

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY: ANSWERS TO TEN KEY QUESTIONS

Prepared for the North Texas Regional Library System

by

Miriam Pollack
Miriam Pollack + Associates
Northbrook, Illinois

June 2008

THE QUESTIONS ▶▶▶▶▶▼ ▼ ▼

- 1: What is a Friend?**
- 2: Why Do People Volunteer?**
- 3: How Might the Library Benefit from a Friends Group?**
- 4: How Do We Start a Friends Group?**
- 5: How Do We Re-energize Our Existing Friends Group?**
- 6: What Are Some Strategies to Attract Members?**
- 7: What Are Common Pitfalls and How Do We Avoid Them?**
- 8: What Are Some Interesting and Innovative Activities?**
- 9: What Are Some Friends Groups in the NTRLs Doing?**

- 10: What Resources Are Available to Help Us?**

THE ANSWERS ▶▶▶▶▶▼ ▼ ▼

1: WHAT IS A FRIEND?

The *American Heritage Dictionary's* definition of "friend" captures the various meanings associated with the word:

- A person you know well and regard with affection and trust
- An ally: an associate who provides assistance
- A person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause; a comrade
- One who supports, sympathizes with, or patronizes a group, cause, or movement¹

We all need friends and we establish our friendships around needs and common interests. We willingly give our time and effort to nurture these personal relationships, and we usually have different friends for different reasons and needs.

Public libraries also need friends, and a Friends of the Library group is an excellent way to meet that need. The relationship that is established with a Friends group has similar rewards as those gained through personal friendships. The relationship also requires the same kinds of effort as with personal friends. Even though we get to know our community through such methods as needs assessments, the strategic planning process, user interview and survey data, and focus groups, and we typically reach out in person and online, a Friends group provides a unique opportunity to establish consistent, ongoing, and personal relationships within the community.

Although the date and place of the first Friends of the Library group has not been verified, it is known that public libraries and their friends were inspired by Andrew Carnegie's generosity to communities across America. The number of public libraries in the United States grew from 637 in 1898 to 3,500 by 1919, the year that Carnegie made his last grant.² Half of the new libraries were funded by Carnegie and his philanthropy stimulated fundraising and library development by community members. As Sally Gardner Reed, Director of Friends of the Library USA (FOLUSA), notes, "The citizens who changed laws, persuaded city and town leaders to fund operations, and raised money were--in spirit if not always in name-- quintessential Friends of libraries."³

2: WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?

Although volunteering has a long tradition in our country, data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics reveal that the number of American adults who are volunteering has increased during the past thirty years. In fact, 61.2 million people volunteered during 2006. American youth are also active as volunteers in growing numbers

through school-based service learning and volunteer projects.⁴ As the Corporation for National and Community Service explains, volunteering is widespread:

Americans of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities are donating their time and talents to schools, churches, hospitals, and local nonprofits in an effort to improve their communities and serve a purpose greater than them.⁵

It's evident that more and more people are becoming involved as volunteers, but a significant shift has occurred in recent years that needs to be considered by any organization that works with volunteers. In general, volunteers increasingly prefer specific, well-focused projects and short-term commitments. This trend is likely the result of a higher percentage of adults in the workforce and a greater demand for volunteers among various organizations.⁶

Volunteer work is characterized by the fact that individuals are choosing to give their time, expertise, and energy to an organization or cause, and they do not expect financial remuneration for their efforts. People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, and the list of reasons reflects different motivations:

- desire to help others
- meet new people
- socialize with friends
- be part of the community
- new experience or challenge
- opportunity to learn new skills
- dedicated to the cause or organization's mission
- potential for job opportunity
- desire recognition
- share a skill or area of expertise
- available free time
- know someone who volunteers for the organization, and
- compatibility with religious beliefs or ideals.

When your library begins to recruit library volunteers, consider the motivations that may prompt individuals to give their time and energy. Different groups of people within the community will likely respond in unique ways to a request to join a library Friends group. High school and college students may find the opportunity to learn new skills to be appealing. Recently retired adults and senior citizens, on the other hand, may find they have free time and are interested in a new challenge or socializing with friends. If the library wants to recruit small business owners as potential Friends, the idea of contributing to and being part of the community may sound appealing. In other words, people need to see a link between their motivation to volunteer and the goals of a Friends group.

