

Strengthening Libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries

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Oklahoma Libraries Making a Difference

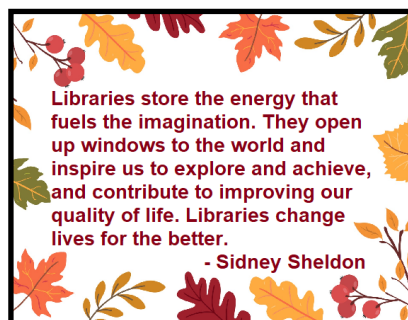
Oklahoma's 216 public libraries served more than four million Oklahomans last year.

Library cards are held by 1.9 million Oklahomans. Digital materials (eBooks, audiobooks, and videos) were downloaded 6.3 million times over the year. Over 21 million items were checked out. Oklahomans visited libraries 7.5 million times. Library programs were attended by 550,000 patrons. All Oklahoma public libraries are Wi-Fi accessible with 3.6 million people connecting during the year. WOW! Oklahoma public libraries are busy!

Public libraries are providing services to their communities based on local needs. Some libraries are providing:

- Online high school completion for adults
- Passport assistance
- Maker labs
- Community gardens
- Literacy - English as Second Language
- StoryWalks®
- Training - computer classes, career training (LinkedIn, BlueCareer, Skill Surfer, Google)
- Homeschool resources
- Social services connections
- Résumé and job hunting assistance
- Tutoring

Libraries work together to improve library services for Oklahomans. Libraries, library workers, volunteers, friends of libraries, trustees, literacy groups, and organizations provide and facilitate library services for community members.



Seeds for Success Grants

A study ("The Role of Preschoolers' Home Literacy Environment & Emergent Literacy Skills on Later Reading & Writing Skills in Primary School" by Lucia Bigozzi, et al in *Frontiers in Psychology* vol. 14 - Feb. 27, 2023) examined the relationship between home literacy environments and practices, emergent literacy skills, and later reading and writing skills. The children's emergent literacy skills were first measured during their last year of preschool, and their writing and reading skills were evaluated in the first grade of primary school.

Researchers concluded that preschoolers with higher scores in their home literacy environments also demonstrated higher reading and writing skills when measured one year later in primary schools. Children with higher scores also showed higher levels of notational awareness or the ability to translate sound into written signs.

Having books in the home helps children be ready to learn. Parents and caregivers regularly reading to children is so important in vocabulary building, comprehension improvement, attention span increase, love of reading, and more. A recent study found that 60% of low income homes have no books.

At the FOLIO Splash Conference on October 12, 2024, Seeds for Success Grants were announced. FOLIO member Friends of the Library groups may apply for either of these grants. The goal is to give preschoolers in low income areas books to have at home.

- One grant for up to \$500 for books.
- Many grants for 50-100 used picture books to place in take-and-share book shelves (like Little Free Libraries, community centers, health centers, laundromats, housing centers, etc.).

The application is due on December 31, 2024, and available at okfriends.net under Awards.

Describe your plans for the grant. Does it relate to a previous Friends activity? Will you use some FOL money as well? Will you include some library promotion in the project?

Awards will be presented at the end of February and recognized at the FOLIO Annual Meeting during the 2025 Annual Oklahoma Library Association Conference on March 14, 2025 in Norman, Oklahoma.

From the President. . .



As summer fades into fall, we find ourselves embracing the familiar rhythms of cooler weather, vibrant autumn colors, and the excitement of football season for some. Most notably, it's a time for returning to school and settling back into regular routines.

While I don't have daily interactions with school-age children, I do have the opportunity to volunteer once a month at the local intermediate school, where I help celebrate students' birthdays. This time allows me to sit down with small groups of children, hear about their experiences at school, and occasionally, what's happening at home. These conversations have been truly enlightening! No matter what we discuss, I always find a way to steer the conversation toward books. I ask them what they're reading, if they visit the library, and whether they have easy access to books. The responses vary widely. Many are still engaged in reading—Harry Potter and similar stories remain popular. However, there are children whose homes lack books, where reading is not encouraged, and who rarely, if ever, visit the public library or participate in summer reading programs. It's hard to imagine growing up without the joy and escape that books offer!

