

Strengthening Libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries

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Library Services for Strong Communities

Public libraries provide a variety of materials, services, activities, and resources to their communities. A national survey in 2022 gathered information about library programs, services, partnerships, and library facilities geared toward meeting needs and fostering resilient communities.

Libraries are a cornerstone of civic and social infrastructure that support strong communities. The results show continuing strengths in core areas such as literacy, education, civic engagement, and public access to information resources.

Virtually all public libraries (99%) have summer learning programs for children, teens, and/or adults to support learning outside of school.

Services such as those for GED diploma students were provided by 59% of libraries. English language and adult literacy programs were supported by 46%. Job and career services were offered in 78%.

Partnerships with external organizations (schools, other government entities, or nonprofits) were found in 98% of the libraries. Building partnerships can benefit the library, the other organizations involved, and the community as a whole, enabling the sharing of expertise in working toward common goals.

Libraries face significant challenges in maintaining current operations and expanding them to meet growing needs. Capacity - particularly in funding and staffing - remains a persistent issue.

Many library buildings (40%) have not undergone major renovation in over two decades.

Investment in infrastructure and staff is critical for public libraries to continue to provide a broad range of services that support strong and resilient communities, now and into the future.

[continued on p. 2]



Q - What can Friends do to support access to books? Locally a class on literature and movies was cancelled due to a challenge, and someone has questioned having a picture book with two mothers.

A - The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. Libraries provide resources for the interest and information of all people of the community the library serves, including materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues.

Friends can be supportive of libraries, access to library materials, and library staff.

1. Check out a challenged book. Circulation data can be used to support keeping challenged books on shelves and to justify ordering more books by the same authors or on the same topic. Here's a list of recent challenged books: www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/books/story/2023-05-15/15-most-banned-books-2022-2023 This list includes classics under fire, i.e., *1984*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
2. Read challenged books. Be informed about the types of materials being challenged and why. Read the whole book. (Many people who are questioning materials have one sentence that's objectionable, taken out of context, and have not read the entire work.)
3. Think about how libraries select books from reviews in literary journals and newspapers, *NY Times*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Booklist*, *Library Journal* and more, representing the interests and population they serve. No libraries can have everything. Libraries have a collection development policy adopted by their local boards and have budget constraints.
4. Tell your neighbors, friends, and acquaintances about the importance of access to information and the freedom to read.
5. Communicate with your city council, library board, school board, and legislators about the necessity of intellectual freedom and your families' right to read.
6. Stay informed about local activities. Plan to attend local board and city council meetings

[continued on p.2]

From the President. . .



Fall is a paradox. The leaves on the trees are turning yellow and orange and starting that slow descent to the ground one by one until I shake myself from procrastination-induced inertia and grab my rake to fight the annual, futile leaf battle. However, the flowers in my yard bloom merrily on as if they haven't gotten the word that frost is coming. While summer vegetable gardens are

lying dormant, pumpkins and winter squash abound. However, fall is also a tenuous time. We bask in its beauty knowing that a polar wind can take it all away. Robert Frost said it best: "Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;/ Tomorrow's wind, if it be wild,/Should waste them all."

As nature prepares for winter hibernation, we celebrate beginnings. A new school year brings promise. As a former teacher, I still remember the excitement of new faces, high hopes, and big plans of the fall semester. This autumn excitement carries over into other areas of life. For my husband, fall signals the start of football season. For others, fall is a prequel to the holidays.

For FOLIO, fall is a time to honor the hard work of dedicated, creative Friends groups. We grant two \$200 awards to Friends groups who do outstanding work during National Friends of Libraries Week. We also award \$500 to two Friends groups who document their outstanding work performed throughout the year. Interested groups should visit the FOLIO website at www.okfriends.net for applications and details. Speaking of monetary awards, FOLIO also grants three \$1,000 scholarships to full or part-time employees of a public, academic, or special library in Oklahoma. Applications are available on the website.

For the FOLIO Board of Directors, fall is a time of planning. A new, modern user-friendly website is in the works. Plans for FOLIO Day at the OLA Annual Conference in March 2024 in Tulsa are taking shape. Those plans include two educational sessions and a chance to hear Oklahoma author Julia Bryan Thomas. Early registration is December 4-February 6 on the OLA website.

As you bask in the mellow days of autumn, remember Robert Frost's advice, "Nothing gold can stay." But while fall's beauty is fleeting, our dedication to public libraries is steadfast.

Judy Haught, President

Library Services for Strong Communities

[continued from p. 1]

The majority of libraries (68%) offer election services, such as voter registration.

Half of libraries have special designations for emergencies, serving as cooling/warming centers in extreme temperatures, distribution centers during public health emergencies, and/or centers for community members and first responders during disaster recovery.

Public Library Association. *Public Library Services for Strong Communities*, 2023. <https://tinyurl.com/2ey76rvz>

Ask a Friend

[continued from p. 1]

to let officials know that many people (including you!) support access to information and oppose censorship.

7. Start a Banned Books Club and discuss materials and the importance of having the freedom to read.
8. Start a Support Group. If needed locally, bring together your friends, family, and other members of the community to form a group. People sharing why materials should be available makes a powerful voice. Local citizens' groups can help empower decision-makers.
9. Encourage youth to use their voices. Student groups, such as Teens Leading Change in California & Students Engaged in Advancing Texas, have enriched discussions and decisions. "We need a chorus of voices, united in our determination to protect intellectual freedom," says high school student Da'Taeveyon Daniels in *School Library Journal* (Sept. 26, 2023).
10. Write a letter to the editor about the importance of free access to information, making a public statement about the right to read in your local paper.
11. Buy a banned book for your local library, school library, or Little Free Library. (Ask the librarian what book is needed.)