3: HOW MIGHT THE LIBRARY BENEFIT FROM A FRIENDS GROUP?

The benefits to be gained from the activities of a Friends group are numerous. Before you initiate a Friends group for your library (or revitalize a lagging one), however, you should determine the primary mission and function of the group. Involve the library's board, staff and committed community members in this important discussion. Some of the most commonly cited benefits for the library (and the community) include:

- increased appreciation of the library,
- a better understanding of the function and operation of the library,
- expanded services and programs with the assistance of volunteers,
- new bequests, donations, and gifts,
- more active campaigns to raise money to purchase library materials and equipment,
- strong support for library issues and challenges (e.g., referendum, intellectual freedom, funding), and
- enhanced community involvement.

When a new Friends group begins, it's unrealistic to think that it can realize all of the benefits listed above. The group needs to decide which goals will receive priority. By taking the time to articulate a clear set of goals for the Friend's group as it begins to take shape, it will be easier to focus member recruitment and avoid confusion when planning activities later on. This initial discussion also provides an opportunity to differentiate the roles and responsibilities of the board, staff, and Friends volunteers. FOLUSA has developed an excellent chart that summarizes key issues related to this topic: "Model Friends' Cooperative Network," <http://www.folusa.org/sharing/role-table.pdf>.

4: How Do We Start a Friends Group?

The decision to start a Friends group is a time for celebration, because it heralds new opportunities for support and outreach into the community. It's not unusual, however, for the reality of running a volunteer organization to hit early on and dampen some of the initial enthusiasm. This does not necessarily need to be the case. Having the right pieces in place at the beginning will help to ensure a successful launching of a Friends group.

Core Group of Committed Community Members

The value of securing the commitment and energy of a small, but dedicated, group of individuals cannot be overemphasized. Merrily Taylor describes the crucial role of this group in her article about establishing a library Friends group:

An enthusiastic well-connected nucleus of supporters can attract key individuals, generate excitement, and put together an appealing group which others in the community will want to join. If these volunteers are willing to put in the time, they can also keep Friends' activities "perking" in the early days when resources may be limited but when a high profile is critical.⁷

Although this group will likely take on a good share of the work, library staff (and perhaps the library board) will need to assist and provide support. At least one library staff member, for example, should serve as the contact person for the group. The library director will also need to maintain involvement with the group. As noted in the discussion about an individual's motivation to volunteer, the personal connection with an organization and its mission is often important. Library staff recognition of and involvement with the Friends' activities speaks volumes.

Administrative Support

The enthusiasm and energy of this core group of initial Friends members should not be sidelined by lack of access to administrative support. An initial rush of activities will likely need to occur to generate community awareness and interest, and these activities may include the following:

- scheduling and conducting meetings
- designing newsletters, announcements, brochures and similar publications
- preparing mailings
- creating and maintaining a Website
- establishing a system of financial and membership recordkeeping, and
- communicating with e-mail, fax, and telephone.

All of these activities require a basic level of administrative support. It is not unusual for the library to provide this type of assistance, at least initially. If the library does assume this responsibility, it will need to consider the impact on staffing levels, use of space, and the library's budget. In sum, before launching a new Friends group, it is important to determine how such administrative needs as clerical support, office space, computers and necessary software, and telephone and related communications tools will be provided.

Start-up Funding

A major goal of most Friends groups is fundraising, but funds are not necessarily available when a group first establishes itself. Seed money will be needed and the source of these funds is an important consideration. Some libraries have been successful acquiring a preliminary infusion of donor funds to support the start-up activities of a Friends group, a situation that is ideal but not typical. Grant monies, partnerships with local organizations, or

business sponsorship of initial activities are also potential sources of funding. Many libraries decide to provide financial support at the beginning, knowing that the return on its investment is likely to be significant.

