

TRUSTEE

Library Trustee Development Program

January 1999
Issue No. 16

Cultivating Your Friends

*The Winter 1993 - 94 issue of **Trustee Tips** discussed the question, "Should our library form a 'Friends of the Library' group?" The focus of this new issue of **Trustee Tips** is on the functioning Friends group. A selection of operating Friends groups illustrates how these groups function, their structure and activities. With more than 130 groups across the country, there are many models from which to choose. The experiences of these four examples may help other groups decide how to proceed.*

Trustee Tips talked to "Friends" spokespersons at Prince Edward/Wellington Branch, Cochrane, Sault Ste. Marie, and Ottawa Public Libraries. They reflect a cross-section of library sizes and locations and were drawn from northern and southern Ontario libraries. Representatives were asked to comment on how the Friends group began, how long it had been operating, how many people were involved in the group, the cost to join, the group's main purpose, activities and structure, as well as the relationship with the library board and the library staff. Each group was also asked to comment on the amount of money it expected to raise in the coming year.

Each Friends group is successful in its own right in its own community. The library benefits from the work of these many volunteers who devote countless hours to their library. What are the factors that make them successful?

Wellington Branch, County of Prince Edward Public Library

The Friends of the Wellington Library began in 1997 as a direct result of amalgamation. The board of the local library had always served as a source of volunteers, fund raisers and supporters for the library. When the new amalgamated board structure did not guarantee a representative from each branch, it was feared that the individual branches might suffer. A Friends group was formed to support the Wellington Branch.

There are about a dozen members who regularly attend meetings and another 60 paid-up members available as volunteers. The focus of the group is on the needs of the Wellington Branch - both the building and the collection. The main activity is the annual July 1st Book Sale which raises about \$1000. Staff might also seek the Friends' support in programming areas as well.

The Wellington Branch Friends, along with other community groups, held a reading of local author, Janet Lunn's prize-winning books, *Come to the Fair* and *Charlotte*. The organization also takes part in community events, such as Pumpkinfest, and works with other Friends groups in the County on joint projects. The proceeds are shared and used for special initiatives such as library automation.

The structure of the group is very flexible. Officers are elected mainly to have signing authority on the Friends' bank account, but there is no constitution and the group meets only as necessary.

The Friends look to the staff for guidance, suggestions, and in some cases, instructions - an arrangement that has resulted in little, if any, conflict. The members see themselves as a support group for the Library, and feel (so far) that staff is the best judge of what is needed. A major advantage for the staff is that they benefit from the Friends' creative ideas and help.

TRUSTEE TIPS
January 1999

Trustee Tips is published by the Southern Ontario Library Service
151 Bloor St. W., Ste. 601
Toronto, ON M5S 1T4
1-800-387-5765
Fax: (416) 961-5122

Editor
Ranee Loucks,
SOLS Toronto

Editorial Committee
OLS-North
John Slater, Kirkland Lake
SOLS
Peggy Malcolm, Ottawa
CEO Representative
Carole Marion, West Nipissing Public Library

Editorial Advisors
SOLS Trustees
B. Lynne Felhaber,
Pembroke Public Library Board
Ethan Mings, Lincoln Public Library Board
OLS-North Trustees
Marlene Davidson,
Atikokan Public Library Board
OLTA Council
Hilary Bates-Neary

Translation:
Louise Godbout-Legault,
SOLS Ottawa

Artwork:
Liane LeBelle, age 8
and a Friend of the West Nipissing Public Library

Trustee Tips is part of the **Library Trustee Development Program**, a joint project of Southern Ontario Library Service, Ontario Library Service North and the Ontario Library Trustees Association.

We acknowledge the support of the people of Ontario through the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation in presenting the **Library Trustee Development Program**.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français

ISSN 1188-763X
©1999



Friends of the Ottawa Public Library (FOPLA)

The Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association began in 1981 as the innovation of then CEO, Gilles Frappier and Ernest Côté, a member of the library board. They thought it would be a good idea to have a group supporting the library through a trust fund and membership dues. Initially, library staff did all the paper work and many of them contributed to the start-up costs.

Currently, there are just over 300 members, of which nearly 200 are paying members, 80 are bookstore volunteers and 8 paying members work on the FOPLA Executive.

The membership fee scale ranges from \$20 for an annual membership to \$200 for a life membership. There are also family memberships (\$35), sustaining memberships (\$50) and Patron (\$100) categories. Although most members are in the 'annual' category, there are approximately 80 life members.

The group's main purpose is fundraising. In 1984, a secondhand bookstore, *Ex Libris*, was instituted. This has turned out to be the main source of funds for the Friends. It is open six days a week. Friends are also involved in small ad hoc fundraising activities, such as an annual fall book sale, which generated about \$6,000 in 1998. The books sold by the Friends are largely library discsards, as well as donated books in good condition.

