

Strengthening Libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries

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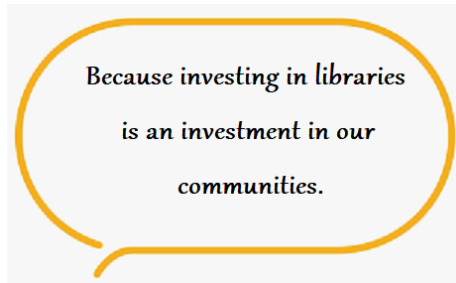
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Oklahoma has over 214 legally-established public libraries, either branches of systems or local municipal libraries. Many of these are small and rural libraries, providing “unique programming to serve patrons, address community challenges and play an important community-building role,” says Emily Stochl, bookriot.com.

Educational services, including digital access and resources, are essential with internet access, computers and training. Many rural areas do not have broadband access, and libraries have provided that vital link.

According to Public Libraries Online, “those relying on libraries for digital access are often people experiencing homelessness and poverty, older adults,



rural residents, and students. They use library broadband and Wi-Fi to apply for jobs, complete school work, communicate via email, find information, and conduct business.”

Libraries have increased Wi-Fi access, even while they were closed, to continue to provide access to digital resources (eBooks, eAudiobooks, online reference assistance via phone, email or chat), research materials, and online programming.

Support from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in state aid, interlibrary loan, consultants, continuing education, and digital resources is crucial to the ongoing success of OK’s small and rural libraries.

Tell Us How Your Friends Pivoted in the Pandemic

Please help us share how Friends are assisting libraries around Oklahoma during the pandemic. For the next FOLIO fundraiser, the Endowment Committee would very much like to honor the local Friends groups in the state, especially those who have made remarkable efforts during this challenging time.

That’s where you come in. We need photos and a short story of the effort your Friends of the Library (FOL) has made that we could share in our fundraising tools. The pictures are especially important, because they are “worth a thousand words!”

The endowment is critical to FOLIO’s efforts to award scholarships to library staff working toward a library degree and to provide support to Friends across the state. Your assistance will help tell the stories of how Friends are impacting libraries in Oklahoma.

To share the information statewide in October, the sooner we hear from you the better. Please send photos and an email with your Friends story and contact information by Sept. 15 to Sharon Douthitt @ sdouthitt@prodigy.net. We look forward to honoring the outstanding efforts made by the FOLs around the state.

Q - How can we get younger people in our Friends group?

A - Millennials are more likely to have visited a

public library in the last year than any other adult generation. They are library supporters. Turn them into Friends. See the “They’re Busy” article on p. 4. Other ideas are in the workbook *All Ages Welcome; Recruiting & Retaining Younger Generations...* by Lina Bertinelli, et al (ALA, 2020).

- Is your group easy to join and understand?
- What can potential members achieve? What’s in it for them?
- Will you provide training and support to grow their skill set?
- Will you directly ask people to participate? People want to be liked and like to help.



From the President. . .



A word new to me that a lot of people have used during the pandemic is Blursday. It happens when the days of the week are so much alike that you are no longer sure what day it is. I've had that feeling a lot this year and certainly during the past several months. There has been a lot going on, and I sometimes wonder, am I actually retired?

But I know what is scheduled to happen August 8th. We will head for Sarasota, Florida to spend a week

with our daughter and son-in-law. (They moved to the area at the end of March.) Because of the pandemic, we do not plan to get out in public, but we always enjoy our time together with them. Among other things, we have some very spirited games of cribbage and mah jong. But I hope that one day next week, properly masked, I will manage to get into a good used book store.

But then I will return to Oklahoma and the world of resurgent pandemic uncertainty. Libraries and Friends groups across the state are all asking the question, what do we do now?

It's not going to just be a replay of the near-total shutdown that happened last year. But there is an even more contagious variant of the COVID virus going around, driving infections back up, and putting plenty of people in the hospital, while plenty of others with milder cases ask themselves, what will happen to me in the long haul?

This time around, so far, the decisions on what to do are being made locally. So the best advice I can offer Friends members and their librarians is, put your masks on, sit down, and ask, what can we do to serve the community—safely? Friends members want to know, what can we do to help? The answer should not be nothing! Work out a plan and change it if necessary, but remember that the library's services are vitally important to a whole lot of people. We learned last year about some of what works and what doesn't. We can build on that experience.