Infrastructure: A Plan, Policies, and Procedures

While a new Friends group will not want to get bogged down in logistical details, it is important to have an initial plan of action and a set of policies and procedures. These items provide organizational and operational structure. A strategic plan will identify the group's key goals and the activities necessary to reach those goals. Policies provide guidelines for decision-making and address such issues as reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, confidentiality of volunteer and patron records, and training. The step-by-step descriptions of how tasks get done are outlined by procedures and cover such operational activities as handling book sale monies and membership recordkeeping. By-laws are also needed to establish the governing process, and a means for legal consultation should be secured. The *Resources* section at the end of this document provides links and references to numerous planning and management sources, including sample strategic plans and templates for policies and procedures. To address basic infrastructure issues, any new Friends group should articulate answers to the following questions:

- How will the library benefit from the activities of the group?
- How will the group support the mission and goals of the library?
- What does the group hope to accomplish – short term and long term?
- How will the group accomplish its goals?
- What challenges might the group face as it establishes itself? What are possible solutions to these challenges?
- How will the group know that it has successfully accomplished its goals?
- How will the group be governed?
- What are the benefits and rewards for volunteers?

If answers to these questions do not seem forthcoming and if a means to meet initial administrative and financial needs does not seem possible, it may not be realistic to launch a Friends group. More time may be required for community awareness, input, and buy-in. In the meantime, some alternatives to establishing a Friends group include a community advisory committee that meets once or twice a year or recruiting volunteers on a project by project basis.

5: How Do We Re-energize Our Existing Friends Group?

All Friends groups are likely to go through cycles, being very visible and active during some projects and less evident and involved at other times. Large projects, such as construction of a new building or passing a referendum, might attract new members, interest,

and support. When these larger projects are over, however, a time of low energy might set in and the group may seem to be in a rut. It's important to keep in mind that projects which attract some members may not appeal to others and the organization should maintain a variety of activities to appeal to all members on an ongoing basis.

When the most active Friends members realize that the group needs revitalization, it's not uncommon for those members to try to do more of what they have already been doing, hoping that it will somehow magically ignite new interest and energy. It is also usually easiest to bring in more people like ourselves – our friends, family, and neighbors. A more effective approach, and one that is likely to have more long-term benefits, is to reach out to different groups in the community, to offer new opportunities, and to restructure some aspects of the group's operations. For example, is it possible to arrange a meeting to attract parents as potential new members by scheduling a meeting with complimentary childcare? Perhaps young working singles would be attracted to a social event sponsored by the Friends group at a popular locale.

Consider the following aspects of your Friends group and its operations when exploring options for revitalizing the group:

➤ *Membership*

The volunteers are the heartbeat of any Friends organization and a healthy, balanced mix of members will sustain the group over the long term. One approach to revitalizing a Friends group is to conduct a membership "audit" to update, review, and evaluate ongoing and potential new recruitment efforts. The following questions should be addressed in a membership audit:

- Who are our current members and are our membership records up-to-date? Do we know our members' interests, areas of expertise, skills, and preferences?
- Does the membership reflect the diversity of the community – i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, income level, occupation, etc.?
- How has the membership changed over the last several years? What might account for these changes?
- What are the percentages of membership involvement with various projects and activities? What might account for the differences and similarities?

➤ *Organizational and Operational Structure*

The Friends members who volunteer on a regular basis become familiar and comfortable with the day-to-day operations of the group. New members and potential new members may not have the same level of comfort. A review and evaluation of the governing and decision-making structure – i.e., board, elections, committees, etc. – may be needed. For example, does the existing structure encourage (or perhaps even discourage) participation? Are there mechanisms in place to promote the participation of new people?

The organizational and operational structure should also be reviewed on a periodic basis to ascertain whether the mission and goals of the group are still on target. Ongoing communication and collaboration with the library staff and board will help to ensure that the mission and goals of the Friends group are in alignment with the goals of the library.

➤ *Activities*

If a Friends group seems to be languishing, it may need to renew the types of activities and events that it organizes and carries out. At least once a year, the group should brainstorm potential new approaches to meeting its goals. Research and discussions (online or in person) with other Friends groups and similar volunteer organizations provide opportunities to consider new ways of doing the work of the group. Initiating different types of activities may also have the added benefit of attracting new members.