We're fortunate in Oklahoma to have programs like the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which serves children from birth to their fifth birthday in about 50 counties. But there are still many children in this age group—and beyond—who remain underserved. To help address this gap, FOLIO has launched an initiative called *Seeds for Success: Pre-K Book Grants*. This program allows Friends groups to apply for up to \$500 to purchase books for preschoolers. In addition, FOLIO offers grants that provide free, gently used picture books for distribution to children in local communities.

As book lovers, we understand the profound impact a home filled with books can have on a child's future academic success and career opportunities. FOLIO remains a steadfast advocate for childhood literacy, recognizing its lasting influence on health, earning potential, mental well-being, and overall quality of life. What can you do to help foster a lifelong love of reading in the next generation?

I encourage you to help a child Fall in Love with books this season!

Angie Lewis, President

FOLIO Board Action

The FOLIO Board met on June 21, 2024 and August 17, 2024. Discussions and actions included:

- The Treasurer reported that FOLIO will receive over \$7,300 this month from the Endowment fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation.
- The Oklahoma Department of Libraries' (ODL) Report, presented by State Librarian Natalie Currie, overviewed ODL activities and the Institute of Museum & Library Services funding.
- The Audit Committee reported that the audit was completed with all records in order.
- Types of materials held in the FOLIO Archives at OSU Library were reviewed. The Board voted to reimburse the Library for archival supplies - \$290.
- Friends of Libraries are encouraged to assist with library voting registration efforts.
- The upcoming Tony Hillerman Oklahoma Literary Site dedication is planned for March 14 or 15 in Shawnee.
- Membership is working hard to migrate info to the new membership system and add emails, to save mailing costs. (*Members: As you renew your membership, please add your email address.*)
- Kirk Baird is doing an excellent job upgrading the FOLIO website - okfriends.net.
- FOLIO Splash Friends of Library meeting on Saturday, October 12, has several registrations and eight Standout Friends nominations.
- The Annual FOLIO Meeting held in conjunction with the Oklahoma Library Association will be Friday, March 14, 2025, in Norman. Program ideas and speakers were discussed. Authors Anne Hillerman and Kim Ventrella will be speaking.
- The next FOLIO Board meeting is January 3, 2025 via Zoom.

Silent Bid Auction Fundraiser - Altus



The Great Plains Literacy Council is holding a Silent Bid Auction for this quilt. This beautiful quilt is hanging at the Altus Public Library, Southern Prairie Library System, 421 N. Hudson. Bids will be accepted until December 3, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.

This queen size quilt was handmade and generously donated to the Great Plains Literacy Council by Mary Cole Patterson. This is a fundraiser for the literacy council and all proceeds will be used to provide free adult literacy services to improve lives, enrich families, and strengthen our communities.

FOLIO Week Awards

Did your Friends have activities during National Friends of Libraries week? It was October 20-26 this year; so hopefully Friends planned activities to raise awareness of your Friends' group, promote membership, and ramp up support for the library.



FOLIO has two \$500 awards to recognize local FOL activities, one for Friends serving communities under 10,000 population and one for communities serving over 10,000 population. An application and instructions are available on the web site (www.okfriends.net) under Awards. **The entry deadline is November 15, 2024** and awards will be presented in December 2024. Friends' groups must be FOLIO members to apply for the awards.

Linda Pye, FOL Week Committee Chair, FOLIO Board

FOLIO's 2023-2024 Endowment Campaign a Success!



Because of all of your generous donations to the FOLIO's endowment at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation during our last fiscal year, we reached our goal of raising \$6,000. This resulted in the recent receipt of the matching grant of \$2,000 from the Kirkpatrick Foundation.

The endowment began in 2009 with \$12,000. Since then, through contributions during the annual campaigns and the matching grants from the Kirkpatrick Foundation, the endowment has grown to almost \$160,000. The interest from the endowment has allowed FOLIO to distribute over \$60,000 in awards and scholarships since 2009 without touching the endowment. Because of the growth in the endowment, we have been able to double the amount of the awards and scholarships, budgeting \$6,500 for them for 2025.