For those who did not come to the annual joint conference of FOLIO and the Oklahoma Library Association, you missed a very fine author talk by William Bernhardt, and good programs on advocacy and recruiting younger members. We had two of our scholarship winners present; we saluted all of Geraldine (Gerry) Hendon's dedicated work on building the endowment, being membership chair, preparing the newsletter for distribution, and serving as treasurer and now assistant treasurer, as we presented her with the Hall of Fame Laurel Wreath Award; we recognized the winners of the Best Friends Awards; and we elected long-time Board member Eugene Earsom as an Emeritus Board member. I'm still amazed at how much business we crammed into one hour for our Board meeting and membership meeting. We also elected former OLA President Linda Pye as the newest member of the FOLIO Board.

It's back-to-school time again, but with a difference. This will not be a normal late-summer and autumn. It's both a challenge and an opportunity for creative and service-minded librarians and Friends groups. The same principle applies as in public speaking: tell people what you are planning to do; do it; and tell everyone what you did and how you did it. I'm looking forward to hearing about it.

Wayne Hanway, President

FOLIO Board Actions

- The Scholarship Committee Handbook and Timeline were adopted.
- A volunteer storyteller was approved for an early literacy program.
- Linda Pye was elected to the FOLIO Board. Eugene Earsom was elected to the FOLIO Emeritus Board.

Welcome, New FOLIO Board Member

Linda Pye was elected to the FOLIO Board at the July meeting. She recently retired as the Head of Technical Services at the Al Harris Library at Southwestern Oklahoma State University after working in that capacity for almost 32 years. She has been an active member of the Oklahoma Library Association (OLA) for many years, having served as Chair for several roundtables and committees and as the OLA President in 2017-2018, which was a time of major changes in OLA's structure and functions.



She has served as a volunteer for the Westcentral Oklahoma Literacy Coalition since 2008. She began volunteering as a tutor and then became a member of the WOLC board serving as Secretary and now as President. For several years she was a volunteer with the Early Birds Program at Burcham Elementary in Weatherford, helping first graders improve their reading skills.

She says, "I have loved libraries since I was a child, when I discovered our county library in the basement of the courthouse in Clarksville, Arkansas. I checked out stacks of books every Saturday and couldn't believe that I could read so many books for free! My husband and I moved several times during the earlier years of our marriage and finding the local library and getting a library card were always fairly close to the top of our priority list. Being a member of the FOLIO Board will provide me with an opportunity to promote libraries and reading which has been my passion for so many years."

Linda has a B.A. in French and English Education from Arkansas Tech University and a Master's in Library and Information Studies from the University of Oklahoma. She and her husband Quentin, who is retired from the Oklahoma Medical Foundation, have two sons and two grandchildren. In addition to reading, she enjoys gardening, spending time with family, and having coffee or lunch with friends.

News from Around the State

StoryWalk at Eufaula

The Friends of Eufaula Memorial Library have partnered with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to place a StoryWalk on the shore of Lake Eufaula. Our StoryWalk was even featured on News On 6's special "Trips on a Tankful." Lori Fulbright highlighted our project as she showed things to do around Lake Eufaula.

The Friends provide the books and trade them out each month. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation provided the wonderful steel display cases. The City of Eufaula provided the manpower to install the cases and all was done with the permission of the Army Corps of Engineers, who own the land! At the end of the story, there is a page which tells the children to come by the library and tell them the secret word to receive a prize. Over 150 prizes have been given away, and we know many more are reading the story, since it is located near a favorite swimming spot on the cove.

—Robyn Burris, Friends of Eufaula Memorial Library
(The Oklahoma Department of Libraries has a new map with some StoryWalks around the state at: <https://padlet.com/OKLIBRARIES/5e8uoawgb99996kt>.)



Grove Friends Help Renovate

The Grove Public Library has an incredible transformation after a renovation. The Friends of the Grove Public Library are proud to have been a part of funding the circular sectional and providing the custom Library lobby sign. Their newsletter said, "Thank you for your continued support that allows us to meet the needs of our beloved Library!"



Meeker Celebrates 20 Years

The Meeker Public Library re-opened to the public on May 1. Many patrons were happy to return to their routine by coming in, visiting, and utilizing all of our services.

