Good reads available at Creekside Park

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

ARCHDALE — When Kassidie and Ryan visited the playground at Archdale Parks and Recreation Creekside Park, they found swings, slides and a bonus — books to read.

The siblings selected their favorites from among approximately 50 books housed inside a bright red Little Free Library and sat down at a picnic table to read them.

“They found it and they came back to me real excited,” said their dad Ryan. “Everybody seems to be enjoying them.”

As Kassidie and Ryan read their books, Stephen Mayfield arrived with a few fresh titles to tempt early readers.

A sophomore at Wheatmore High School, Mayfield is the son of Andy and Donna Mayfield of Trinity. During the summer of 2016 he was one of 26 students selected from 60 applicants to participate in the Student LIFT (Student Information For Tomorrow) program of the Asheboro-Randolph Chamber of Commerce. Over a seven-month period which began in September, participants gained knowledge about business and local government through tours to a manufacturing plant, police department, emergency services, the Randolph County courthouse, the recycling center and the jail.

Wheatmore High School sophomore Stephen Mayfield is pictured next to the Little Free Library he installed near the playground at Creekside Park. Sponsorships paid for materials which the Wheatmore High School Construction class used to build the Little Free Library. Children’s titles available for reading were acquired through donations at Hopewell Elementary School and Wee Friends at Archdale Friends Meeting.

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Stephen Mayfield was one of 26 Randolph County high schoolers students selected to participate in the Student LIFT program of Asheboro-Randolph Chamber of Commerce. He solicited sponsors to fund a project that would benefit the community. To date, Mayfield has collected and distributed more than 600 children’s titles from the Little Free Library that was installed in February.

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“Some places we’ve gone I never would have had the chance to visit on my own,” said Mayfield. “It has been a great experience.”

As a program participant Mayfield had to design a community service project and solicit donations. Sponsorships paid for materials which the Wheatmore High School Construction class used to build the Little Free Library. When it was complete Mayfield took it home, painted it in eye-catching colors and added finishing touches.

“You can just go in, grab a book and sit down and read it,” said Mayfield, who found the idea online but adapted it into one that would specifically benefit kids in order to promote literacy. He encourages users to return the books when they’re finished reading them, but if they don’t it’s OK.

Since he installed the fixture at Creekside Park, more than 600 books have been distributed. Most came from Hopewell Elementary School where there is a book donation box in the front office.

To view Mayfield’s Little Free Library on the international website, visit littlefreelibrary.org Charter # 50013.

Donors are welcome to place child-friendly books in the Little Free Library or drop them off at Hopewell Elementary School. To make a monetary donation for book purchases, email stephenmayfield40@gmail.com.

“It gives kids the opportunity to read in a fun environment. If they don’t go to the library they can read books at the playground. They don’t have to have a library card and there are no due dates or fines.”

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