The grant application to the Kirkpatrick Foundation for this fiscal year has been submitted for the same amount of \$2,000. Our endowment campaign goal is again \$6,000, and the campaign will begin during Friends of the Libraries week in October. Expect to hear from us soon.

Melinda Howard, Endowment Committee chair, FOLIO Board

Scholarships Available

The Lillian Born Norberg and Mary Lou Atkinson Staff Support Scholarships are offered to full- or part-time employees of a public, academic, or special library in Oklahoma in the process of furthering their education. The scholarship amount will be a minimum of \$1,000 for up to three recipients.

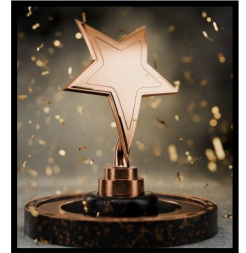
Scholarship awards will be presented at the FOLIO annual meeting on March 14, 2025, held during the Oklahoma Library Association conference in Norman.

- Applicants must be currently employed at a public, academic, or special library in the state of Oklahoma.
- Full or part-time employees are eligible for consideration.

Go to the FOLIO Scholarship page at okfriends.net for full information.

Increase in the 2024 FOLIO Best Friends Award

FOLIO annually gives two Best Friends Awards to local Friends of Library organizations. Because of our successful endowment fundraising campaigns and the matching Kirkpatrick Foundation grants, the awards have doubled this year from \$500 to \$1,000. We hope this will encourage more Friends groups to apply.



The two awards are:

The John Harkey Best Friends Award of \$1,000 recognizes a Friends group in a city or town with a population of less than 10,000.

The Oklahoma Best Friends Award of \$1,000 recognizes a Friends group in a city or town with a population in excess of 10,000.

The Best Friends Committee will use the following criteria for judging entries:

- Narrative summary describing a major innovative/creative event or series of activities that impacted your library for calendar year 2024.
- A narrative describing the process used for increasing the involvement of patrons in the local library.
- Use numbers to indicate how the events increased the patronage use of the library and the approximate number of local community members involved in each event.
- Quality of the narrative and the organization of materials presented in support of your entry.

Materials may include: pictures, videos, newspaper or magazine articles, newsletters, posters, handouts and flyers concerning the events. Scrapbooks are acceptable, but not required. Entries may be electronically submitted via e-mail. **The deadline is December 31, 2024.**

Awards are given at the Oklahoma Library Association Conference in the spring. Last year, the John Harkey Best Friends award went to the Friends of the Eufaula Memorial Library, which took on a project to find a place for the War Memorial bricks that had been removed from the east side of the library seven years before because they were a tripping hazard. The Oklahoma Best Friends award went to Friends of the Helmerich Library which can give grants to any library in the Tulsa City-County Library System.

Applications can be found at www.okfriends.net or by emailing Melinda Howard, Best Friends Award Chair, at bestfriends@okfriends.net.

Standout Friends Recognized at FOLIO Splash

At the FOLIO Splash Conference on October 12, eight outstanding Friends of the Library members were recognized. Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma joins with the local Friends of the Library groups in recognizing these Standout Friends of the Library.

Maggie Frye - Ada

In his nomination letter, Ada Friends President Joshua Grasso said, "To call Maggie an 'unsung hero' is an understatement, as she is the epitome of a selfless volunteer whose name has become ubiquitous with the Ada Public Library itself." Maggie Frye is at nearly every library event, whether as a participant, a behind-the-scenes engineer, or as the person running the show. She is always the first to start unpacking book donations and setting up displays for the Book Sale, and she is always the last person to leave after an event, making sure everything is ready for the next day's patrons.



Frye seems to possess the energy of a dozen people half her age, and the know-how of an entire staff of dedicated library workers. She is someone who can always be relied upon for advice and solutions, and she is one of the most kind-hearted and compassionate volunteers imaginable.

As a former educator herself, Frye understands the vital role the library plays in a small community like Ada, Oklahoma, where resources are often few and far between. In many ways, she has never stopped teaching even in her retirement, as she is continually mentoring, guiding, supporting, and affirming everyone she meets at the library.

Susan Gearhart - Chickasha



Susan Gearhart is an active, devoted member of the Friends of the Chickasha Library. Gearhart has been on the Friends Board and Publicity Chairperson for over 15 years. Board member Angie Lewis when submitting Gearhart's nomination said, "She is irreplaceable."