On May 8 the Friends were able to participate in the citywide garage sale. Many books were sold along with baked goodies. A beautiful quilt was made by FOL member Joyce Flowers, which was raffled.

The Meeker Friends sponsored the Summer Reading Program with special events, including Monty Hall to sing, Police Officer Wade South to read books, and Ida Smith to share *Juniper's Butterfly Garden*.

The Meeker Friends of the Library was formed in 2000, and the Meeker Public Library was established on February 14, 2001. Our big 20th Anniversary Celebration was July 17. We started planning the event in 2020 for the February 14, 2021 actual date, but it was postponed. The Library Friends wore their special shirts, "Books are the heart of the matter," served refreshments for all who came to help us celebrate. The Friends received a special "Citation of Recognition" plaque from our Senator Zack Taylor.

We have great plans for the fall – our annual Big Bunko Dinner in September (to raise money for next year's Summer Reading Program), Pumpkin Festival in October, and biggest Bake Sale in December.

—Donna Weber,
Meeker FOL
Treasurer



Monty Hall led a special Summer Reading Program and sang with over 40 attending.

Ida Smith, left, presents the quilt to the raffle winner. (Additional photos from this active group are featured on Facebook.com/FOLIOOKFriends.)



FOLIO Annual Meeting Programs



Advocacy in the Time of Pandemic, Polarity, and Insecurity: How to Reach Decision-makers and How to be Effective

The presenters at this OLA Conference session were Dr. April Grace, Superintendent of Shawnee Public Schools, Breaa Clark, Mayor of the City of Norman, Melissa Houston, Founder and Principal for 929 Strategies, a public relations firm, and James McSpadden, the OLA Legislative Liaison. The discussion was led by Aiden Street, OLA Advocacy Committee chair and Associate Director, Pioneer Library System.

The panelists reported advocating for similar things during the pandemic, ranging from health precautions to funding. They agreed that one of their most difficult responsibilities was maintaining relationships and handling the emotions of staff and their constituents. The panelists shared how they had to improve their skills in working with others virtually through social media or Zoom meetings by reimagining how to engage people more regularly and consistently and thinking through how people can best receive information.

When asked about the role libraries play in creating civic and social engagement, they agreed that libraries provide neutral information, a safe space for having civil dialogue, and the critical resources and technology for students and job seekers. They suggested that libraries need to continue to expand in these areas since "you are the experts." When asked how libraries can be at the table when economic recovery is being discussed, the panelists emphasized that access to the internet is key and suggested that libraries expand on being an important resource for job seekers and others needing community services, especially as DHS offices are closing. All agreed that workforce development is a critical need and partnerships with schools and career techs on internships for résumé building as well as classes on entrepreneurship would be helpful.

The panelists shared that the most effective way for the attendees to make their voices heard is to "make deposits in the bank so you can draw on it rather than use credit" by building relationships, inviting decision-makers to their facilities for a tour, having donuts and coffee, providing a photo opportunity. They also recommended being clear about your goals, strategies and stakeholders, listening to all their perspectives in a respectful way.

When asked about how to handle the increased polarity in today's political environment when reaching out to community leaders and elected officials, both when they agree and when their opinions don't align, panelists suggested face to face communication is best, listening respectfully and making sure every voice is heard. Don't lead with controversial issues. Make any written communication personal rather than copy and paste, stick to the facts, and take out the emotion. Be a good listener; listen past the anger; and be respectful of other positions. Most people are often willing to dialogue, if it is respectful. Focus on the outcome to build a consensus towards that.

Melissa Houston's quote is a good summary of this topic: "Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it."
--Dr. Melinda Howard, FOLIO Board

"They're Busy—And We Need Them"

This panel addressed attracting and keeping younger library volunteers, Friends and Board members. Panelists were Sharon Saulmon, FOLIO Past President; Heidi Port, Volunteer Coordinator, Metropolitan Library System; Sara Schieman, Librarian, Yukon Public Library; and Tim Miller, Executive Director, Western Plains Library System.

Volunteers Needed!

With the various types of Libraries (academic, special, schools, public systems, and public), they are all governed differently, with various methods of recruiting new volunteers.