➤ *Communication*

To maintain a vital membership, everyone who is involved with the group needs to feel that they are “in the loop” and informed. The communication channels that people use on a daily basis are vast and even overwhelming at times, but it’s critical to disseminate information via the mechanisms that are being used by the members. In fact, it may be necessary to use several means of communication – i.e., newsletters and postal mailings, e-mail, instant messaging, and telephone calls.

In addition to keeping the membership current with news of the group, the community at large should also be aware of the activities of the Friends group. The accomplishments of the group (and individuals) should be communicated and publicized in the local press and related sources.

6: What Are Some Strategies to Attract Members?

Many Friends groups find that it’s often the same small cadre of members who carry out most of the work. To avoid this pattern, it’s important to recruit new members on an ongoing basis, but there are also times when the group may want to initiate a more intensive recruitment initiative. Rick Lynch and Steve McCurley, who have written extensively about volunteers, recommend three focused approaches to recruiting new members: Warm Body Recruitment, Targeted Recruitment, and Concentric Circles Recruitment.⁸

Warm Body Recruitment

With this approach, you are hoping to attract the interest of a large group of individuals. Typically, this method is used when you need many volunteers for a particular activity (e.g., author event, annual book sale, mass mailing) and specialized skills are not required. Information about the need for members might be disseminated via brochures and posters,

announcements in newspapers and local magazines, e-mail notices to the entire membership and affiliated groups, and word of mouth.

Targeted Recruitment

When specialized skills or membership characteristics are needed, a targeted recruitment method should be used. Basic information about skills, interests, and preferences that is recorded when a new member joins the Friends group would be useful as a starting point with targeted recruitment. In addition, the following questions will help guide a targeted recruitment effort:

- What are the skills, expertise, or characteristics we need?
- Who in the community has these skills, expertise, or characteristics?
- What would be the most effective means to contact and communicate with them?
- What will likely motivate them to become involved?

A unique approach to targeting the interests of specific groups is the creation of small Friends chapters in affiliation with local organizations and community groups. The Wilbraham Public Library in western Massachusetts, for example, has created a Junior Friends of the Library (JFL) organization, which is designed to provide fourth graders and up opportunities for active involvement with the library. This particular age group often leaves regular library visits behind as they mature and the library has created a means for maintaining a connection with this group of potential library users. The following types of groups and organizations may be interested in starting a Friends chapter:

- High schools
- Rotary, Lions, and other civic community groups
- Churches
- Bridge clubs and similar social groups
- Book clubs
- Senior centers
- Museums and arts organizations
- Local businesses and corporations

Concentric Circles Recruitment

As the name of this recruitment method suggests, you start with groups of individuals who are already in contact with the library and encourage their involvement. You also encourage the participation of those people who have an association with the initial group. A regular and active volunteer, for example, might be encouraged to bring a friend or relative to an event or meeting. Individuals within the community who have a connection or interest in specific issues addressed by the library may also be targeted. In other words, you develop an increasingly wider circle of potential members. With this approach, a volunteer library organization could consider working with regular library users, friends of volunteers and staff,

and people interested in or affected by an issue that the library addresses (e.g., literacy, English as a Second Language, after-school activities, job skills and career preparation, local history).

These three recruitment approaches are effective and cover numerous situations, but other methods of volunteer recruitment should be considered. Increasingly, for example, Friends groups are using their websites and online approaches to identify and attract new members. The *Resources* section at the end of this document provides access to several online sources about volunteer recruitment.

7: What are Common Pitfalls and How Do We Avoid Them?

Even a successful Friends group can run into problems that weaken its overall effectiveness. There are some common pitfalls that plague volunteer organizations, and it's useful to be aware of them and to take steps to avoid becoming a victim of them.

➤ *Lack of Training*

Volunteers need to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and feel capable of doing the work. Many Friends groups find it helpful to create job descriptions for volunteer positions that outline responsibilities and required or preferred skills and competencies. In addition, all new volunteers should receive an orientation to the group and its operations. Ideally, this orientation should be in person and allow new members the opportunity to ask questions and become familiar with other members on an informal basis. A handbook that includes policies and procedures, as well as a FAQ section, should be given to all volunteers.

