

BRANCHING OUT – Multi-branch libraries and their Friends

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OLA Super Conference 2015



Friends of Canadian Libraries

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.. ontario library boards' association

Branching out - multi-branch libraries and their Friends

How do Friends of the Library groups operate in a multi-branch library system? Do they operate system-wide, only at certain branches or as a hybrid?

How are issues of communication, conflict resolution and respect for local diversity addressed? Our panel from urban library and county library systems offer their unique perspectives.



Branching out - multi-branch libraries and their Friends

- Learn how Friends function in library systems with more than one branch
- Consider differences between centralized and decentralized models
- Hear about successful working relationships



*We will examine two successful models:
centralized/decentralized - big city/rural.*

*Pick the best practices from both that work for your
organization.*



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Library Branches | 6 |
| Population served | 44,876 |
| Friends Groups | 3 (2 active, 1 inactive) |
| Model | Decentralized/Informal |
| Incorporated | No |
| Registered Charity | No |
| Amalgamation | 2001 |
| Friends formed | Jarvis - 1975 Dunnville - 1996 |



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

Membership

Jarvis – 7

Dunnville – 16

Selkirk – inactive

Governance Structure

3 member Executive

Liaison

Library staff liaison at each meeting – either Community Outreach/Inreach Coordinator, Deputy CEO or CEO



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

Budget 2014

Dunnville \$12,000

(\$5,000 of which is an annual budgeted donation from the book sale to the library operating budget)

Friends' Financial Decision making

All monies are available for use by the Dunnville branch, with some support for system wide initiatives.



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

Activities

Jarvis – Christmas craft workshops; Bus trip; support for children's summer programming, and other programmes

Dunnville – Annual book sale; annual garage sale; annual Christmas sale and support for other programmes
(Also work with Better World Books)



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

Policies

Constitution and by-laws

Friends' procedure for lottery license

Volunteer training

Library provides health & safety training

Friends provide vocational training for roles within group



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

Vital relations

- Library staff treat the Friends of the Library like family; special relationship with special privileges resulting in good communication and effective services
- Importance of “open door” nature of DFOTL: not a “closed club” or “clique”, individual members are valued for their strengths and allowed opportunities to showcase those strengths in various roles that coincided with abilities and preferences. **INCLUSIVE!**



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

Success

- Minimal policies, flexible and responsive issue resolution by executive with buy-in from members very important to success
- Informal structure allows individuals to give as much time to the organization as they like, find more commitment to work when able to make own schedules etc.



Friends of the Haldimand County Public Library

Challenges

- Ageing out of volunteers/recruitment of new volunteers
- Pushback regarding any systems wide initiatives/expenditures

Lessons learned

- Being adaptable, responsive, and flexible is integral to the sustainability of the group
- Building social capital through interpersonal relationships with other local and regional organizations



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Library Branches | 33 |
| Population served | 883,391 |
| Friends Groups | 1 |
| Model | Centralized/Formal |
| Incorporated | Yes |
| Registered Charity | Yes |
| Amalgamation | 2003 |
| Friends formed | 1981 |



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Membership

300 volunteers (at bookstores in 20 library branches) +
250 members who pay an annual fee

Governance Structure

14 member Friends Board

2 part time employees

3 sub-committees (Operations, Communications and Trust Fund)

Liaison - A library liaison officer is essential



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Budget 2014 \$365,000

Friends' Financial Decision making

System wide expenditure

Money raised by volunteers reinvested in local library but not all of it.

Activities

- Bookstore sales and sales through Better World Books website
- Literacy – Publish pot-pourri, an annual bilingual anthology of children's poetry and short stories, to inspire our youth.
- Advocacy



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Policies

By-laws

Memorandum of Understanding with library

Cash handling and accountability

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

Safety and welfare

Trust Fund Investment Policy

Travel Reimbursement

Wish List Formula Policy

Volunteer training

Friends volunteers trained by Friends Bookstore Manager at local branch - library orientation and bookstore operation



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Vital relations

- Support of the CEO chief Librarian is essential. (catalyst not controller)
- Board – Library - Volunteer committees and connections
- Encourage a personal relationship with their librarian so stuff gets worked out at that level. (Note: the few volunteers I have that are so shy or not gifted in working problems with people are the branches that consume 90% of my intervention time.)
- Wise oversight of revenues and gifting



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Success

- Lead People, manage things
- Minimal policies,
- Wise oversight of revenues and gifting
- Provide the “what” and the “why” and then let the bookstore manager figure out the “how” to run their respective stores.



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Challenges

- Declining book sales
- Internal and external communications



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Lessons learned

- Build a solid financial checks system
- Recruit a solid treasurer with accounting experience
- Screen board members carefully for skills, availability and commitment to work
- Unleash the younger members and allow them to pursue their ideas



Questions?



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Contact Us

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