



Gabrielle Burgess-Smith AWC Detroit Literacy Heroine



Gabrielle Burgess-Smith, who has her own PR agency called PRGirlGabby, recently completed her M.A. in Communications from Eastern Michigan University, where she was on the adjunct faculty her final year. As a member of the Association for Women in Communications (AWC) Detroit Chapter, she participated in the literacy initiative, utilizing what she was learning in her graduate studies in marketing and PR.

She was motivated to help advance literacy when she heard the statistic that 74% of 3rd graders who read poorly will still be struggling in ninth grade and that their reading scores can predict their likelihood to graduate from high

school. “I was shocked that this epidemic was right in our backyards, but I found reassurance in knowing that the provision of little libraries could help alleviate this crisis,” she said.

In taking charge of the little library installation at the Detroit Public Library’s Parkman branch, Gabrielle organized volunteers, coordinated event set-up and conducted promotional activities. She unveiled the AWC-NAHC little library at the dedication event and led a reading circle with the children. [See video.](#)

“Literacy is a fundamental building block of our past, stretching into our future. The need for literacy will never diminish. As the need increases and the skill of literacy decreases, I am here to help correct this epidemic through education.”



The **National Automotive History Collection**, housed at the DPL Skillman Branch, is regarded as the nation’s premier public automotive archive documenting the history and development of the automobile and other wheeled land transportation.

The **Detroit Public Library Friends Foundation** supports the Detroit Public Library, through volunteering and fundraising, to ensure that the library system can continue its mission of providing enrichment programming to library patrons and to preserve a space in Detroit where everyone is welcome to work, study, learn and create.