Working each month to ensure that Chickasha Friends members and the entire local community are aware of library events, activities, and fundraising efforts to support the Chickasha Public Library, Gearhart has adapted to the changes in media. She works tirelessly to make sure the Friends news gets to audiences.

"The reality is that she puts in an incredible amount of her personal time and money to find media outlets and maintain those relationships while also being a good steward of Friends financial resources, which she has consistently done over the years," continued Lewis.

Gearhart designs and creates eye-catching postcards and notices that she emails and mails to her vast mailing list of members of the friends as well as the community. "The Chickasha Friends would not have such successful events if it weren't for our much loved and appreciated board member, Susan Gearhart!"

Linda Stineman - Elk City

Linda Stineman is an active, devoted member and president of the Friends of the Elk City Carnegie Library. Stineman agreed to be the new leader of the Friends, when no one seemingly wanted to assume the responsibility. Stineman was a relatively new member but stepped forward and was unanimously elected.



Judy Haught, Friends Vice President said, "The rest as they say is history. From that day forward, Linda has consistently illustrated her phenomenal leadership abilities." Stineman is a "cheerful volunteer and her close, respectful relationship with the library staff make her the ideal leader." The Friends of the Elk City Carnegie Library nominated her for this statewide award.

Organizational skills are hallmarks in Stineman's leadership with regularly scheduled meetings, agendas, sign-up sheets, plans for new projects, and implementation. Stineman volunteers for the annual book sale – sorting, organizing, planning, recruiting volunteers, and coordinating for smooth operations. Keeping members involved is another goal with Stineman adjusting schedules to be more inclusive.

Stineman is the perfect liaison between the Friends group and the library staff, having a great rapport with the library staff and regularly checking with them to see if they need anything. "They know who to call when the library needs something extra or some volunteer hands. She also is the first to say that we have a great library director and a wonderful, creative staff," Haught continued.

Susan Lewis - Helmerich



Susan Lewis is an active, devoted member of the Friends of the Helmerich Library, a past president, and a former librarian. Her contributions have propelled the Friends "into recognition by assisting with both our annual book sale and our ongoing sale, which benefits all branches of the Tulsa City-County Library System," said Sherry Spurrier, past president of the Helmerich Friends.

Lewis earned an art degree, sharing her expertise with the community. The Helmerich Library lobby display case is often decorated by the Friends and Lewis, advertising the many Friends' projects as well as announcing events and awards. "Her creativity and eye for art make the first glance into our building a spectacular one," said Spurrier.

"Acting as banker for the sales money collection, Susan keeps our cashbox monies accounted for and deposited into our accounts. A big task due to the success of the program," continued Spurrier. "Rest assured that Susan Lewis is a hard worker, a smiling representative of the Friends and a true asset."

Standout Friends Recognized at FOLIO Splash (continued)

Quoc Vo - Rudisill



Quoc Vo is an active, devoted president of the Friends of the Rudisill Regional Library, Tulsa City-County Library System. Vo was elected president in 2012 and has served the Friends group, North Tulsa Community, Library partners, and the TCCL through good times and bad during the past twelve years.

Vo created the Brown Bag Book Review to add some life and spark in book discussion sessions - read, eat, and learn together. The number of attendees increased, and the event's popularity grew. He partnered the Friends with the Taste of North Tulsa in a one-of-a-kind event for the library, which brought in large numbers and new Friends. Programs for teens, special celebrations, and Staff Holiday Luncheons are some of Vo's initiatives.

"In 2020 Covid had a negative impact on Library operations and the Friends programs. Vo appointed a Membership Chair, energizing our membership, which had dropped to just a few life members, to over 100+ as of January, 2024," said Barbara Thompson, the Friends Membership Chair.

In 2023, life at the Library turned deadly. Two of our community citizens were killed in the library. After investigations, therapy, special counseling, and a closed library for weeks, Vo and the Friends held a "We Are Back Party" for the staff. Vo is a business owner, husband, father, FRIEND, and avid reader.

Linda Grimm - SW OKC

Linda Grimm is an active, devoted member of the Friends of the Southwest Oklahoma City Library, 2201 SW 134, Pioneer Library System.

