

FRIENDS' DAY AT OLA: Best Practices - Membership

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RECRUIT

- **However you recruit, be clear about your purposes, range of activities and the relationship between Friends and Library. Sometimes differing purposes may mean differing methods of recruiting. (advocacy, fund-raising)**
- **PERSONAL CONTACT – people who have shown an interest in the Library through advocacy, community participation etc. ESPECIALLY important when recruiting the founding executive**
- **THROUGH LIBRARY STAFF – identifying likely members, NOTICES on bulletin boards, in Library publications, special BOOKMARKS, FLYERS, HANDOUTS in Home Library deliveries, even Welcome Wagon**
- **MEMBERSHIP DRIVES : Can link to special events in Library year, Ontario Public Library Week. Blitz once a year, same time every year, special events, raffles, something eye-catching to attract new and retain old members**

DUES: Choose a fee structure which enables all to join and some to be generous.

- **rates for seniors and students, corporate and business partners,**
- **provide an opportunity to DONATE and inform how donations will be used – give choice if possible – and THANK immediately**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME is a good time to survey for ideas, volunteer opportunities etc.

MEMBERSHIP FLYER: state aims, give past accomplishments, list future goals, contain sign-up form, contact #s, web-site, THIS IS YOUR FIRST CHANCE TO CAPTURE AS MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MEMBERS AS YOU CAN – TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT!

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT : Hand pick your first one, and ratify at first AGM. NURTURE active members, encourage the talented to take on new roles.

RECRUIT FROM OUTSIDE and work on matching seasoned and new executive members –

MENTOR as much as possible

BE FLEXIBLE – remember we are volunteers, plan for vacations, back-up, encourage skill development, share tasks, be **COLLEGIAL**

THINK ABOUT SUCCESSION PLANNING – bring new members into new roles, retire seasoned leaders into event planners and into mentoring etc.

RETAIN

ORIENT new members to the organization – tell them who is who and what the org does and how to keep in touch and encourage their ideas and involvement

THANK at all times – personal, hand-written notes after volunteer events

-formal thank-yous at events - Library should show its thanks as well

REGULAR renewal times gives the org an opportunity to report on past events, lay out future projects, encourage new and renewing members to sign up, get involved, express opinions, suggest new projects, etc.

MEETINGS – AGMs a major opportunity

-report on past years accomplishments

-introduce Executive and highlight their contributions

- nominations elections
- gather ideas from members at large
- ensure membership knows how to contact executive
- if Executive meetings are open to all members, communicate this information and publicize meeting times

REPORT TO MEMBERS AND PUBLIC – AGM, Newsletter, Friends' page in Library Newsletter will reach the broader community, spread the word about your role and witness to your support of Library

CELEBRATE: social events just for Friends – bonding

PROBLEMS : deal with them promptly and treat them seriously

-say **THANK YOU** and **GOODBYE** to those leaving

REVIEW: practice self-examination, evaluate goals and performance of group, involve members in outreach, learn when to re-organize how you function

BENEFITS: what are they? Appreciation, warm-glow-in-the-heart, Discounts, special events? What works for your group and your community?

BRANDING: identify members – pins, badges, t-shirts, ribbons

-wear at all events – shows your visibility – advertises your involvement

-enables media to identify your group easily, they will be more likely to recognize your role and contributions

-plaques, bookplates on Friends' funded contributions

INVOLVE

There is **ACTIVE** and **PASSIVE** involvement, **SLEEPING** members need to feel connected, too.

Plan events which reflect Library needs and community ideas – a two way street. Example – BFEC – already in existence when Friends formed. We found an opportunity to get involved which assisted the project, and then expanded our involvement.

Some projects develop a **LIFE OF THEIR OWN**. Friends groups must keep an eye on future possibilities for growth and expansion of the projects in which they are involved, and find ways for them to grow and involve new members.

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED:

ADVOCACY – a way of life. **IF** this is a Friends' role, then talk up the Library and its Friends at all opportunities:

- retiree groups, service clubs etc.

- **Municipal Council – and not just at budget time – use direct political action in the form of petitions, letter writing, your PRESENCE**
- **When publicizing Friends’ events – talk about the impact of this community link to the Library**

VOLUNTEER opportunities – ensure this role is carefully coordinated with Library Board and Administration so that volunteers do not replace staff, but rather enhance Library services

- **try to INVOLVE AS MANY members as possible**
- **encourage your event teams to bring in new members as often as possible**
- **look upon all your events as a training ground**
- **ensure that your teams are inclusive and welcoming, not “cliquish”**
- **if you have to recruit from outside, see that as an opportunity to sign up new members**
- **listen to your members for new ideas, and try not to fall into a rut of “we do it this way”. It is often easy to dismiss suggestions before trying them, or before giving someone a chance to develop an idea into a plan.**

THANK participants. List and photograph and celebrate them!

Develop a RECOGNITION program, and so should your Library!

MOTIVATE

Your success in RECRUITING, RETAINING and INVOLVING your members will add to their motivation to be a Friend of the Library.

ACTIVITY is motivating

RECOGNITION and APPRECIATION is motivating

SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEERING is motivating

More subtly, creating a group of people who relate well to each other, treat each other with respect, appreciate each others strengths and support each others weaknesses, will motivate your members to continue their involvement, and to recruit others for your group.

Use SETBACKS as well. From adversity wrest new energy.