

## What Does it take to Sustain a Friends Group?

### What are Friends for?

- To help raise funds to purchase equipment and materials not available through the regular Library budget
  - To provide volunteer assistance at special programs and community events
- To promote knowledge of and interest in the functions, services and needs of the Library
  - To foster public support for the Library and its development

Develop Community Partnerships by Understanding and Participating in your Community

Define the Role of Your Friends Group

Use the 5 Ws and S.M.A.R.T. Principles

Develop Your Marketing Strategies

FOR THE ONGOING SUCCESS OF YOUR FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY GROUP!

#### Event Planning

*The 5 W's*  
Who  
What  
Where  
When  
Why

#### S.M.A.R.T Objectives

Specific  
Measurable  
Achievable  
Relevant  
Timely

PowerPoint presentations and all handouts may be found at [www.friendsoflibraries.ca/Conferences/OLA-2008/OLA-2008.htm](http://www.friendsoflibraries.ca/Conferences/OLA-2008/OLA-2008.htm)



## What Does it take to Sustain a Friends Group?

**Sheila Durand,**

CEO North Perth Public Library

**Lois Magahay,**

Friends of the Lindsay Branch of the Kawartha Lakes Public Library

**Val Marshall,**

Friends of the Ajax Public Library

*Friends of Library groups function like a "marriage." It's all about relationships – with the added difficulty that many more than two people are involved - the CEO, the Library Board, the library staff, the local community and – all the Friends.*

*Again, like a marriage, it takes cooperation, flexibility, patience, understanding, a sense of humour and tolerance – plus the ability to overcome changes.*

How do you keep harmony, sustain and grow your Friends group?

- 1) Build on a solid foundation
- 2) Define the role of the Friends
- 3) Fundraising
- 4) Staff Support
- 5) Communication

6) Dealing with Change

- Change of the CEO
- New Board members
- Closure of branches
- Lack of interest from Friends

7) Appreciate your Friends

8) Resources of Friends of Canadian Libraries

## Increasing Friends Membership and Volunteer Base

Where do we look for new members?

- **Current Membership**
  - Utilize Members Involvement in Other Organizations
- **Library Users**
  - Utilize existing programs and events
  - Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies
  - Book marks outlining the *Friends* activities and upcoming events are provided to all library departments for insertion in books being checked out.
- **Community**
  - Utilize Members involvement in other societies.
  - Membership Drive
  - Celebrate your Library's birthday
  - Doors Open
  - The Publicity Co-ordinator
  - Brochures
  - Posters

## HOW TO START A FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY GROUP

### What Friends do for Their Libraries

- ▶ Advocate
- ▶ Increase public awareness of the library and its services
- ▶ Raise funds, over and above the library's operating budget
- ▶ Sponsor programming
- ▶ Provide support for library programs or special events
- ▶ Establish a good volunteer base

Dorothy Macnaughton  
Vice-President,  
Friends of Canadian Libraries  
President, Friends of the Sault Ste. Marie  
Public Library

### The Role of the Friends in Relation to the Library Board and Staff

- When the Friends consider their role, their objectives them, they need to consider how the Friends organization fits in with the library's mandate and strategic plan
- Friends partner with the library, undertaking complementary activities
- The Friends can pursue opportunities for advocacy activities and fundraising that the library can't
- The Steering Committee and, later, the Friends President, should communicate regularly with the Library Director/CEO or staff liaison
- The Friends are an independent organization, with their own Board, Constitution and By Laws
- The Friends Board is not a governance Board.
- The Library Board is a governance Board, responsible for monitoring the library's budget, staffing, policies and strategic plan
- A good relationship should be established between the Friends Board and the Library Board
- Many Friends organizations have a Library Board member (Ex officio) on their Board
- Library Trustees and staff should be welcoming and appreciative of Friends' volunteers, as they are not only giving a great deal of time, they are also promoting the library in the community

### Your First Meeting/Organizing

#### Promoting the First Meeting

- In the library and other prominent locations, advertise a meeting to attract interested people who are regular library users, who care about the library and who might have some time to give to support the library
- You may also want to enlist the help of Library Board Trustees and staff who could hand out invitations to the meeting. If the library has a newsletter, advertise the first meeting well in advance
- Put a notice of the meeting on the library's web site
- Use free media opportunities (public service announcements).
- In all advertising, emphasize how the proposed Friends group wants to help the library and needs people who really care about their library

### Your First Meeting/Organizing

#### Planning the First Meeting

- If a Library staff person or a Library Board Trustee are spearheading the formation of a Friends group, they can make the necessary arrangements to book a meeting room, arrange for chairs, etc.
- Otherwise, a key volunteer can take on this responsibility
- **Always have refreshments.** If the primary organizer knows a volunteer baker, enlist their help. If you are expecting a larger crowd of people, Timbits work well
- At the first organizing meeting, at least one Library Board Trustee and one library staff person should be present to speak about the need for a Friends group, to answer questions and offer support
- You could invite someone who is a member of a local Friends group in your area or a member of Friends of Canadian Libraries to provide information at this meeting.
- The primary organizer can draw up a simple agenda to keep the meeting on track

#### The First Organizing Meeting

- Request that people ask specific questions, particularly of the library representatives, bearing in mind that it will take time for the Friends group to undertake larger projects or to provide funding for more expensive requirements
- Find out if the library needs advocates in the near future or if there are some smaller items the Friends could fund
- This will be a preliminary planning meeting where a Steering Committee will be formed
- Additional volunteers could plan the first event
- If the pool of volunteers is quite small, that group may choose to be the Steering Committee and hold off on any other event planning

#### The Steering Committee

- At the initial meeting, ask for volunteers to form a Steering Committee, which will lead in the future to a Friends of the Library group. Some of these people may form the first Executive of the Friends' Board
- A Library Board Trustee and a library staff representative should be part of the Steering Committee (ex officio)
- One of the Steering Committee members should be the Treasurer
- The Steering Committee will be responsible for drafting the Friends' Constitution and By Laws
- The Steering Committee should review several sample Constitutions and By Laws, choose which ideas they like from those and draft their own version which fits with their library's goals and plans
- The Steering Committee should strive for comprehensive, clear and uncomplicated documents
- Remember, the Constitution and By Laws can always be altered later on