



"It's wonderful," says Arthiss Kliever of the library she operates in her house. "Love and happiness, and action going all the time."

She's Booked

With thousands of books and room to spare, Arthiss Kliever runs a kids' library in her Dallas home

She may be a librarian, but Arthiss Kliever is no shush-er. At Launa's Little Library, a sun-filled reading room she has created on the second floor of her Dallas home, rambunctious toddlers and grade school kids pore over children's favorites like *Madeline* and Richard Scarry books—all while being as noisy as they please. "Mrs. K. never gets upset with us," says Jack Huntress, 8, who seldom leaves without an armful of dinosaur books. "When I grow up, I want to have a room in my house just like hers."

That's what Kliever, 61, is hoping for. For years she wondered what to do with a massive collection of children's books once owned by her daughter Launa, 38, a former schoolteacher, that were gathering dust in her garage. "I thought briefly of donating them to charity," says the retiree, who once taught music at a private girls' school. "But I didn't want to let them go."

Instead she and husband Lon, a professor at Southern Methodist University, converted Launa's bedroom into a lending library for area kids, who didn't have

a public library within walking distance. Since the Klievers threw open their doors in January 2001, more than 200 local children have taken out free memberships—and parents are delighted. "My kids just run right up the stairs when we get there," says Mary Huntress, mother of regulars Jack, Anna, 5, and Ryan, 3. "Mrs. K's heart and soul has gone into this."

Open three days a week, and operating without volunteers or public funds, the project has cost Kliever "thousands of dollars." She has added to the original cache of books by collecting 5,000 volumes at garage sales or through donations. She briefly closed her doors this summer, after Lon died at 72 of prostate cancer. But Kliever couldn't stay away from a card catalog long. "This is my service to society," she says. "I have a whole house of surrogate grandchildren." ●