Training for specific tasks and activities should also be available. The volunteer responsible for membership recordkeeping, for example, may need to attend a workshop about new software and technology applications. Although training can often be handled by the experienced members, there are times when formal training conducted by an outside group is necessary. The proficiency and expertise that are gained through formal training almost always outweigh concerns about cost.

➤ *Forgetting to Say "Thank You"*

Most Friends members decide to volunteer, because they are committed to the goals of the library and feel a connection to its mission. As noted earlier, they freely give their time without the expectation of monetary reward. This dedication, however, does not mean that they do not expect, or at least benefit from, some type of recognition. Recognition should occur on an informal and formal basis. The officers of the Friends group and the key leaders should provide frequent acknowledgment and encouragement during discussions and while working with the volunteers. More formal recognition should occur in the form of annual dinners and awards ceremonies, and the library

director and board members should be in attendance. All activities and events sponsored by the Friends group should be indicated as such to recognize the overall efforts of the group. Other means of formal recognition might include T-shirts, small gifts, photographs, and press coverage of events.

➤ *Same Old Same Old*

It's not uncommon for the same small group of people to volunteer for activities and hold leadership positions in the organization. While it is beneficial to have veteran members managing operations and holding key positions within the organization, a balance needs to be found so that newer members gain experience and feel that they have a "voice" in the functions and operations of the group. Without this type of balance, the group risks becoming stagnant.

➤ *Conflict*

Conflict of some type is almost inevitable, but steps can be taken to avoid it and even prepare for it. Conflict can occur among members and with library staff. As noted earlier, a well-articulated strategic plan, policies, and procedures provide structure and guidance for doing the work of the group. At times, members may forget the overarching mission and purpose of the Friends of the Library group and time needs to be set aside to discuss and reiterate the group's goals. A clear differentiation and communication about the roles and responsibilities of the volunteers, staff, and board members should help prevent potential confusion and conflict as activities are planned and carried out. As needed, volunteer managers should feel competent and receive training in facilitation techniques, time management, small group communication, and conflict resolution.

8: What Are Some Interesting and Innovative Activities?

The variety of activities and events conducted by Friends groups across the country are numerous and impressive. This section highlights just a few and you are encouraged to become familiar with the sources noted at the end of this document for additional ideas.

Book Sales

Book sales and related events are a common, and usually effective, activity of most Friends groups. Some Friends groups have been particularly effective with this type of activity.

Denver Public Library's Friends group, for example, gave a gift of \$590,000 to the library in 2000 and much of the fundraising occurred through its *Thanks to the Booklover's Ball*, the *Annual Used Book Sale*, and the *Rare and Not-So-Rare Book and Art Auction*.

At Cuesta College (CA), The Corner Store is located in the lobby of the library and offers students and other patrons used books and magazines in good condition for reasonable prices.

To coincide with Valentine's Day, the Friends of the Adamstown Area (PA) Library recycle Valentine's Day cards each year to make elaborately decorated bags that are then filled with donated romance novels. The actual decorating begins in early January so that a hundred bags are ready for sale by Valentine's Day. According to library director Kathy Thren, "This is a much-anticipated event."⁹

A rapidly growing means for ongoing fundraising is online book sales. It can realize surprising profits. A book that might sell for fifty cents at a traditional book sale can suddenly be matched with a specialty collector who is prepared to pay top dollar for it. The reach for online book sales is worldwide. Some Friends groups recruit volunteers to review the books targeted for resale, looking for items that may have a significant online sales potential. In other cases, this type of project may become collaboration between the Friends and library staff, with the library dedicating a staff person's time to book evaluation and selection. The Lake Forest (IL) Public Library and the Warren-Newport (IL) Public Library staffs work with their Friends groups to identify titles that might be added to the collection.

Library Programs

Larger, well-established Friends groups often specialize in planning and hosting large and high-profile literary and author events. Groups of any size, however, can also organize these events. A Friends group can hold an event to celebrate the work of a local author or it can coordinate a program with a local bookstore that is bringing in an author to speak or for a book signing.

