

# **Friends of Small Libraries**

**El Session, February 18, 2020**

**Dorothy Macnaughton, Past President, Friends of  
the Prince Township Library, Ontario**

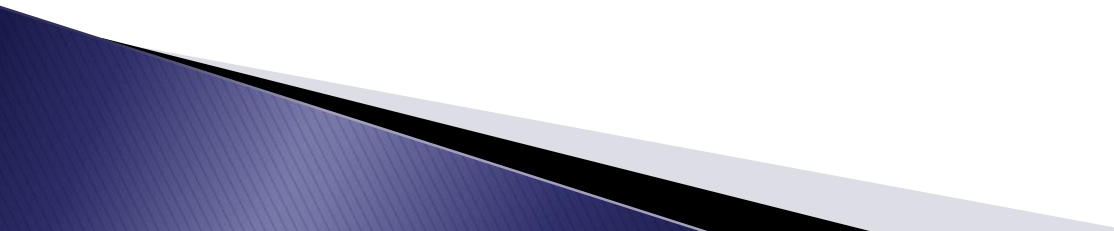
# Friends of the Library Groups

- ▶ Friends groups can be successful, no matter the size of one's community.
- ▶ I have been heavily involved in two Friends groups, one in Sault Ste. Marie (population 75000) and one in Prince Township (population 1100 and a rural area), both of which were very successful.
- ▶ The challenges are greater when one's Friends group is associated with a library in a small, rural area where there may be few businesses and a large number of seniors.

# Prince Township Friends

- ▶ The Friends of the Prince Township Library has existed for over 20 years and throughout those years has had a solid membership of 10-20 members, including Library Board members. We encourage Library Board members to support the Friends by taking out a \$5 annual membership.
- ▶ Library Board members often help out with Friends' events.
- ▶ Over 21 years, the Friends have raised over \$90,000.

# How Friends Can Help

- ▶ Friends can offer the library financial support and increase the library's visibility in the community by holding various fundraisers.
  - ▶ Monies raised are not used for operating expenses, but rather to provide additional critical funds the Library needs
  - ▶ Friends can advocate when cuts threaten the library's budget or when the library may be in danger of closing.
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# Friends Relationships

- ▶ Friends work collaboratively with the Library Director/CEO, staff, and the Library Board.
- ▶ Good communication between the Library Director and the President of the Friends group is critical to the Friends' success.
- ▶ There is a great chart on the OLA website that demonstrates the relationships well.
- ▶ Roles and Relationships - Chart

[http://www.accessola.org/web/OLA/About/OLA\\_Friends\\_Committee.aspx](http://www.accessola.org/web/OLA/About/OLA_Friends_Committee.aspx)

# Forming a Friends Group

- ▶ Your Friends group does not require a large number of supporters to get started.
- ▶ Many Friends groups in smaller communities start small (10 members, for example) and stay small for many years, but still accomplish a great deal.
- ▶ Your Friends group may be formal, with a Constitution and/or By-Laws, may be a registered charity, or may just be an informal group of library supporters.
- ▶ [Checklist](#)

# Forming a Friends Group

- ▶ If your Library is interested in starting a Friends group, there are some resources on the OLA website, as well as a manual developed by Friends of Canadian Libraries to help you. The manual is available from the OLA Marketplace. It is in the process of being revised and will soon be available to download by sections.

- ▶ Resources:

[http://www.accessola.org/web/OLA/About/OLA\\_Friends\\_Committee.aspx](http://www.accessola.org/web/OLA/About/OLA_Friends_Committee.aspx)

# Forming a Friends Group

- ▶ It helps to elect a small Executive – President, Treasurer and Secretary at least.

- - The Vice-President's position can be left vacant if no one comes forward to fill it.

The Friends can meet as often as the group finds necessary. Many small groups meet primarily to plan events.

- It can be as little as two times a year, with an additional meeting for an AGM

- it can be every two months, except during the summer



# Forming a Friends Group

- ▶ Remember to use e-mail to conduct business between meetings.
  - ▶ If you have By-Laws, make sure you have a clause that states you can vote on items between meetings via e-mail; financial votes agreed on by e-mail should have a specified \$ limit
  - ▶ Or, it could be a Policy that was voted on at a meeting.
- ▶ Sample:

Voting between regular Board meetings

  - Between meetings, voting may be conducted by e-mail.
- ▶ Make sure e-mail votes are recorded in the official minutes of the next regular Board meeting.

# How to Raise Funds

- ▶ Know Your Community – determine what kind of fundraisers will go over well and not duplicate what other groups are doing.
- ▶ Most Friends groups raise funds for their Library by selling books:
  - in the library on shelf units or on book carts
  - in the library at a larger book sale
  - online
  - at outside book sales in malls, at municipal facilities, such as a community centre, in a high school gymnasium, etc.

# How to Raise Funds

- ▶ By holding events, either in the library or outside the library, such as
  - silent auction
  - bake sale
  - pie auction
  - spaghetti dinner
  - tea
  - trivia contest
  - house tour
  - quilt raffle

# How to Raise Funds

- ▶ If your group has Registered Charitable Status, you can raise funds in a different way than if you don't have charitable status.
- ▶ You can apply for various government grants and grants from private Foundations.
  - - The Prince Township Friends apply annually for a federal government program which allows them to have a full time summer student for several weeks (can be from 7 to 10 weeks). The Friends cover additional costs, such as WSIB and so your Friends group needs to budget accordingly.