The main purpose of the session was learning how to recruit younger volunteers. The group defined 'younger' as those between 30- and 50-years-old. It was also noted that teen volunteers are seeking work experience, whereas those a bit older are seeking some type of personal fulfillment. For both of these the organization must create meaning and purpose within the volunteer activity. Things we must consider are: Why is it important? What is the need? How will it impact the community? What is the schedule? Who has the talent and skills needed? When recruiting volunteers across the generations, we must consider their different needs, what 'clicks' for each age group, physical limitations, time commitments, and communication preference.

We need to know what we want in a volunteer. Is the task something that any one could do and we just need a 'warm body'? Or are there certain skills needed? Recruitment can consist of advertising with newspaper, Facebook, other social media and flyers. The most effective way seems to be word of mouth, a volunteer who feels valued and appreciated will ask others to help.

It is important, especially with teens, to treat the volunteer activity like a job. This will prepare them for future endeavors. Teen volunteers can easily transition into Library employees, saving the Library time and money in advertising for jobs and in training.

The big take away from this session was to know what tasks you need volunteers for and recruit the people with the right skills, talents and interests. It is important to have meaningful tasks for them, to communicate with them and most of all to value them and show appreciation.
--Angie Lewis, FOLIO Board

**Read a banned book.
"There are worse crimes than
burning books. One is not
reading them." - Ray Bradbury**

FOLIO Awards

Laurel Wreath Award

Scholarships



Gerry Hendon received the FOLIO Laurel Wreath Award, FOLIO's most prestigious award recognizing outstanding service to the FOLIO Board. President Wayne Hanway presented the award at the FOLIO Annual Meeting.

Oklahoma Best Friends Award



Left to right: Durant FOL President Brenda Moore, FOLIO Board member Sharon Douthitt, & Durant FOL Treasurer Angie Mullen.

The **Friends of the Donald W. Reynolds Community Center and Library of Durant** was awarded the Oklahoma Best Friends Award for their funding creative projects to meet the needs of their community. They provided Take Away Bags for three different age-level groups.



FOLIO Scholarship recipients Amairani Perez and Ghazal Ghazi (l to r) were recognized during the FOLIO Awards session. Dr. Cecelia Brown presented certificates to the winners. Not pictured are Brent Greyson and Crystal Gillette.

John Harkey Best Friends Award



Left to right: SPLFS Treasurer Cathy Unger, FOLIO Board member Sharon Douthitt, and SPLFS Vice President Donna Boecher.

The **Stilwell Public Library Friends Society (SPLFS)** received the John Harkey Best Friends Award for their outreach to children, inviting students to purchase books for 25 cents and supporting Take Home Kits for curbside pick up.

*"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert."
- Andrew Carnegie*

News from Around the State

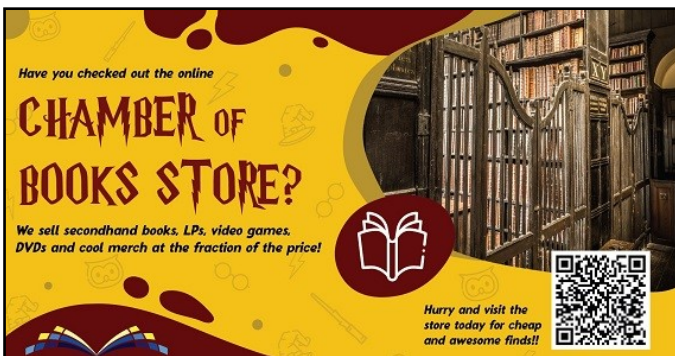
Tom Terry Honored



Tom Terry (right) proudly displays the Mayor's Proclamation declaring "Tom Terry Week" in Shawnee, and the renaming document which officially makes the name of a downtown Shawnee park, "Tom Terry Park." Pictured with Tom is Peggy Cook, Regional Coordinator with the Pioneer Library System.

Tom was recognized in a surprise event in late June. The event was coordinated by the City of Shawnee, Blue Zones of Pott County, his church, and Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU). Tom is retired from his position as Vice President of Business Affairs at OBU, and now serves as the university archivist. Tom also continues to provide leadership in Shawnee in numerous other capacities. He has served on the local library board, the PLS Board of Trustees, and in numerous church and civic organizations.