In Bolingbrook, Illinois, the Friends of the Fountaindale Library recently presented their second interactive mystery play, "The Murder of the Loaded Librarian." Both performances were sold out and over \$1000 was raised. Next year, the Friends plan to sponsor four performances. Ticket prices are reasonable at \$10 per person. For each performance, seating is limited to fifty and hors d'oeuvres and dessert are served. Refreshments and prizes are donated by area merchants.

Contests

Some library volunteer groups hold design contests open to the entire community for Friends of the Library logos that are then put on t-shirts and book bags for sale.

More Ideas

The Messenger Public Library Friends group in North Aurora (IL) recruited parents to raise money for a porch with rocking chairs at the library. It's a popular spot for parents to sit with their children and read.

The Friends of the Kirkwood (MO) Public Library are taking books traditionally designated for the book sale, hollowing them out, and transforming them into attractive “book purses.” With this clever arts project, a *Readers Digest Condensed Book* suddenly becomes a \$25-\$50 fashion accessory. The purses are selling well at the Greentree Books Shop, a retail store located in the library and managed by the Friends.

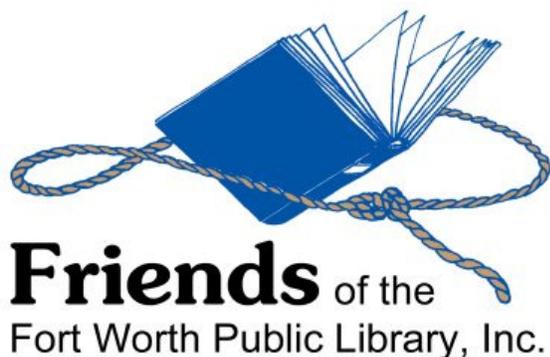
Several Friends groups are creating cookbooks and then sponsoring “taste of” celebrations that showcase the recipes. For example, Friends of the Whitman County (WA) Library cookbook has over 700 recipes collected from residents around the county and they have sold over 1000 copies.

(<http://www.whitco.lib.wa.us/kara/support%20your%20library/cookbook/cookbooks.htm>). The Friends of the Griswold (IA) Public Library are putting together *The Cookbook for Booklovers: Nourishment for the Body, Mind and Soul* (<http://www.griswold.swilsa.lib.ia.us/friends.htm>), and the Friends of the Oakfield Haxton (NY) Memorial Library have collected local recipes for the book *Hometown Favorites - A Community Collection*.

9: What are Some Friends Groups in the NTRLs Doing?

Within the North Texas Regional Library System, there are numerous Friends groups, and the activities and accomplishments of a few are highlighted below.¹⁰

Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library



Bunny Gardner, President of the Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc.

(<http://www.fortworthgov.org/library/info/default.aspx?id=5606>), has built a strong organization. She believes that the mission of the Friends is not only to promote the library and library issues but also to promote the Friends as a viable entity. In brief, if the Friends are successful, more people will join.

The group engages in a number of activities that raise money for the library and also promote its membership. Their most successful activities include book sales, author appearances, and the Texas Literary Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame honors authors whose body of work enhances Texas' literary heritage, is original and first published in this country, and has already been recognized for its literary significance. Held biennially, the Hall of Fame is

commemorated by the "Texas Tales™" painting created by artist Marjorie Stark Buckley that hangs in the west wing of the Central Library.

The group understands the problem of storing book donations so it started and manages a 5,000 square foot bookstore that is open year round with various sales throughout the year. This endeavor allows them to process current fiction and nonfiction titles in a timely manner. In addition, Friends members get 10% discounts and first-day admission to special sales.

The Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library group has between 800 and 900 members and is trying to reach 1,000 members. In the current economy, however, Ms Gardner notes that a \$25 membership can be steep.

Ms. Gardner emphasizes that that anyone building a Friends group needs to be patient and understand that people want to participate but usually have only a limited amount of time to give. It's best for the Friends group to define time-specific jobs and projects. She believes that Friends are not "just" volunteers, but that they represent the Friends and the Ft. Worth Public Library. Thus, high standards and professional attitudes are a must. Nurturing relationships between the Friends and the library staff are also essential. The Friends need to demonstrate that they are there to help the library and can make a notable difference.

