

# **Friends of Your Library: Passionate Partners**

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# FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY



## What is a Friend of the Library?

- A Friend is a member of the community who values the library and wants to support it by donating time and talent in a variety of ways.

Greensboro Free Library, Greensboro,  
Vermont

# FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY



Webster's Dictionary defines a **friend** as "a person whom one knows well and is fond of; an intimate associate; a close acquaintance". Being a Friend of the Library is the inside track to establishing a closer relationship between you and your library.

Friends of the Brownsburg Public Library,  
Brownsburg, Indiana

# FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY



- Libraries across the country have friends, who are typically a group of volunteers dedicated to supporting the library through fundraising and advocacy.
  - Friends of the Trenton Free Public Library, Trenton, N.J.

# FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY



- Friends are citizens who value the service of libraries and volunteer to help them. Friends usually operate with a self-elected Board of directors representing the community.
  - Whitehall Friends of the Library, Whitehall, Montana

# PARTNERS



## **What is a partner?**

- According to Merriam Webster's online dictionary, a partner is "one associated with another, especially in an action".
- Partners, by definition, are people who have a strong association with the organization they choose to support and they support it in an active and meaningful way.

# FRIENDS = PASSIONATE PARTNERS



- If you have an existing Friends group, you already have a base of passionate partners.
- If you have one, two or a few regular library users who might be willing to become the core of a Friends group, encourage and support them in this endeavour. They will become your passionate partners in the future.
- If you have opportunities to be out in the community, promote the need for Friends to assist and support the library and your partner base will increase.

# FRIENDS = PASSIONATE PARTNERS



- Friends of Libraries, organizations dedicated to supporting your libraries, are your **passionate** partners.
- **WHY?**
  - Friends already value the library and want to support it
  - They have indicated by becoming Friends that they are willing and able to donate their time and energy to fundraising, advocating and promoting the library, as needed



# FRIENDS = PASSIONATE PARTNERS



- Of all the organizations in your community, these volunteers have chosen your library as their volunteer priority
- Today's volunteers are extremely busy people, but still have a lot to give, even if they can only give a limited amount of time
- If their volunteer experience is a positive, fulfilling one, Friends will tell others about it and you'll gain additional volunteers

# HOW TO FIND FRIENDS



- In your library – get to know the regular patrons who seem to be avid readers; observe those who seem to be retired or have time to be at the library frequently
- At book clubs or genealogy society meetings
- At events in the community where the library has a display or a presence
- At other well attended community events
- At book sales

# WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?



## Why Do People Volunteer?

- To help a cause they believe in (95%)
- To use their skills and experience (81%)
- Have been personally affected by the cause (69%)
- To explore one's own strengths (57%)
- To improve job opportunities (23%)
- People also volunteer to have fun and gain a sense of personal achievement.

# WHY PEOPLE DON'T VOLUNTEER



- **Why People Don't Volunteer**
- Do not have the necessary time (69%)
- Unwilling to make a year-round commitment (46%)
- Give money instead of time (38%)
- Were not personally asked (37%)
- Already made a contribution to volunteering (22%)
- Did not know how to become involved (20%)

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY VOLUNTEERS



- In a study undertaken by the Canadian government, “Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating”, a breakdown in percentage of volunteers by sector indicates that only 3% of total volunteers were from the Arts and Culture sector.
  - [http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/files/giving/en/csgvp\\_highlights\\_2007.pdf](http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/files/giving/en/csgvp_highlights_2007.pdf)

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY VOLUNTEERS



- Volunteers contributed the largest average numbers of hours to religious (141 annually), sports and recreation (119), social services (114) and arts and culture organizations (107).  
Expressed in terms of the Canadian population, 4.6% of Canadians (i.e., 10% of the 46% of Canadians who volunteer) accounted for 54% of total volunteer hours, and 12% of Canadians contributed 78% of total hours.

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY VOLUNTEERS



- At the 2007 Ontario Library Association Super conference, Reva Cooper presented two sessions on Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Today.
- Reva stated, "It is more difficult to recruit and retain volunteers than in the past. The more creative and proactive we can be in our responses to trends and issues, the more successful we will be in meeting the goals of our organizations."

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY VOLUNTEERS



- “Volunteers are looking for new ways of volunteering, have greater expectations of volunteering, and are being more selective about their choice of volunteer activities.”
  - Environmental Scan on Volunteering in Canada,
  - Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2001



# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY VOLUNTEERS



- **Be a matchmaker** - Match the interests, motivations, skills, and time availability of individual volunteers with specific needs in your organization.
- Be honest about the requirements, time and qualifications
- Interview all potential candidates including volunteers moving to new positions
- Check-in to make sure match is working

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY VOLUNTEERS



- **See volunteers as customers** - use a customer service approach with volunteers. Volunteers are your customers because, without them, the organization cannot carry out its mandate and community programs would not be delivered.
- Provide a means for volunteers to provide feedback

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY VOLUNTEERS



- **Create a positive organizational climate** - the climate expresses shared assumptions, values and beliefs about itself, its members, its paid and unpaid staff, and its clients/participants.
- Trust or mistrust can have a tremendous impact on the success of an organization.
- High performance results when there is a spirit of teamwork and trust.
- Ensure that your organizational climate supports trust and teamwork.

