

Size Does Not Matter Leadership does!

Session #608

Colin Plows, President, Friends of the Ottawa Public Library
Judy Sauve, Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library
Ashley McCool, Friends of the Cornwall Public Library



Friends of Canadian Libraries

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Overview of Friends' Group

Ottawa Public Library

- 33 branches
- Approximately 750 fulltime and part time employees
- \$47 million dollar budget for 2014
- \$8 million for material and programmes



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Overview of Friends' Group

Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

- Volunteer run used bookstores in 19 of 33 branches.
- Approximately 300 volunteers
- 450 members
- 70% of volunteers are retired
- 75% are over the age of 55



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Overview of Friends' Group

Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

- Gifted \$350,000 to OPL in 2013 through book sales at branch libraries and a partnership with Better World Books. This represents about 4% of the annual OPL materiel budget.



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The Challenges

Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

- Recruiting an effective strategic-thinking board
- Recruiting Board members who have the time to work to improve and grow the organization
- The slowdown and possible decline of walk-in used book sales in Ottawa
- Finding alternate means of raising money for the library



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What contributes to your success?

Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

- Strong support and leadership of library CEO and staff
- Clear mission
- Keeping Friends Board focused
- Constant feedback to volunteers on what we have done for the library (although there never enough internal communications)
- Care and feeding of volunteer bookstore managers who then keep our volunteers motivated to come back and work.



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What keeps you up at night?

Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

- We have not had to mount an advocacy campaign for about 7 years and the current Board composition and volunteer base does not have this set of skills.
- For every 10 people who apply for Board after orientation session there may be 2 or 3 who are willing to serve.
- None have been interested in advocacy and public speaking.
- At least one of these members will leave the board after 6 months.



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Leadership matters . . .

Friends of the Ottawa Public Library

Let people be who they are and unleash their creative talent.

Risks to this approach

- Unsettled some volunteers who avoid change or new ideas but this is manageable.
- Did the same with my VP Communications and she left.



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Overview of Friends' Group

Cornwall Public Library

- Library serves 46,000 Cornwall residents
- Residents in the outlying areas of SD&G (Stormont Dundas & Glengarry) have to pay for a library card
- The library has 20 full-time and 13 part-time staff
- Library's CEO, Library Liaison (responsible for public relations and coordinating with the friends group)
- Extensive amount of FREE programs and services



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Overview of Friends' Group

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- Founded in 1995 when the when the library began planning to move to a much larger building that could accommodate a used book store
- The Friends raised \$6,000 towards the new space, called "The Friends' Place" which opened in February of 1997.



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Overview of Friends' Group

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- Our executive consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, these positions are elected every 2 years.
- The Friends of the Cornwall Public Library is a major sponsor of the Read to Ride campaign and the Writer's Fest which are programs operated by the library.



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Overview of Friends' Group

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- Fundraising is mainly a Big Book Sale in the fall as well as our shop which is open for 39hrs in the fall and winter and 36hrs in the spring and summer months.
- Fundraising efforts are for programming and items that are not included in the operating budget. Also, if an emergency comes up that isn't covered under the operating budget; the friends will usually help out.
- In addition to used books we also carry books by local authors from SD&G and the Friends retain a portion of the profit of the sales.



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The Challenges

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- Most of our members are older members of society and carry much of the workload required to successfully operate the store and our fundraising efforts. We are always looking to add new members to our group especially young adults and teens who may wish to perform their community hours



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The Challenges

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- Book Sale is the only way we fundraise right now, looking for new ideas but also people to help us out.
- Needing to do more PR to promote the Friends of the Library
- We have many dedicated volunteers including an executive devoted to the cause. Being President of the Friends while working full time has its challenges of its own and requires much time and attention



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What contributes to your success?

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- Great core volunteers who are always willing to help, especially at the last minute.
- Encouraging students to volunteer with us for their 40 hours and help with the sorting/pricing of books as well as in the shop.
- Started selling books through social media (Facebook) which generates traffic to the library as well as our Friend's page.



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What contributes to your Success

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- Online contest via Facebook, 500 likes and then we drew a name for a winner of a basket of books. Increased the likes from 30 to over 200 in just over 1 month.
- Have had local newspaper's Seaway News and Le Journal do write ups about the Big Book Sale to add to our presence in the community.
- New members of the CPL get a \$5 book voucher to the Friend's store



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What keeps you up at night?

Friends of the Cornwall Public Library

- How to keep volunteers. Students are only a temporary fix for while they are in school and the majority of the ones who sign up for their hours are in their last year before leaving for college/university.
- How to get new ideas floating and people to carry out the ideas



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Overview of Friends' Group

Bonnechere Union Public Library

- Serves 2 rural townships; total population of 6,600
- CEO, 3 part-time staff, a CAP student member and a high school co-op
- Open 48 hours/week; variety of programs and services; annual budget of \$190,000



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Overview of Friends' Group

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

- Formed in 2006 to equip library after renovation
- Still maintain focus on **fundraising** for CEO's "wish list"
- Raised approx. \$44,000 in past 7 years
- Donated \$9,000 to the library in 2013 (4.7% of total library budget)



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Overview of Friends' Group

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

- Began as a very informal group
- Now Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations, several committees
- Developed Mission Statement & Guidelines for Expenditures in 2013
- Not incorporated; no elections so far (volunteer)
- Fundraise through events & activities



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The Challenges

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

Signature event fundraising dinner (“talk of the town”):

- annual theme, costumes, massive decorations
- themed games and activities
- Friends and friends provide buffet dinner
- **CHALLENGE #1** – balancing our success with level of work required for what is now our main event
- **CHALLENGE #2** – keep the event exciting and **special** so the small community continues to eagerly support it



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The Challenges

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

- **CHALLENGE #3** – conducting meetings in a way that allows brainstorming, discussion and new ideas without boring those who dislike meetings or making meetings too long.



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What contributes to your success?

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

- Leadership skills of our Chair
- Importance of the library in our small community
- Composition of the group:
 - Committed
 - Available
 - fun, social, want to network
 - mix of “imports” and “locals”
 - one creative genius who inspires us”



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What keeps you up at night?

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

- We need to grow but space problem in library means lack of meeting space
- Currently have 3 types of members:
 - 18 core members - attend meetings, make decisions
 - 6 Friends - copied on all minutes and volunteer as needed
 - group of other “Friends of Friends” - can be called on for help
- Finding other methods of fundraising that don't burn out our members



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Leadership matters . . .

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

Profile BEFORE:

- Members bored, unmotivated, “robotic” tasks **assigned**
- Template for successful events repeated, no changes
- Meetings controlled but no agenda, no minutes, no time for socializing

Profile AFTER:

- Now see enthusiasm, participation, ideas, strong friendships



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Leadership matters . . .

Friends of the Bonnechere Union Public Library

HOW?

- Created positions for structure; secretary produces minutes
- Documented major jobs (e.g. committee chairs)
- Chair consults executive; members vote
- **Encouraged to volunteer for whatever interests you**
- Committee meetings - brainstorm, discuss, socialize – FUN
- Less stress - freedom to volunteer at comfort level for individual
- Opportunities for socializing (e.g. 1/2 hr coffee before mtg.)
- Flexibility and change encouraged



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Your questions - Practical solutions



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Contacts

Speakers

- Colin Plows - cplows@rogers.com
- Ashley McCool -
- Judy Sauve - eganvillejudy@yahoo.ca

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- Jami van Haften - jami.vanhaaften@gmail.com
- Dorothy Macnaughton - rmacnaug@sympatico.ca



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