Friends of the Bedford Public Library



Friends of the Bedford Public Library

Maria Redburn, Director of the Bedford Public Library, reports that the library has a small, but very active, group (<http://www.bedfordlibrary.org/friends.html>). Currently, there are eight members but the group has held successful author events and is active recruiting through Friends of the Library parties. At the adult summer reading program, books autographed by local authors are available to those who join at a certain level. The group is also auctioning off a MP3 player for Friends recognition. In addition, the big screen television in the library lobby publicizes an ongoing book sale.

Friends of the Bowie Public Library



Jackie Lowrie, Director of the Bowie Public Library, identifies practices that been effective at Bowie Public Library. The Library serves a population of 5,543, and the Friends group has approximately thirty-five members. They

meet once a month except in June and August. The same four members have been officers for several years, which has provided continuity. The members are well-acquainted with each other through other organizations and churches in Bowie. This familiarity provides a cohesiveness that is helpful in having a congenial yet productive group.

The Friends work to sponsor two book sales each year. Last March, over 1100 books were donated to the sale. In addition, the Friends hold a "Taster's Luncheon" in February and attendees bring their dishes to taste. At the follow-up "Spring Luncheon," the best dishes are served by the Friends to attendees. At the most recent luncheon, 120 people attended. The current fundraising efforts yield \$1500-\$2000 each year.

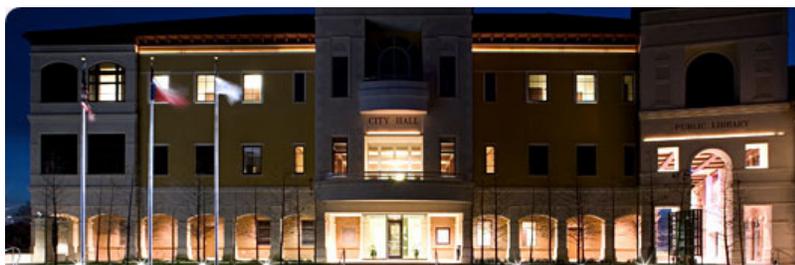
Friends of the Keller Library



Friends of the Keller Library

Keller Public Library serves approximately 37,000 people. The Friends of the Keller Library (<http://www.kellerfriends.org/index.html>) manage a bookstore in the former library building. The store is open on Wednesday and Saturday, plus an annual sale every year. Monies raised are donated to the library based on the library's wish list. The Friends group has 501(c)3 status, which helps with receiving library grants and donations. Current membership is a few hundred and about twenty members attend the monthly meetings. Ms. Prock believes that effective communication is the most important element for a good relationship between the Friends and the library staff. She makes certain that lines of communication are always open and she talks to the President of the Friends at least once a week.

The Friends of the Colleyville Public Library



Mary Rodne, Director of the Colleyville Public Library, says that the Friends of the Library and the Foundation have made the library what it is today. The library serves

approximately 22,000 and the Friends group has a membership of approximately 100. The current library building opened in 2003 with both the Friends and Foundation in place, each with its own roles and activities. While the foundation engages in large fundraising events, the Friends support other activities such as the book sale, which is ongoing, and it provides refreshments at various library events. They have also decorated the library for numerous parties and events. They support the library by providing funding for items such as equipment. The City of Colleyville does not allow the library to solicit for prizes, so the Friends take on this activity.

In addition, the Library has an eight-foot bear in the children's room and during an open house, the Friends took pictures of each child with the bear and provided the children with a copy. The quilting group made a quilt for the Friends, which was sold at a silent auction and a calendar was produced that included the various blocks of the quilt. These calendars were a very popular item.

The activities of the Foundation complement the Friends. The group prepares and disseminates an annual mailer and raised \$150,000 during the first year. It also sponsors a very popular Fun Run. At an annual dinner, people can buy a table and decorate it with a book theme. This event raises a significant amount of money for the library. For another event, Danny Wright, a local pianist, donated a concert and tickets sold for \$50 each.

Ms. Rodne notes that the relationship among the library staff, the Friends members, and the Foundation members has been very positive. She works to make sure that there is open communication and that each group understands its unique role in helping the library move forward.

