

Morrisons Little Library is Launched

Morrisons stores now have a book donation and exchange station for children.

The Morrisons Little Library is aimed at promoting literacy and reading, particularly among those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Customers can bring along unwanted books to donate and anyone can pick up a book or two for free.

The initiative was inspired by children's author, Rebecca Smith, who approached the store for help in tackling the issues around literacy and the lack of available books.



David Potts, Morrisons CEO, said: "The past year has been

extremely difficult for everyone and we want to help as much as we can. We know that our younger customers love reading but some may not have access to books of their own. That's why we're launching the Morrisons Little Library – so every child has the chance to enjoy reading and brighten their future.”

Rebecca Smith said: “To think that there are children who have never enjoyed a bedtime story is heart-breaking. Stories change lives. Every child and every parent should have access to that experience. The Morrisons Little Library provides that potentially life-changing access.”

Research from The Open University, which has been involved in shaping the initiative, shows that reading books helps children to start conversations, spark imagination and support emotional wellbeing. The National Literacy Trust recently reported that children who own books are six times more likely to read above the level expected for their age but that one in 11 disadvantaged children don't own a single book.

Teresa Cremin, Professor of Education Literacy at The Open University, said: “It's been great working with Morrisons to help make the Little Library idea a reality. Reading benefits children and young people in so many ways and is especially vital after such a difficult and disruptive year, as it creates a safe space to escape and learn.”



In addition the store has published 50,000 copies of a new book, *Cedric The Seed* which will be distributed nationwide by the Morrisons Community Champions to those who need them most.

Cedric the Seed has been written for Morrisons by Danielle Corrigan from Saddleworth, who began writing children's books last year whilst she was homeschooling her own children. Danielle began writing positive stories for children to read last year to help them cope with the mental health effects of lockdown.

Inspired by the pandemic and how lives were changed in an instant, the book follows Cedric, a small sunflower seed as he is separated from his family and friends. His journey is full of unexpected adventure, friendship and fun as when Cedric begins to grow, he realises his friends and family were there all along.

The initiative is the latest from Morrisons which aims to make good things happen and bring hope to the nation. Last month, Morrisons gave away over 2.5 million packets of sunflower

seeds to customers to grow at home and half a million postcards for people to send messages to their loved ones who they haven't been able to see due to lockdown.

Morrisons Community Champions have also launched the "Little Sunshine" awards which aim to recognise those who have gone above and beyond to help their community during the pandemic.

