



Maintaining a Successful Friends Group

KEYS TO MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL FRIENDS GROUP:

- ❖ Establishing an organized decision-making process
- ❖ Effective communication between the Friends board and volunteers
- ❖ Developing community partnerships

Decision-Making Process

- ❖ Develop good communication among Friends members, volunteers, and library staff.
- ❖ Develop a good system for organizing events – analyze how well it worked after each event and adjust it in time for the next.
- ❖ Hold regular board meetings where the group can discuss the Friends' initiatives and make decisions as a group on how funds will be spent.
- ❖ Hold effective meetings where Friends members can discuss events that they want to undertake and where they can brainstorm ideas and agree by consensus.

Communicating with Volunteers

- ❖ Keep track of volunteers – names, emails, phone numbers, types of tasks that they enjoy.
- ❖ Be welcoming to everyone and value peoples' ideas.
- ❖ Try to spread the workload as much as possible.
- ❖ Make every member feel that their contribution is important to the group's success.
- ❖ Use the library's website and/or newsletter to thank volunteers and to notify the public about upcoming events.
- ❖ New volunteers will want to be involved with a group of people who love books, love the library, and enjoy what they do to support the library.

Community Partnerships

- ❖ Understand the demographics of your community and plan events accordingly.
- ❖ Identify the library's role in the community and its relationship with local government.
- ❖ Participate in community events.
- ❖ Recognize the contributions of other groups within the community and collaborate.
- ❖ Keep track of local issues.
- ❖ Develop and maintain a good relationship with the media.

Content taken from Macnaughton, D. (2010). *A little help from your Friends*. Presentation at Ontario Library Service North Conference, Sudbury, ON; and Magahay, L. Marshall, V. & Durand, S. (2008). *What does it take to sustain a Friends group?* Presentations at OLA Super Conference, Toronto, ON.