10: Resources

Web Resources: Library-Specific

FOLUSA is the primary association for Friends of the Library groups, and its website provides a wealth of information for starting and maintaining Friends groups.

- *Friends of the Library USA (FOLUSA):* <http://www.folusa.org/>

Web Resources: General

The following websites provide access to a variety of resources about volunteers, including recruiting, management, recordkeeping, planning, program ideas, and related issues.

- *Corporation for National and Community Service:* <http://www.cns.gov/>

- *Energize*: <http://www.energizeinc.com/>
- *Free Management Library, Developing and Managing Volunteers*: <http://www.managementhelp.org/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm>
- *Idealist.com, Volunteer Management Resource Center*: <http://www.idealist.org/en/vmrc/>
- *Points of Light Institute*: <http://www.pointsoflight.org/>
- *Techsoup: The Technology Place for Nonprofits. Shared Wisdom: Recruiting and Managing Volunteers*: <http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/volunteers/page6010.cfm>
- *VolunteerToday.com, The Electronic Gazette for Volunteerism*: <http://www.volunteertoday.com/default.htm>

Books and Articles

McCurley, Stephen and Rick Lynch. *Essential Volunteer Management*. Downers Grove, IL: VMSystems/Heritage Arts Press: 1989. (An online version adapted from the book is available at: <http://www.casenet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/essenvol.htm>)

Reed, Sally Gardner, Beth Nawalinski and Alexander Patterson. *101+ Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2004.

Taylor, Merrily. "It's Hard to Make New Friends: What to Think About in Creating a Friends of the Library Group." *Library Trends* (Winter 2000). http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1387/is_3_48?pnun=8&opg=63165617

Songs

And, finally, there are many popular songs about friends and friendships. Think creatively – there are probably dozens of activities using these songs that are waiting to be developed. For example, conclude a Friends meeting with a group rendition of one of the songs, hold a contest at a Friends meeting to see who knows the words to the songs, or organize a Karaoke event as part of a Friends meeting.

- *If My Friends Could See Me Now*
- *Make New Friends*
- *Oh You Got To Have Friends*
- *That's What Friends Are For*
- *With a Little Help From My Friends*
- *You've Got a Friend*

FOOTNOTES

¹ friend. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/friend> (accessed: June 12, 2008).

² Reed, Sally Gardner. "FOLUSA Turns 25." *American Libraries* 35 (February 2004): 40.

³ Reed, Sally Gardner. "FOLUSA Turns 25." *American Libraries* 35 (February 2004): 40.

⁴ Corporation for National & Community Service. *Volunteering in America*. <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/index.asp> (accessed: June 12, 2008).

⁵ Corporation for National & Community Service. *Volunteering in America*. <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/index.asp> (accessed: June 12, 2008).

⁶ Lynch, Rick and Steve McCurley. *Essential Volunteer Management*. <http://www.casenet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/essenvol.htm> (accessed: June 12, 2008).

⁷ Taylor, Merrily. "It's Hard to Make New Friends: What to Think About in Creating a Friends of the Library Group." *Library Trends* (Winter 2000). http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1387/is_3_48?pnun=8&opg=63165617 (accessed: June 12, 2008).

⁸ Lynch, Rick and Steve McCurley. *Essential Volunteer Management*. <http://www.casenet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/essenvol.htm> (accessed: June 12, 2008).

⁹ Price, Lee. "With a Little Help From My Friends." *Public Libraries* 46 (September/October 2007).

¹⁰ Information gathered from websites and interviews conducted by telephone during the week of June 9, 2008.

Miriam Pollack has over 30 years of experience working in public and special libraries, library systems, and library education programs. As Assistant Director at the North Suburban (IL) Library System for 17 years and as a private consultant, she has been known for her skills in innovation thinking, creative project and service development, and assisting organizations in embracing change and working with library staff and trustees to help them identify their preferred future. She has extensive experience in recruiting public library directors, long-range planning, staff development, grant writing and management coaching. She is known for skills at matching public libraries with appropriate library directors, finding the best fit for the organization. She has a BA in Education from the University of Illinois Chicago, an MA in Library Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and an MA in Human Resource Development from Northeastern Illinois University. See her website at <http://www.miriampollack.com>.