

A well organized, informative advocacy campaign can inform the public about the issues. Friends can often sway public opinion in favour of retaining libraries or library services. With the advent of the Internet and almost instant communication with anyone in your district, no matter how geographically isolated some smaller, outlying communities may be, your Friends volunteers can garner a great deal of support quickly and effectively.

Resources:

Canadian Library Association. *CLA Advocacy now*
Website: www.cla.ca/divisions/capl/advocacy/
Workbook:
(www.cla.ca/divisions/capl/advocacy/lanworkbook.pdf)

Dolnick, Sandy (1996). *Friends of Libraries Sourcebook*.
Chicago, IL: American Library Association. (Copy available
from *FOCAL Lending Library*)

Ferguson, Daniel (2005). *Friends of libraries resource book*.
Tullamarine, Australia: Friends of Libraries Australia.

Friends of Libraries U.S.A. *Fact sheet #13 advocacy*.
(www.folusa.org/resources/pdf-versions/fact-sheet-13.pdf)

Library Campaign (2006). *The Handbook for library friends
and user groups*. London: The Library Campaign.

Macnaughton, D. & van Haften, J. (2007). *How to form
your friends of the library group*. Sault Ste. Marie, ON:
Friends of Canadian Libraries.



Advocacy

Advocacy means actively supporting a cause *by taking action*. Friends can be effective advocates by offering support when the library requires people in the community to highlight specific issues or concerns in a coordinated way.

A consistent message will be delivered if everyone is kept informed. The same information will come from the Friends, library staff and Library Board Trustees.

Advocacy may be formal, such as a letter writing campaign to municipal or provincial politicians, or letters to the editor in local newspapers. Advocacy may be more informal, such as when a Friend talks to someone else about how much a particular library service means to them.

Friends of Libraries are invaluable advocates when library branches are about to be closed, or if much needed funds might be decreased, instead of increased. They can be the reason libraries are saved or the reason new libraries are built to replace old, outmoded buildings.

Your Friends are very passionate about the intrinsic value of their library. Since Friends are library patrons and have their own important reasons for caring about their library, they have individual and often moving stories to tell about why their library means so much to them.

They are willing to put aside other commitments to give untold hours, often at short notice, to make many phone calls, to write letters and to spread the word that the library needs community advocates to make a difference to the final outcome of budget deliberations.



Best Practices in Advocacy



◀Ottawa, Ontario

Friends of the Ottawa Public Library SOS “Save Our Services” Campaign

www.ottawapubliclibraryfriends.ca/en_sos.html

Friends of Libraries U.S.A.

Friends can make the difference between a budget increase and a budget cut for their libraries. You can make a long lasting and significant difference for your library through advocacy. ▼



Oshawa, Ontario

Phone Campaign – The *Oshawa Friends Advocacy Committee* successfully launched a “flyer and phone campaign” to ask Council to restore the library funding . . . the goal was that each councilor receive 30 phone calls. Well, they got at least 100 phone calls and some received 150. The councilors were impressed because the callers identified themselves as constituents, were courteous, informed and had a simple message, “We want you to restore the library’s funding.” When the vote came, it was 10 – 0 in favour of a nearly 20% increase in the library’s budget.⁴

Atikokan, Ontario

"I cannot imagine a library functioning well without Friends . . . the Municipal Council was shocked when 125 people marched in the Council Chamber, during their regular meeting, to emphasize the importance of the library in the community. It was truly an amazing accomplishment.”

“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.”⁶

The Library Campaign, United Kingdom



. . . an independent, national organisation, set up in 1984 to support Friends of Library groups, and to campaign for improved services in publicly funded libraries.