Tom served on the FOLIO Board for many years, and was inducted in 2006-07 into the FOLIO Hall of Fame, an award which honors FOLIO members who have proven their dedication and commitment through outstanding service to FOLIO and libraries in Oklahoma. Tom has served the community through beautification committees, garden clubs, his church, and continuing service to OBU. As he celebrated his 91st birthday in late June, the community was pleased to say "Thank you" to Tom for his leadership. More than 60 community members joined with Mayor Ed Bolt, OBU President Heath Thomas, and Blue Zones Administrator Kori Perez for the surprise event.



Poll and Prizes for Awareness

The Friends of the Chambers Library, University of Central Oklahoma, moved their spring book sales online, pivoting from in-person to online. Find them on Facebook at UCO Library Chamber of Books Store.

In an effort to increase awareness of their Facebook page, they held a student giveaway. They asked students to go to their Facebook page and follow and comment on a poll. Everyone who left a comment won a prize – flash drive, power bank, tote bag or other. All of those commenting

were entered into a grand prize drawing for a Kindle Paperwhite eReader.

Their survey asked students to identify and say why a particular library lifehack was their favorite. The library having textbooks, the library chat option to reach a library staff member, or the research databases providing free articles. The winner - Students explained how they used databases for all their research and appreciate not having to pay for scholarly articles. Find out more about the UCO Chambers Library FOL at library.uco.edu/fol/.

Children's Book Gift

Dr. Gitanjali Pai and Dr. Viktor Landge recently donated \$1,500 to the Stilwell Public Library Friends Society (SPLFS) to purchase books for young people in our community. These books were ordered by the Friends and delivered to the Stilwell Public Library a few weeks ago. The SPLFS wants to thank Dr. Pai and Dr. Landge for their generous gift.

Pictured below (left to right) are: Secretary Regina McLemore, Librarian Rachelle Horny, Vice President Donna Boecher, and Treasurer Cathy Unger. The officers presented the new books to the library.

The Friends plan on having a book sale and a yard sale on library grounds in a few months.

Regina McLemore, SPLFS Secretary



Proactive Advocacy

"Library advocacy is turning passive support to educated action," said Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian in New Jersey, at a United for Libraries webinar this spring. Proactive advocacy is "laying the groundwork and building the relationships for positive library support year-round."

She encouraged attendees to look at library advocacy as community advocacy. That is what it really is. What is good for the library is good for the community.

Respectful communication with elected officials and representatives provides a mechanism to recognize common goals and build relationships. When sharing statistics, select the top three to relate for impact.

Now is the time, while the legislature is not in session, to invite your representatives to the library and let them learn about the services, resources and needs there.

Need Help?

Call your FOLIO Ambassador

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



Northeast

- Jon and Sharon Douthitt
douthittsharon60@gmail.com

Northwest

- Karen Neurohr
karen.neurohr@okstate.edu

Southeast

- Dr. Bill Hagen
whagen41@gmail.com
- Teresia Harrison
teresiamharrison@gmail.com

Southwest

- Judy Haught
haughtjc@gmail.com
- Carla Garrison
cgarrison@cableone.net



- Library Card Sign-Up Month - September - Find info at ala.org/conferencesevents
- Banned Books Week - September 19-25, 2021 - Find info at bannedbooksweek.org
- TeenTober - October - Find info at ala.org/yalsa/teentober
- FOLIO Board Retreat - Oct. 15-16, 2021
- National Friends of the Library Week - October 17-23, 2021 - Find info at ala.org/conferencesevents
- FOLIO FOL Week Award applications due - Nov. 16 - Find info at okfriends.net/awards.html
- FOLIO Annual Meeting, Tulsa, March 11, 2022

We have received some very important gifts from some Very Important People recently and now take the opportunity to say

THANK YOU !!