Grimm is a founding member of the Friends over 10 years ago and has been an unsung heroine, as she is the epitome of a fervent volunteer with endless energy. She has served as secretary for many years - taking minutes, ordering book bags to sell, and volunteering for Friends projects.

Grimm is willing to take on projects, recently uncasing over one thousand DVDs and getting envelopes, readying them for sale. She works very independently and came in and loaded book carts so the materials were ready.

She capably works behind the scenes to assist SOKC Friends projects from rummage sale to whatever project the group adopts. She maintains the Friends email list and distributes the Friends of the SOKC Library e-Newsletter.

Linda and her husband, John, have been instrumental in having local restaurants sponsor "Friends" nights, in which the Friends received have received Friends business memberships from several local businesses in the past.



Carrol Copeland - Sallisaw



Carrol Copeland is an active, devoted president of the Friends of the Stanley Tubbs Memorial Library in Sallisaw. He reorganized the Friends, as well as filed for incorporation and tax exemption. He has been unanimously elected as president for nine years.

Debbie Phillips, Treasurer of the Friends, said in her nominations letter, "When I read of FOLIO's fabulous opportunity to honor standout friends, your description, movers, and shakers whose dedication, creativity, and boundless energy helps the organization, I immediately thought of Carrol Copeland. His leadership is an asset - standing firm and doing any needed job."

Copeland provides invaluable insight and direction and is largely responsible for the success of the many programs that the Friends strive to assist for the wonderful Library. Countless children have passed through our summer reading programs, being awarded prizes and refreshments, thanks to his tireless, unheralded efforts.

Carrol is a study in availability, scheduling train visits, book sales, library appreciation week treats, and setting up and serving at our book study luncheons. He participates in our annual garage sale in conjunction with the old high school association by advertising, collecting donations, setting up, conducting sales, taking down, and cleaning up. Phillips continues, "He does it all."

Sandra Mace - Stillwater

Sandra Mace is the Standout Friend from the Friends of Stillwater Public Library. Her interest in the Friends started in 1993 when a friend asked her to help with providing refreshments for a Friends event. From there, Mace joined the Friends Board, beginning more than 30 years of service to the Stillwater Friends. Through the years, Mace has held every officer position in the organization. When asked about the most enjoyable role or duty she performed, Mace responded by saying, "I loved everything I could do to help."

Mace is tenacious, energetic, knowledgeable, and dedicated to the FOL Board. Mace was basically the heart and soul of the "Sort Room" and dedicated thousands of hours to ensuring only the best donated books went into the Stillwater bi-annual sale. Diane Caneday, Friends' Past President, said, "I quickly found out that Sandra is the boss, and she knows this job inside and out. She evaluates closely every donated item. It is a job that takes lots of stamina, courage, and a willingness to only offer the 'best' to Stillwater customers."

Mace still maintains her willingness to serve. Her desire to ensure that the Stillwater FOL book sales are successful remains in place with the same vigor, energy, and determination.



Fundraising Ideas

McAlester Raffle for Handcrafted Items

The community was invited to stop by the library TODAY, Wednesday, August 28, until 1 p.m. to purchase a \$2 raffle ticket for a chance to WIN this patriotic queen-size quilt and other beautifully handcrafted items made by the library's Sewing Club! All proceeds benefit the McAlester Friends of the Library (Southeast Okla. Library System)! Drawing will be held on Veterans Day. You don't have to present to win! Stay tuned for future opportunities to assist the library!



Miami Friends Invites Sponsorships

The Friends of Miami Public Library invites sponsorships. "Help Us Keep the Library Magic Alive!"

Did you know that the Miami Public Library is the only public library in all of Ottawa County, Oklahoma? The Library proudly serves everyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Ottawa County! And the best part? Getting a library card is absolutely FREE!

However, being funded on a single city budget means we sometimes face challenges in bringing you the best programs and resources. That's where YOU can make a difference by being a sponsor! Check out how you can become a library supporter and put the "unity" in Community!