# WHY PEOPLE STAY INVOLVED



- Generally, people stay involved because:
- They feel that they are making a difference
- They see they have a useful role to play within the organization
- Volunteer work is personally relevant
- They are able to fit volunteering into their busy lives

# WHY PEOPLE STAY INVOLVED



- There is an opportunity for advancement, learning and growth
- They are involved in problem-solving and decision-making
- Their needs are being met
- They feel valued and appreciated
- They are having fun

# WHY PEOPLE STAY INVOLVED



The top three retention factors identified by direct service volunteers are:

- Show appreciation and respect
- Provide meaningful and varied experiences
- Communicate with and be responsive to volunteers

*Recruiting, Retaining and Rewarding Volunteers: What Volunteers Have to Say, 2002 (see Research Bytes for further information)*

# BENEFITS OF HAVING A FRIENDS GROUP



- According to Sally Reed, Executive Director of the Association of Library Trustees, Friends and Foundations in the U.S., (ALA), libraries “benefit by the expansion of their resources to serve the public. Friends extend a library’s capacity through dollar gifts, volunteer and program support, and through advocacy. Few libraries are in a position to turn away help from their supporters...”
  - Libraries Need Friends, A Toolkit to Create Friends Groups or Revitalize the One You Have

# BENEFITS OF HAVING A FRIENDS GROUP



- **Friends can raise money**

- Every library needs additional funds, beyond what their local government provides
- Friends can apply for funding that their library can't
- Friends can raise funds for capital campaigns, for equipment or to fund library programs or services
- Friends raise funds for books, DVDs, and other materials for the library's collection



# BENEFITS OF HAVING A FRIENDS GROUP



- **Friends can be great advocates**
- Sally Reed of ALTAFF states, “Politically, Friends are very important and effective for libraries of all types. Friends are advocates by default! Friends wouldn’t be giving their time, energy and financial support to an entity they’re not willing to fight for – that entity is the library. When the case needs to be made for your library, the group most able to step up to the plate is the Friends of the Library.”
  - Libraries Need Friends, A Toolkit to Create Friends Groups or Revitalize the One You Have

# BENEFITS OF HAVING A FRIENDS GROUP



- **Friends can be great advocates**
  - If your library needs community support in a crisis (e.g. closure of a branch), having an existing Friends group will provide the numbers that can make all the difference
  - Friends have family or friends in the community who they can mobilize quickly
  - Friends of the Ottawa Library Association mobilized to save many library branches (Save Our Services)

# BENEFITS OF HAVING A FRIENDS GROUP



- **Friends can help raise the library's profile in the community**
  - Any fundraiser your Friends group organizes will make the community more aware of the library
  - Friends can partner with the library at various events, or partner with other organizations during fundraisers or public awareness events

# BENEFITS OF HAVING A FRIENDS GROUP



- **Friends are dedicated volunteers**
  - By having a visible presence in the community, Friends are able to promote the need for volunteers
  - At all events, with information at the library's circulation desk and whenever possible, Friends can talk about what they do and how fulfilling and enjoyable volunteering for the library can be
  - Some individuals can assist both the Friends and the library as a volunteer

# BENEFITS OF HAVING A FRIENDS GROUP



- **Friends provide support for programs, services and special projects**
  - With funds raised for the library, Friends can choose to support Teen literacy programs, Books for Babies programs, author events, speakers, etc.
  - Friends can designate funds for the CNIB Partners Program, walkers, captioned DVDs, etc.
  - Friends support the library during special events such as a 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary or opening of a new library

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Friends can partner with other community organizations for fundraising or public awareness events

Displays or events with service clubs or volunteer organizations, arts or heritage groups

- ✦ Recycling events
- ✦ Horticultural society
- ✦ Genealogy society
- ✦ Art gallery
- ✦ Heritage groups

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



- Friends can approach businesses to donate draw prizes or funds, or to sponsor programs, equipment or capital projects
- Over time, Friends can help increase the visibility of the library in the business community and nurture that relationship
- Friends with charitable status can approach various organizations and government for project specific funds that the library cannot apply for

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



- To quote from a letter of support, from a very small community in Nova Scotia, Clark's Harbour, "The Friends group worked with local organizations to raise nearly \$40,000...this community is battling through hard economic times, low literacy levels, and geographic isolation, but the Friends group still managed to raise the money for its library."



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



- “The Clark’s Harbour Friends group conducted various fundraising events and letter-writing campaigns and submitted grant applications to numerous foundations to achieve its goal. The Friends group was creative and inclusive in its activities, holding community teas, bake sales, sweater and quilt draws and auctions.”
  - Trudy Amirault, Letter of Support, Gabriele Schreiber Friends of the Year Award submission to FOCAL, 2008

# CONCLUSION



- Your conference theme, “The Power of Many – The Power of Partnerships” could have been written as a theme for Friends of Libraries Groups.
- Your Friends group is made up of dedicated volunteers who are your most passionate partners.
- Harness that power and your library and your community will reap the benefits for many years to come.

# CONTACT FOCAL



- Friends of Canadian Libraries was formed to support Friends groups and libraries across Canada with information and resources.
- Please contact us with questions, or if you need specific information.
  - [focal@accessola.com](mailto:focal@accessola.com)
- Visit our web site at:
  - <http://www.accessola.com/focal/>

# FOCAL SURVEY



- On the FOCAL web site:  
<http://www.accessola.com/focal/>
- Go to “Counting Opinions” and please fill out the survey for your library or your Friends group