Jane Bryant

Jon and Sharon Douthitt—

In Honor of Gerry Hendon

Teresia Harrison—

In Memory of Tricia Wood,
Volunteer and Story Teller Extraordinaire
of Stratford, Ok

Gerry Hendon—

In Memory of Patrick Brennen,
FOLIO Advisory Board

David and Jane Hendon—

In Honor of Gerry Hendon

Joe and Carol McReynolds—

Susan McVey—

George and Karen Neurohr—

In Honor of Gerry Hendon

Sharon Saulmon—

In Memory of Patrick Brennen,
FOLIO Advisory Board

Friends of Tulsa Libraries—

In Honor of Tulsa City-County Library
Staff Members

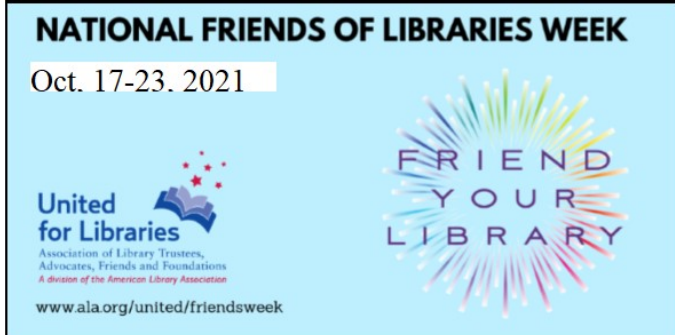
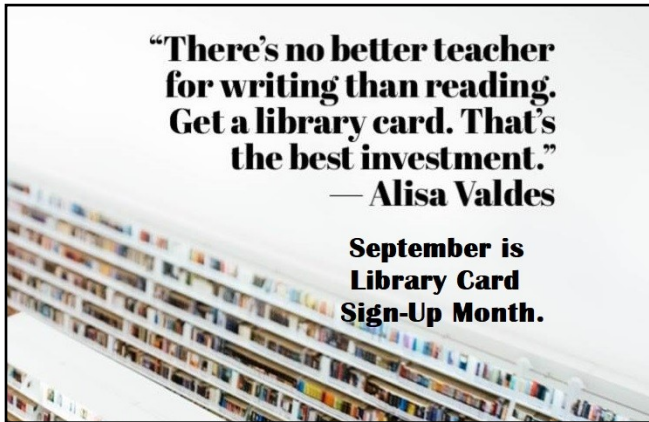
Gifts to the FOLIO Endowment are especially important because they are gifts that keep on giving. These monies are deposited in the Oklahoma City Community Fund where they are invested and continue to earn interest and grow for years and years to come.

The FOLIO Endowment was established in 2009 with a \$20,000 initial deposit. Deposits have been made annually as a result of the gifts received from FOLIO members, the annual endowment fund-raiser and the matching grants that have been received from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund and Oklahoma City Community Fund (OCCF). The fund balance is now \$147,000. AND FOLIO has received a total of \$34,298 in distributions since 2010.

The distributions received have been used to fund scholarships to those selected by the FOLIO Scholarship Committee and to provide information and assistance to strengthen libraries through Friends of Libraries groups.

P. O. Box 702585
Tulsa, OK 74170

Return Service Requested



Plan your Friends of Libraries (FOL) celebration for the week of October 17-23, 2021. Friends of Libraries Week offers an opportunity to celebrate Friends, to promote your group in the community, to raise awareness and to promote membership.

FOLIO has two \$200 awards to recognize local FOL Week activities, one for Friends serving communities under 10,000 population and one for over 10,000 population. An application and instructions are available on the web site (www.okfriends.net) under Awards. The entry deadline is November 16, 2021, with awards to be presented in December. Friends groups must be FOLIO members to apply for the award.

United for Libraries (www.ala.org/united) has sample press releases, proclamations, Facebook and Twitter covers, public service announcements and a sample letter to the editor. Other materials, such as buttons and posters may be ordered.

Some ideas on how to celebrate the week include:

- Plan a special display, membership drive, or bookmark contest.
- Tell your city or campus officials how important the Friends are to the ongoing success of the library.
- Use this opportunity to convey to officials how the Friends raise money, promote the library, and volunteer in many ways.
- Host a mayoral proclamation with special coverage in the local news media.
- Drawing for gift baskets for library customers each day during FOL Week.
- Host an author panel discussion, local author book signing or book review.
- Feature different library services each day of the week on Facebook.
- Have different programs each day, ending with a Staff Appreciation Dinner.
- Have an Open House or Book Sale—“Make Friends with a Good Book.”

Other great ideas are at United for Libraries, which also has national FOL Week awards available.

Plan your Celebration now!

--Angie Lewis, FOL Week Chair, FOLIO Board