FOPLA expects to raise between \$70,000 and \$75,000 this year, of which approximately \$55,000 will be from the book store, another \$10,000 from the book bar (an adjunct to the book store), and \$5,000 to \$10,000 from membership and miscellaneous fees. Some monies raised, such as Life membership dues (\$200) and "In Memoriam" donations, are deposited into the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association Trust Fund. The group cannot touch the capital, but the interest raised is used each year for Friends' initiatives. Other monies raised such as bookstore revenues, membership

dues and donations go to the Friends' general bank account. Gifts in kind are then purchased from suggestions on the Chief Librarian's 'wish list' and given to the library. The trust fund balance remains at about \$66,000, and several requests to foundations are pending.

In the last few years, the Friends have begun some advocacy activity but only at the board's request. In one initiative, FOPLA was asked to write letters to the members requesting that they contact their city councillor to ask where they stood on library funding. On a regular basis, a FOPLA member, usually the President or Vice President, goes to City Hall to show support in person for OPL during budget presentations. The group also made a presentation during the Bill 109 hearings in April 1997. Directors also participate at OPL events as invited and usually the President brings greetings on behalf of the Friends.

It is important to note that Ottawa Public Library has a separate advocacy organization, started in 1997 to promote excellence in library service by raising the profile of OPL and letting decision-makers know that the library is a valued service in the community.

Although FOPLA started with a constitution, it did not incorporate until 1992. Under the current by-laws, the Executive is made up of a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Trust Fund Administrator, Secretary and Membership Coordinator. Additional positions include Newsletter Editor, Bookstore Coordinator, and one library representative. The Library CEO is an ex-officio member.

The relationship with the board is fairly formal. A FOPLA Director attends each monthly board meeting. About half of the board members are card-carrying FOPLA members. There is an open channel of communication with the board, via the CEO.

With senior staff, several branch heads, and the Office of the Chief Librarian, there is a very cordial and supportive interaction. In December 1998, the Friends had an opportunity to make a presentation at an Employee Development Day to acquaint staff with the organization and what it does.

Cochrane Public Library

Financial need and the presence of an enthusiastic group of supporters brought about the Friends of the Cochrane Public Library. Spearheaded by a former library staff member, the group has been operational for 2 years and is involved in library fundraising and promotion. Although there is no expectation of how much money will be raised, the Friends are involved in a number of fundraising activities. They sponsor a bi-annual draw and raise money for the purchase of library materials including books, CDs and videos. They held a silent auction for books at Mother's Day and before Christmas.

The group prefers to work in partnership with other community groups to raise money for the library. One such example is a partnership with the Kinettes on a lottery in which the Friends were able to piggyback on the Kinettes' gaming licence.

Since there are few professional library staff, this Friends group is also very involved in programming. For example, because of a particular interest, the group started a 'Tales for Tots' time. They run several promotions and programs for school-aged children. Library 'spies' and Raptor readers, both very popular programs, were run mainly by the Friends group. Two literary evenings, a film night with a guest speaker and a knitting demonstration, all organized by the Friends group, were enthusiastically attended by the public.

The group started very informally, but now has a written constitution and officers. This change was not occasioned by any difficulty but the structure does provide some continuity. Currently and coincidentally, the President of the Friends group is also a member of the Board. Generally, ideas come from the Friends group to the Board, with the Board and Friends agreeing mutually on activities.

The group might also look to the CEO for suggestions.



Sault Ste. Marie Public Library

The Friends of the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library began in the early 1990's as a direct result of a library board initiative to improve the library's profile in the community. At the time, the board felt that a Friends group would be a valuable asset to the library. There are 60-70 registered friends who pay a \$5 annual membership fee. The group operates under a constitution and by-laws with a six-member executive. Approximately 15 other members run the Friends bookstore and sales.

The group has three main purposes: to raise the profile of the library, to lobby as appropriate on behalf of the library and to raise funds for the library. The group's activities include running a bookstore located on the lower level of the main library. The group also runs other fundraising activities such as raffles, and sale of chocolate bars.

The CEO acts as a liaison between the Friends group and the library board, attending all meetings of the Friends executive. The Board Chairperson attends the Annual General meeting of the Friends group and all Board members are now members of the Friends.

In 1998, the group raised a total of \$11,094. The proceeds from the bookstore and associated book sales totalled approximately \$8,500. All bookstore and book sale proceeds go directly to the library's revenue account to be used for library expenses. Beside the bookstore revenue, the Friends also donated \$2,594 from their own fundraising activities to support specific library services. These included funds to purchase library books, to sponsor six magazine subscriptions, and to sponsor a children's programme. These donations were made by the Friends following the request and/or advice of the CEO.