Youth sponsorships include:

- Youth Program Champion - \$1,500 - Supports the summer reading program, providing presenters and materials for local youth.
- Youth Program Advocate - \$500 - Helps provide the youth program with items needed to enhance library areas & literacy programs seasonally.
- Youth Program Promoter - \$250 - Supports monthly literacy outreach, programs, and reading challenges by providing new materials & informational supports.
- Youth Program Supporter - \$100 OR In-Kind Donations - Supports monthly youth programs.

Adult Program Sponsorships are also available. This funding can assist the library with new programs, speakers/presenters, or help us match potential grants! Your support can make a world of difference for our community. Let's work together to ensure that everyone has access to enriching and educational experiences.

Mighty Cause Donations for Eufaula

The Eufaula Memorial Library has a great and easy way for you to donate. The platform is called "The Mighty Cause." It is a website for nonprofits, such as the library, where supporters can make contributions to our campaign. Currently, they are seeking funds to finish out the renovations and to purchase a new outdoor book drop.

Learn more info about giving at: www.mightycause.com/organization/Eastern-Oklahoma-Library-System-Eufaula

Duncan Friends Support Library

Our Friends of the Duncan Public Library this summer, as usual, funded every supply, every program, every prize, and every performer, including Snider Animals which brought in 378 people, the delightful Hooplahoma, and a foam party. We also had a Messtival, where kids were invited to play in the mud, an Orbeez pool, with shaving cream, with splatter paint, and even got to pie librarians in the face! The Summer Reading opener was at Kiddieland, a kid-friendly amusement park, with rides for kids paid for by our Friends group. Nearly 250 people came to this event!

In addition, Friends of DPL purchased new tables for the children's department, a Cricut for the staff and for future programming use, several Tonie Boxes and many popular figurines (a new way to read to kids...place the character on top of the box and it reads a story or plays songs). The biggest hit they had was the purchase of a crane game. Kids (of all ages) who took on the reading challenges were rewarded with chances to play the crane game and win prizes! The first day we had 25 kids run to the children's department and read as many books as they could so they could play the crane game. We had a total of 704 signups for reading challenges this summer, and hundreds of plays on the crane game, with people already asking when it's coming back. The impact the Friends had this summer on making libraries and literacy fun was tremendous!

-Amy D. Ryker, Library Director
Duncan Public Library



Youth are pictured enjoying the Crane Game at the Duncan Public Library.

Need Help?

Call your FOLIO Ambassador.

FOLIO has Outreach Ambassadors who are ready and willing to talk or consult with your Friends' groups or your officers. We want to help you be successful and strengthen your library. Let us know how we can assist you.



Northeast

- Candace Baird
- Karen Alexander
NEAmbassador@okfriends.net

Northwest

- Dr. Karen Neurohr
- Linda Pye
NWAmbassador@okfriends.net

Southeast

- Dr. Bill Hagen
SEAmbassador@okfriends.net

Southwest

- Angie Lewis
- Terry Jordan
SWAmbassador@okfriends.net



- Friends of Libraries Week Award deadline - Nov. 15, 2024
- Seeds for Success deadline - Dec. 31, 2024
- Scholarships deadline - Dec. 30, 2024
- Best Friends Award - Dec. 31, 2024
- Next FOLIO Board meeting - Jan. 3, 2025
- Next FOLIO Newsletter deadline - Jan. 6, 2025
- Library Lovers' Month - February
- Take Your Child to the Library Day - Feb. 1, 2025
- Oklahoma Library Association Conference - March 12-14, 2025 (FOLIO Day is March 14.)
- Tony Hillerman Oklahoma Literary Site Dedication in Shawnee - March 14 or 15, 2025

The time for you to renew or join is NOW!

Join FOLIO!

Great reasons to be a FOLIO member:

- To be inspired with new ideas, projects, and activities to promote your Friends group
- To encourage a vigorous Friends group in every library
- To be an advocate for libraries locally and statewide
- To ensure that Oklahoma libraries have the best educated staff
- To assist with starting or revitalizing a Friends group
- To network and share ideas for programming and fundraising
- To help bring new, progressive ideas to all libraries in the state

Contributions in addition to the minimum dues further support FOLIO's mission and are greatly appreciated. Your generous support helps FOLIO accomplish its mission: To strengthen libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries.

