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Title: BOOK BRIGADE HELPS WEBSTER UNIVERSITY MOVE LIBRARY
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* The last 200 volumes were passed hand-to-hand in just 30 minutes.

A gentle madness. How else to explain why about 700 people stood under a sweltering sun Monday to pass **books** to a new library at Webster University in Webster Groves?

How else to explain why the rain that soaked parts of the metro area held off until one of the littlest volunteers had slipped the last volume onto a shelf?

How else to explain in this age of preschool fascination with computers, video games and TV why 5-year-old volunteers from Faith Academy Montessori School chanted, "We want the **books**," as they stood in line?

Those **books**, numbering about 200, marked the last of 200,000 to be moved from the Luhr Library that Webster shared at nearby Eden Theological Seminary to Webster's new Emerson Library at 101 Edgar Road.

Those in the line - infants to people over 70 - hailed from as far away as Germany, Mexico, Ghana and England. They began lining up about 10:30 a.m. Just before 11 o'clock Allen Mueller, director of the Luhr Library, handed out the first **book** - "Library Evaluation: A Casebook and Can Do Guide."

Volunteers clapped as the **books** began changing hands.

Some people took a moment to read titles: "Peru Before the Incas," "Managing Electronic Resources" and even "From Here to There, Moving a Library."

As adults passed **books** to the preschoolers from Faith Academy, one **book** and then another dropped to the ground.

Joel Thompson, 13 and an eighth-grader at Hixson Middle School in Webster Groves, sized up the children and said, "I hope they don't pass any dictionaries."

The **book brigade** stretched 1,800 feet - along the sidewalk from Luhr Library to East Lockwood Avenue, down an alley by Webster's Loretto Hall to Big Bend Boulevard, past the Sverdrup business and teaching complex to the Emerson Library. Webster University employees used shopping carts to dash the **books** across Lockwood and Big Bend.

Efrain Gutierrez, 21, of Guadalajara, Mexico, said this was the first time he had helped move a school library.

"We are receiving from Webster, and we want to give something back," said Gutierrez, a student in an international business internship exchange sponsored by the school.

Another volunteer, Sara Parker, state librarian of Missouri, said new libraries are "awfully important."

"We are heading into summer - a wonderful time for reading," Parker said. "For children, reading in summer keeps them from losing reading skills. For grownups, all of us dream of lying in a hammock with a cup of lemonade and a good **book**."

The Emerson Library is the first library on campus for Webster University, which has shared Eden's library since 1969.

The Emerson Library cost \$21 million and took nearly two years to build. The library's five floors offer space for 400,000 **books**, a place to buy coffee and work on computers. It seats more than 700 people.

Just a half-hour after the **book** passing began, university President Richard S. Meyers handed the last **book** to 3-year-old Alyson Goggin of Fenton.

Alyson hoisted the **book** onto a shelf and peered at the title.

It read: "A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, bibliomanes and the eternal passion for **books**."

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Link to information about the old and new libraries at Webster University online at STLtoday.com/links.

Caption:

PHOTO

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Color PHOTO by HUY RICHARD MACH / POST-DISPATCH - Working here are (from left) Mimi Toure, a graduate student at Webster from Senegal; Hope Mubanga, an alumna from Zambia; Phoenix Bussey, 3, of Webster Groves; and Kate Northcott of Webster Groves.

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Section: METRO

Page: B1

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