FOCAL

Initiated in 1997 and formally inaugurated at the 1998 Canadian Library Association conference in Victoria, British Columbia, the Friends of Canadian Libraries (FOCAL), is now a reality. Of interest to all Friends groups across Canada, FOCAL holds among its goals:

- strengthening the ties between existing Friends groups in Canada
- supporting the development of Friends Groups through workshops and seminars, and
- developing models and generic information to assist groups to grow and develop

What do we learn from these examples?

Although new Friends groups are forming on a regular basis, there are often concerns on the parts of board and staff about getting involved with Friends. Yet, the experience of these four boards seems to indicate that the Friends are making a very valuable contribution to their library. Each of the groups is run quite differently. They are unique in their own right and they all work for their individual communities. What made for their success? It is clear that there is no one sure path to success, but there are some common elements.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities

Clarifying who does what and ensuring that all parties are satisfied with their roles seems to be a key element to success. Without this agreement there may be general concern that the Friends group might lose track of its initial purpose and work at cross-purposes to the board. Serious conflict can result if the issue is not resolved. It must be clear to everyone involved that the library board is the only body mandated by provincial legislation and appointed by municipal council to govern the library. While providing the best possible library service in response to the community's unique needs may well be a shared vision among board members, staff and friends alike, the job of governing belongs solely to the board.

The four Friends groups highlighted here appear to have thought through their roles and responsibilities. They focus on specific activities. In the smaller libraries, these activities include programming that staff are unable to handle. A Friends group in a larger library might raise funds that would allow the library to provide a new service but would probably not participate in delivering the programs or services. FOPLA's activities even involved advocacy support as requested by the board.

A constitution is an excellent tool which assists the Friends group to define itself as a separate entity and to outline its purpose. While there may be considerable value in maintaining maximum flexibility for the group, the time expended to write a constitution is well spent and will also assist in clarifying the group's mission. If the group intends to seek charitable status, a constitution is a requirement.

Clear communication

Once the roles and responsibilities are defined and a suitable structure is determined, it is important to define how the friends, CEO and library board, will relate to each other. Developing guidelines that set out this relationship explicitly will assist communication.

Consider establishing early on who will act as the liaison between the Friends and the board. Will there be cross-representation? Will there be regular reports at meetings of the Friends and the Board? How will the Friends know what the library needs? How will Friends suggest activities and projects that might further the library's ends? The more clearly communication is defined, the easier it will be to work collaboratively.

It will also be important to produce guidelines for how Friends and staff will interact. Staff may be reluctant to add another set of duties to already demanding work days. While it may be necessary to provide some assistance to the group, many staff, already under pressure to do more with less, haven't the time to train and supervise volunteers in activities. These issues need to be considered and worked through in order to arrive at a solution that is most advantageous for all concerned. If staff are assisting Friends, then their duties need to be clearly defined.

The experience of the four groups demonstrates that working together is a necessary element for success. This requires attention to 'process' issues - that is, the methods, procedures, format and tools to be used - before getting involved in fundraising or other activities. The chart on page 5 summarizes the roles and responsibilities for board, staff and Friends. Taking the time to plan how to work together will help to ensure that both the library's and Friends' goals are realized and that both entities remain separate.

Other Issues

How will donations be handled?

Boards often worry that municipal budgets may be reduced if money is raised by Friends. This is an interesting issue that sparks considerable debate. It is important to stress that Friends raise money in order to enhance existing library service. Considering how donations from Friends will be handled should be discussed prior to accepting any donations. Will the Friends group have a separate account? Will funds go directly into the library's general account?



Roles and Responsibilities of Board, CEO, Staff and Friends

	BOARD	CEO	STAFF	FRIENDS
Mission	• to govern	• to administer	• to implement	• to support
Mandate	• Public Libraries Act • Municipal By-law goals and objectives	• job description • mission statement,	• job description	• Constitution
Role	• policy & planning • accountability • advocacy	• administration • planning & procedures • advocacy	• implementation • administration as delegated • advocacy	• fundraising • volunteer support • advocacy
Responsibilities	• fiscal health of the library • represent the community • services that meet needs of community • liaison with Council • securing support for the library from Council and the community	• delivery of services • staffing • budget monitoring • representing the library in the community	• provision of services • advising CEO on services • representing the library in the community	• fundraising campaigns • volunteer hours or scheduling • speaking out for library services in the community
Activities	• monthly meetings • budget presentation to Council • development and review of policies and plans • CEO performance appraisal	• implement Board directives • monitor service delivery through output measures • supervise staff • report to Board	• execute procedures • report to CEO or delegate • report to Board • maintain membership	• plan and execute fundraising activities • work as volunteers on specific services

The Wellington Branch Friends focus specifically on the needs of the building and of the collection while the Cochrane Friends raise money to purchase library materials and to assist with library programs. The Sault Ste. Marie Friends give money directly to the library to be used against expenses.

