of color to surrounding neighborhoods. There is even a full-size replica of a London telephone booth downtown, which is bright red and filled with books. It belongs to Bernadette Ferguson.

On Thursday's "First Look with Scott Cox," Ferguson and Susan Reep, a retired teacher that began the Wendy's Words Library project in Bakersfield, talked about the importance of offering free books to local children. Reep said that she was assisted by co-founder Pat Johnson, also a retired teacher, during the project. The two worked together to design a program that would honor Wayne and spread her message of childhood education. Eventually, the group was joined by Ferguson, whose creative ideas have become an asset to the project, according to Reep.

"They're all over town and they're all over Kern County now," stated Reep. She stated that in the past, people have used all sorts of items, including magazine stands, dollhouses and cabinets to create little libraries of their own.

In fact, Ferguson's phone booth has become something of a Bakersfield landmark, with visitors taking prom and wedding pictures outside of the location. But it's something that the philanthropist said she doesn't mind. "I think for those that have put libraries in our front yard, the benefits outweigh any potential negatives," said Ferguson.

Ferguson's ideas and willingness to share them, she said, is just part of honoring the principles Wayne hoped to teach to her grandchildren. More importantly, she hopes to continue a legacy that will live on through the words of free books offered to Kern County's children.