You may renew your membership and add an additional contribution online at

www.okfriends.net

or to pay by check, mail this form to FOLIO, Attn: Treasurer, PO Box 702585, Tulsa, OK 74170.

Basic dues are as follows:

- \$20 - Individual Membership
- \$25 - Friends Group Membership
- \$30 - Library Membership

Contributions above the minimum dues further support FOLIO's mission, are greatly appreciated, and are tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

Name: _____

(Name of Individual, Friends group, Library or Corporate Business)

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

(Please include this because we are transitioning to communicating by email only to save postage costs.)

FOLIO is a 501(c)(3) organization, tax ID 73-1053431. Dues are tax deductible to the extent of the law. Your personal information is not shared with third parties.

Dues Enclosed: _____

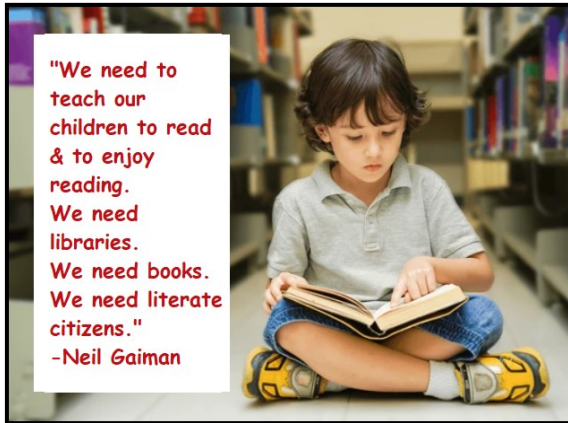
Gift Donation enclosed: _____

Designate gift for: __Additional Support __Endowment

FOLIO—We are Friends helping Friends!

P. O. Box 702585
Tulsa, OK 74170

Return Service Requested



Libraries, the First Amendment, and the Right to Read

Cassidy Edwards, a librarian with the Chickasha Public Schools, spoke at the FOLIO Splash on Oct. 12. She shared information about the First Amendment and Intellectual Freedom. In today's climate we need to be aware of the difference in a book challenge, a book ban, and censorship. A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based on upon the objections of a person or group. A banning is the removal of those materials. Censorship is the limiting of access to something. Censorship is the suppression of content or ideas and happens when one group imposes its beliefs on another. Book banning is a form of censorship.

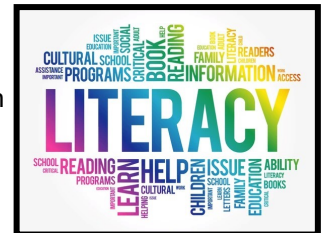
PEN America (pen.org) has excellent information, protecting free expression. Another website cited was Unite Against Book Bans (uniteagainstbookbans.org). The site has an Action Tool Kit to assist in communities uniting against book bans.

The current trends in censorship revolve around sexual violence, LGBTQ+ themes and characters, and transgender themes. She stressed the importance of communication from all parties involved, to talk about the book, discuss issues, and to always keep in mind how a book might impact readers, especially when they think they may be the only ones out there going through a difficult situation.

Edwards encouraged everyone to read The Library Bill of Rights (www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill), to be informed of what is going on in libraries and to support librarians!

Reading Partners: A New Way to Support Struggling Adult Readers

Dr. Liz Willner, Education Program Coordinator, Community Literacy Centers in Oklahoma City, spoke at the FOLIO Splash conference. Dr. Willner opened by asking her audience, "What are you reading for pleasure now?" and then "What are you reading for work and life?"



These are often two different things. There are two types of reading: functional and aesthetic. The functional items might include daily mail, bills, and things we have to read to function in everyday life. Things we read aesthetically are for pleasure. This is where many adults struggle. Not only do they struggle with this, but at the same time their functional reading is literally sucking all the joy out of reading for them.

The Community Literacy Center has adapted the process of teaching children to read to teaching adults to read for enjoyment and not be intimidated by it. She stated that most adults are not illiterate, they can all read at some level, just not at a level where they enjoy it and read for pleasure.

The goal of the Center is to get adults reading for pleasure, entertainment, or for learning to improve their quality of life. The success rate of adult literacy shows when her clients begin to talk about books they are reading, about stories, and how they love going to the library!

- Angie Lewis, FOLIO President