A *wish list*, such as the one used by FOPLA, is a method used by many libraries and Friends groups to provide a clear indication of the library's needs. When the group has sufficient funds, the Friends purchase a specific item and provide it as a gift to the library. This method appears to transfer Friends' money to the library effectively without it showing up in library accounts as cash donations, and is thus recommended by seminars on developing Friends' groups.

Other Friends' groups use a trust fund approach. It might be advisable that Friends' groups involved in large revenues, complex donations or trust fund situations try to recruit an individual with accounting experience to be the treasurer.

Clearly, handling money is an extremely important consideration. A visit to various Friends' websites can provide additional ideas on how other groups administer their funds. The Friends of Libraries USA website is a useful stop, particularly to view the factsheets on 'Keeping accounts' and 'Friends and Trustees'.

Friends as Volunteers

Occasionally, the existence of a Friends group raises the concern that volunteer labour will replace professional expertise. This is often a grave concern for many larger libraries, particularly those with unionized staff. It is essential to determine what kind of tasks can and should be done by Friends group members. It may be that Friends are restricted to activities of a fundraising or advocacy nature or perhaps service to shut-ins. Regardless of the activity, it is essential that the tasks be agreed upon beforehand.



A word about Incorporation

(Adapted from the *Fundraising Training Kit*, Southern Ontario Library Service, 1994)

A Friends group may decide that they are not ready for a formal structure but it is important that the Friends be a separate organization from the library in order to provide as much protection as possible for all parties. It is advisable to discuss the pros and cons of incorporation. Incorporation is the process by which an organization becomes a separate legal entity known as a corporation. This formal corporate entity is specifically created to take advantage of the limited liability and enduring nature of a limited company. That means that individual directors and members have some liability protection in the event of difficulties and the corporation continues to exist beyond the terms of individual directors and members. In addition, it is, quite simply, a more recognizable form of doing business. There is no doubt though, that preparing for incorporation takes some organization and there are regular reporting requirements. There may be costs involved in incorporation, and it is wise to have a lawyer review your application.

Charitable status and **registered charity** refer to an entity which has applied for and obtained a particular tax status from Revenue Canada. This concession is usually motivated by stated philanthropic purposes of the organization which are considered to be in the "Public Good of Canada" and is always conditional upon the organization's submitting itself and its activities to Revenue Canada scrutiny and receiving periodic approvals.

Charitable status confers on the organization the right to give official donation receipts and exempts it from paying income tax. An official donation receipt issued to a donor decreases the amount of taxable income the donor must pay and is, therefore, essential for raising funds from foundations or corporations. An organization does not have to be incorporated to become a registered charity.

It should be noted that charities in Ontario must comply with the *Charities Accounting Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990, Chapter C.10*.

Charitable status limits the organization in lobbying activities. Although the requirements have been relaxed somewhat, the organization may not expend more than 10% of its resources on lobbying activities and may only lobby positively for the organization's ends. For lobbying guidelines, see Revenue Canada Information Circular 87-1.

It usually takes from 2 to 6 months to receive registration as a charitable organization. Most frequently, the cause of delays in obtaining registration is due to incomplete information.

Information about registration as a charity is available from:

Charities Division
Revenue Canada, Taxation
400 Cumberland Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L8
or call toll free 1-800-267-2384.

Revenue Canada also publishes a number of information bulletins to help the charitable organization to comply with rules and regulations. These bulletins are available from the above office.

Regardless of the activities which Friends groups undertake, their unique contribution is community support. Friends are able to act as champions, so to speak, providing invaluable assistance in achieving the overall vision of excellent library service. When a separate organization is seen to exist solely for the support and benefit of the library, the public relations potential for the library is enormous and that citizen support speaks volumes to the entire community and the municipal council.

Further information

FOCAL Point is the FOCAL newsletter, which along with a FOCAL website, are under construction.

"Initiating a Friends of the Library group" *SOLS Small Library Kit* no. 10.

"Should our library form a Friends of the Library Group" *Trustee Tips*, no. 8, Winter 1993-94.

Law, Margaret. *Friends for Small Libraries*, Canadian Library Association, 1991.

Peryman, Lisa. "Friends groups take more active role nationally" *Quill and Quire*, September 1998, page 10.

Friends of Canadian Libraries website:

<<http://www.cyberbeach.net/~vanhaaft/focal.htm>>

Friends of Libraries USA :

<<http://www.folusa.com>>

Friends of Australian Libraries:

<<http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries/resource/friends.html>>

A Friends Webography:

<<http://solsweb.sols.org/webograph.htm>>