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Inspired by late grandfather, local man writes children's book

By JOHN REECER jreecer@bgdailynews.com
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Cameron Levis, Bowling Green Parks and Recreation special populations instructor, shows a canvas print of the cover book he authored titled "Home Is Where Your Park Is," which was inspired by his grandfather Dr. Alton Little's love and parks, at the Inclusive Playground at Roland Bland Park on Friday, April 1, 2022. The 46-page book follows the imaginir and an elderly man as they dream up their ideal park, an idea inspired by Little's park-to-scale project. Levis said the bo made available through online formats like Amazon, and Lost River Cave will host a book launching event May 15 at 5:30 p.m. [Grace Ramey/photo@bgdailynews.com](mailto:Grace.Ramey@bgdailynews.com)

Cameron Levis tells everyone he is a "parks and rec kid." In fact, he wears the title proudly as a badge of honor.

So much so that the current Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Department special populations instructor followed in the footsteps of his mother and grandfather and is now a parks and recreation professional.

That family passion is centered on the work and life of his grandfather Dr. Alton Little.

Little was a professor at Western Kentucky University for more than 36 years in the Recreation Administration Department. One highlight of his teachings was a park-to-scale project that tasked students with designing their version of a perfect park.

He died in September at age 86.

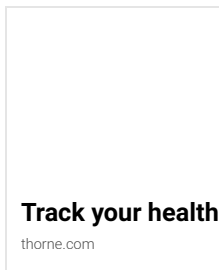
In days of grieving, Levis came up with an idea to honor his grandfather's memory. And that idea is now set to become a reality.

Inspired by his grandfather's park-to-scale project, Levis wrote a children's book titled "Home Is Where Your Park Is."

The 46-page book follows a young boy who befriends an elderly man after meeting him in the park. Together, the two dream up their version of a perfect park.

"The park is a place where communities are built and memories are made," Levis said. "Parks are for everyone. I want people to be inspired by my grandfather's love for parks as they turn the pages. I want it to create a spark of creativity in people. I want adults to be inspired as well. It's personal for me as the closest I feel to my grandfather now is when I'm at the park."

The first-time author credited local artist Keeley Shaw for her colorful illustrations in the story, workers from Warren County Public Library and his mother, B.J. Little Levis, for their assistance in making the book a reality.



To further his grandfather's memory, Cameron Levis said he created his own self-publishing name for the book: "A Little Park Publishing."

"It's a way to carry on his legacy," he said. "I had no idea what I was doing at first. It's been amazing to have a small community of people who helped me put this book out there."

One person who assisted him was Courtney Stevens, community outreach manager at the Warren County Public Library and author for HarperCollins.

Stevens calls herself one of Cameron Levis' "critique partners and cheerleaders." She read early versions of the story, made suggestions and promoted the book.

She said "Home Is Where Your Park Is" celebrates the "beauty, value and joy" parks add to the community.

"This book embodies the importance of greenspace, playspace and accessible fitness programs to every community," Stevens said. "It also reminds the community that they have a voice in what features/amenities our parks have, and it's great to keep dreaming for bigger and better spaces to share with our neighbors."

Cameron Levis said the book will soon be made available through online formats like Amazon, and Lost River Cave will host a book launching event May 15 at 5:30 p.m.

There will be hands-on activities for children at the book launch.

One of those activities will, of course, be an opportunity for kids to draw their idea of what a perfect park is.

"The book is about all the imaginative possibilities a park has," Cameron Levis said. "I want the launch to do the same as well. It's what my grandfather would've wanted."

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