# How to Raise Funds

- ▶ Additional Fundraising Ideas from the old Friends of Canadian Libraries website:

[Click here](#)

There are many other fundraising ideas on the old FOCAL website, including in the FOCAL POINT newsletters.

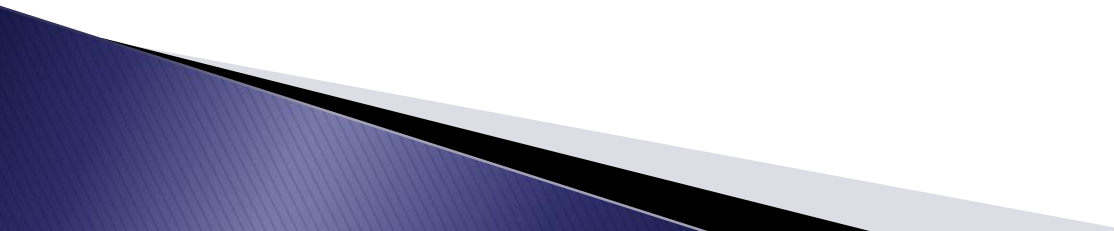
# Planning Events

- ▶ Many small Friends groups try to form a Committee for each event. This way, the Committee can meet between the Board meetings and bring their plans to the Board, either via e-mail or at a face-to-face meeting, for approval.
- ▶ Organization and good, timely planning are key to a successful event.
- ▶ You need to consider how many volunteers you will have helping out and whether the event is something your group can handle.

# Planning Events

- ▶ [Volunteer Canada Event Planning Checklist](#)
- ▶ [OLA Friends Special Event Planning Checklist](#)

# Advertising/Media Coverage

- ▶ Put up posters in local businesses.
  - ▶ Plan your event well ahead of time so that you can advertise it widely and perhaps garner media attention; give them 3 weeks to a month's notice.
  - ▶ Make a list of the e-mail addresses for the media in your community – keep it on file for all Friends events.
  - ▶ Over time, you will develop connections with the press so they will know who the Friends are.
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# Advertising/Media Coverage

- ▶ Remember the media likes to cover anything a little bit out of the ordinary.
  - - e.g. Mini golf in the library
- ▶ Use the Library's newsletter
- ▶ Friends and/or the Library's Websites and Social Media
  - - Facebook allows lots of sharing of your information, including to your own personal Facebook friends.

# How Funds Are Spent

- ▶ Friends groups usually request a “Wish List” from the Library Director/CEO so they will know what items the library needs, with the highest priority items listed first.
- ▶ The Friends Board votes on how they will spend their funds which are in the Friends’ account and the monies are then officially donated to the Library for the purposes chosen by the Friends

# How Funds Are Spent

- ▶ Examples of what kinds of things Friends groups have donated to their Libraries:
  - ▶ - furniture
  - ▶ - computers
  - ▶ - small fridge
  - ▶ - Christmas tree
  - ▶ - large print books
  - ▶ - annual magazine subscriptions
  - ▶ - DVDs
  - ▶ - Furnishings for Children's Area
  - ▶ - iPads
  - ▶ - Digital audio books/DAISY players
  - ▶ - "Adopt a Book" program

# How Funds Are Spent

- ▶ To cover the cost of Library Programs, such as:
  - Books for Babies
  - Programs for Seniors
  - STEAM programs or program materials
  - Computer classes
  - Music programs
  - Children's programs
  - Author visits

# Challenges

- ▶ With a small group of volunteers, there can be challenges, such as:
  - - volunteers getting older who are not able to do the types of tasks they used to be able to (such as moving heavy boxes of books or standing for long periods of time)
  - - not many younger volunteers who want to be involved
  - - volunteers who are already committed to their families or to other local volunteer organizations
  - - not knowing how to recruit new volunteers

# Volunteer Recruitment

- [Ten Tips for Recruiting Volunteers](#)
- [Volunteer recruitment ideas](#)

# Strategies to Meet Challenges

- ▶ Re-evaluate your activities.
  - - maybe it is time to not hold a large book sale, but rather several smaller sales
  - - or to consider other types of fundraisers

Determine what kinds of fundraisers are manageable, given your volunteer base and their ages.

- ▶ Find out if some of your volunteers are interested in things like:
  - - selling books online
  - - holding a small silent auction

# Strategies to Meet Challenges

- ▶ You don't need to plan an event which will bring in many thousands of dollars; instead consider several smaller events, the revenues from which will add up.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to think outside the box.
- ▶ Taking into account what other organizations are doing and what type of event is likely to be successful in your community, consider a special event which another Friends group may have held.



# Strategies to Meet Challenges

- ▶ For ideas, visit the OLA Friends Committee and the old Friends of Canadian Libraries (FOCAL) website.
- ▶ [OLA Friends Committee Signature Events](#)
- ▶ [PowerPoint presentation](#)

# Strategies to Meet Challenges

- ▶ Best Practices: Innovative Ideas
- ▶ Stay at Home and Read a Book

# Contact Information

- ▶ For additional information, ideas or support, please contact:

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