

LITERACY AND JOY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES:

StoryWalks in Urban Settings

Learn more at lapl.org/storywalk



LAPL StoryWalk Stats

- 22 StoryWalks in 15 locations
- 14 community partnerships
- 5 elementary schools
- 4 large-scale events
- Over 5,328 interactions*

*Estimate based on partner feedback and participation data.



Start Here

- **StoryWalk was created and trademarked by Anne Ferguson in Montpelier, Vermont in 2007.** She partnered with the Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg-Hubbard Library to create a collection of StoryWalk books.
- **StoryWalks are disassembled picture books set up on signs along a path.** They are typically paired with prompts that model the early literacy practices of Talk, Read, Write, Sing, and Play.

Hitting a Stride in the Pandemic

- During the Covid-19 pandemic, LAPL librarians were among the many library workers across the country that embraced StoryWalks as a **safe and joyful family program** that could be staged outdoors.
- **LAPL's StoryWalk Cohort formed in October 2021 with the goal of scaling up StoryWalks to a systemwide level.** There was no prior standardized process in the LAPL system. Today, the committee is a Working Group.



StoryWalks remain relevant in an outreach framework. Librarians "serve the community where they are rather than expect that they will eventually come into the library" while also meeting LAPL's strategic goal to cultivate and inspire young readers.



Thanks, Catherine, Phoebe, Annie, An, Deborah, Heidi, and Spring, Ed, Deborah, and Sandra White 2021, Services Library Association, November 26, 2016
 https://www.lapl.org/our-work/early-childhood-services/early-childhood-services-2016-2017-annual-report-2016-2017
 Document ID: 761000-010-001-001-001-001-001

LAPL StoryWalks: How We Found Our Footing

- The Los Angeles Public Library serves **one of the largest and most diverse populations** of any library in the country. Each branch reflects and celebrates a unique community.
- In order to launch LAPL StoryWalks, the Cohort collaborated closely across multiple departments (primarily PR) to create a **branded template, a workflow for assembly and printing, and a digital presence.** Funding was provided by the Library Foundation within the budget of Children's Services.
- In spring and summer 2023, **StoryWalks debuted at parks, inside and outside library locations, a science museum, and CicLAvia, a car-free festival.**
- While partners and community members embraced the concept, stress testing over multiple months revealed the **need for more durable materials.**



SOSI LAPL Staff interviewed Rachel Payne, Coordinator of Early Childhood Services for Brooklyn Public Library, about best practices and materials recommendations. Subsequently, LAPL purchased weatherproof locking frames, began printing on styrene boards, and requested UV lamination.

Creating a Road Map

- Criteria for LAPL StoryWalk selections include **minimal text, dynamic illustrations, and diverse and inclusive representation.** Bilingual titles in English and Spanish are available.
- The StoryWalk Working Group provides **support and detailed resources to guide librarians** through the process of scouting a site, selecting a mounting method, and installing frames.



A Pathway to Partnerships

- Co-hosting StoryWalks with partners **strengthens the library's community ties.**
- **Win-win:** The library engages new and familiar families with early literacy while the partner transforms an underused space into an appealing interactive display.
- LAPL has **co-designed custom StoryWalks** for the Discovery Cube Science Museum, the Audubon Center at Debs Park, and Travel Town Museum in Griffith Park. Display times range from one-day special events to multiple months.
- **LAPL's StoryWalk Lending Library ensures equitable access** to the program by making available ready to install titles to all branch locations and interested school partners.

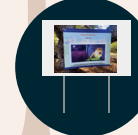


Time to get the word out! LAPL is developing marketing materials and a Google Form to raise awareness and allow for easier access to the StoryWalk Lending Library. The collection currently consists of a dozen titles.



Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Sustain recurring partnerships** and identify new opportunities for growth.
- **Promote the StoryWalk Lending Library** and develop hands-on trainings.
- **Expand the StoryWalk collection** to reflect more of the city's diversity, social-emotional themes, and biodiversity in Los Angeles.



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On Display in Urban Settings

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LAPL StoryWalk Lending Library

- Over one dozen titles.
- Supplemental supplies support.
- Planning session with StoryWalk experienced librarians.
- Available to LAPL librarians and community partners by request.

Display Considerations

Factors like environment, display time, weather, and mounting surface have all come into play when deciding on the best mounting option.

Creative risk taking is often part of the work and sometimes multiple styles of mounting are used in the same StoryWalk! A walk-through helps guide decisions.

StoryWalks require collaboration. LAPL works closely with partners to develop relationships that allow each to share their opinions and areas of expertise.

Weatherproof Frames



Setting: Uncovered exterior chain link fences and rails.
Installation Time: 45 minutes to 1.5 hours.
Display time tested: Up to 3 months.
Supplies:

- Aluminum weatherproof frames
- UV proof zip-ties, minimum 12" length
- Scissors or wire cutters
- Drill or drill bits (if frames have not been used before)

Corrugated Plastic Boards & H-stakes

Setting: Exterior permeable grounds or planters.
Installation Time: 15 to 40 minutes.
Display time tested: One day to one week.
Supplies:

- Corrugated plastic boards
- H-stakes
- Extra strength painter's tape
- Mallet



Painter's Tape



Setting: Interior walls or exterior covered patios.
Installation Time: 15 to 40 minutes.
Display time tested: One day to one week.
Supplies:

- Tough surface painting tape good for indoor and outdoor use.

Zip Ties and Garden String



Setting: Exterior attached to sturdy tree branches or bushes.
Installation Time: 15 to 3 hours.
Display time tested: Up to 3 months.
Supplies:

- Garden string, 50 lb (or above) tensile strength
- UV proof zip ties
- Grommets and grommet installation kit

Plywood & U-channel posts



Setting: Exterior permeable Ground.
Installation Time: 15 to 3 hours.
Display time tested: Up to 3 months.
Supplies:

- Plywood
- Gorilla Glue tape
- U-channel post
- Drill & Screws

Lessons Learned

- Invest in **durable weatherproof materials** to extend the life of a StoryWalk. LAPL uses styrene boards and UV lamination.
- **Avoid chain link fences adjacent to tennis and basketball courts.** Balls can damage frames.
- **Graffiti can be removed** with Goof Off Professional Strength Graffiti Remover. Spray it on and then gently wipe off with a cloth. Soaking or applying too much pressure can cause damage.

