



## How to Form a Steering Committee

### 1. Promote the first meeting.

- ❖ In the library and other prominent locations, advertise a meeting to attract interested people who are regular library users, who care about the library, and who might have time to give in support of the library.
- ❖ You may want to enlist the help of Library Trustees and staff who can spread the word.
- ❖ Advertise the meeting well in advance using social media, the library's website, or the library's newsletter.
- ❖ In all advertising, emphasize that the proposed Friends group wants to help the library and needs people who really care about their library.

### 2. Plan the first meeting.

- ❖ If a member of the library staff is spearheading the formation of the Friends group, they can make the necessary arrangements for booking a meeting room, arranging for chairs, etc. If not, a key volunteer can take on the responsibility.
- ❖ At the first meeting, at least one Library Board Trustee and one library staff member should be present to speak about the need for a Friends group, and to answer questions and offer support.
- ❖ Find out if the library needs advocates in the near future or if there are some smaller items the Friends could fund.
- ❖ Always provide refreshments.
- ❖ The primary organizer should draw up a simple agenda to keep the meeting on track:
  - Introductions
  - Explain what a Friends group can do for the library
  - Discuss the difference between Friends and the Library Board
  - Brainstorm ideas about the types of activities your Friends group might undertake

### 3. Choose the members of the Steering Committee.

- ❖ At the initial meeting, ask for volunteers to form a Steering Committee, which will lead to a Friends of the Library group. Some of these people may be the first executives of the Friends Board.
- ❖ A Library Board Trustee and a library staff representative should be part of the Steering Committee (ex officio).

- ❖ The Steering Committee will be responsible for drafting the Friends' constitution and bylaws.
- ❖ Members of a Steering Committee might include:
  - President
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Other positions, such as a Volunteer Coordinator or Fundraising Chair, depending on the number of volunteers available
  - Ex-officio Library Board Trustee
  - Ex-officio staff liaison

#### **4. Draft the group's governing documents.**

- ❖ The Steering Committee should review sample constitutions and bylaws, choose which ideas they like and draft a version of them that fits their library's goal and plans.
- ❖ The Steering Committee should strive for comprehensive, clear and uncomplicated documents.
- ❖ These documents should contain the purpose of the group, the executive positions and a job description for each, an explanation of what happens to the funds that are raised and the group's relationship to the Library Board and staff.
- ❖ Remember that these documents can always be altered.

Content taken from Macnaughton, D. (2008) *How to start a friends of the library group*. Presentation at Ontario Library Association Super Conference, Toronto, ON.