FOLIO Board Actions

The FOLIO Board met on September 29, 2023.

Discussions and actions included:

- Marketing ideas for the FOLIO Awards and Scholarships were discussed. Friends of Libraries Week Awards Applications are due November 15, 2023. Best Friends Awards and Scholarships Applications are due December 30, 2023. [See www.okfriends.net for information.]
- The Legislative report reminded Board members that advocacy is a key role of a library friend. For funding and access issues, Friends' involvement in sharing the value of libraries is crucial.
- Members will see some upcoming differences via our website and emails. The membership year was changed to 12 months from the time of membership payment, rather than the July-June fiscal year.
- FOLIO is planning a Friends Day Meeting on a Saturday next October at the Moore Public Library. You'll hear more as plans are confirmed.
- Stand Up for Standout Friends Award was created. This will be an opportunity for local Friends to be recognized for their outstanding work.
- Great plans are shaping up for the March 8 FOLIO Annual Meeting. Author Julia Bryan Thomas, "Starting or Reviving a Friends Group," Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Friends' networking, and the FOLIO Board meeting are planned.
- The Kirkpatrick Family Fund will give a matching grant of \$2,000 if FOLIO has donors that give \$6,000 for the FOLIO Endowment Campaign.

FOLIO's Annual Endowment Campaign



The 2023 National Friends of Libraries week is October 15-21, and 2023 marks the 45th anniversary of FOLIO. You will soon receive a letter asking you to contribute to the FOLIO endowment fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation (OCCF). Your contribution is an

opportunity to celebrate these occasions and also to honor Gerry Hendon and Sharon Douthitt, who have been coordinating the fundraising efforts for the endowment for many years. They have recently turned over the responsibility to board member, Melinda Howard.

The endowment began in 2009 with \$12,000. Since then, through generous contributions and matching grants from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund (We receive \$2,000 for \$6,000 raised each year.), it has grown to almost \$150,000. This has allowed FOLIO to have almost \$54,000 since 2009 to distribute, without touching the endowment. We have budgeted \$4,400 for awards and scholarships for 2024.

When you receive your letter, you may send your donation with a check or you can make your donation now online at www.okfriends.net. Your contribution is tax deductible. Please help FOLIO continue the important work of supporting Friends of the Library organizations throughout Oklahoma and library staff members pursuing advanced degrees in library science.

Melinda Howard, Endowment Committee Chair, FOLIO Board

Welcome, new FOLIO Board member

Terry Jordan is an avid supporter and user of the digital resources of the Elk City Carnegie Library. Terry says that throughout his life he has been fairly obsessed with reading, enjoying all genres of fiction as well as nonfiction, history-based books.

Terry received an Associate's Degree in Business. Then he went on to study Criminal Justice and Accounting at SWOSU in Weatherford.

Retired from the United Parcel Service, Terry is currently studying at Saint Paul School of Theology. Having served as local licensed pastor at Granite for several years, he is now Associate Pastor at the Elk City United Methodist Church.

Growing up without a television in the family home, Terry learned early in life the joy of reading. In his spare time he enjoys hanging out with his wife Rhonda, daughter Trinity, their two cats and two dogs, playing golf, studying, eating out, and going to concerts. Welcome!



New Membership Software

Since the beginning of FOLIO, membership and other mail recipient information has been meticulously kept on an Excel spreadsheet by

Gerry Hendon. With Gerry retiring from this time-consuming responsibility, the board voted this summer to purchase a software program, EasyNet, to which FOLIO will be transitioning the website and membership management functions. The program will allow us to email newsletters, membership renewal notices, and other communications to FOLIO members and other interested parties. It will also reduce mailing expenses.

Work is currently being done to transfer the domain name and get the membership database ready to transfer to the new platform. Over the years, names and organizations for which we don't have email addresses, have been added to the database. If you or your organization haven't been receiving any emails from FOLIO, we likely do not have an email address for you. If you know you have not or are not sure and would like to receive emails from FOLIO, please contact Candace Baird to give her your email address. She can be reached at okfriendsmembers@gmail.com.

Melinda Howard, Endowment Committee Chair, FOLIO Board

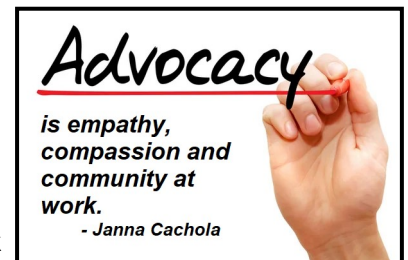
Advocacy Action Plan Workbook

The *Advocacy Action Plan Workbook* has been updated and is intended to help advocates plan effectively towards the realization of specific goals. The free, downloadable workbook is an adaptable guide engaging individuals and groups in library advocacy on any issue. Users may take actionable steps in creating an advocacy plan through community analysis, building a library ecosystem, goal setting, and message development and delivery. Workbook activities also keep users focused on needs assessment, implementation steps, and effective outreach for best results.

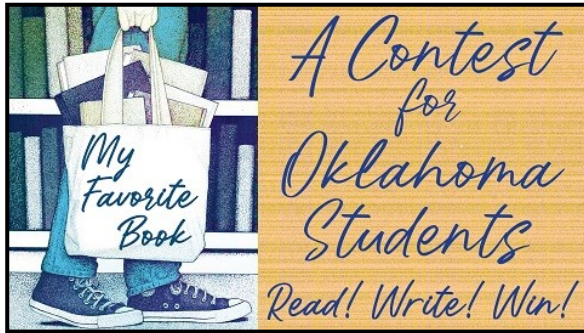
Techniques for guiding conversations so that you are sure to get the main point across are included.

- Bridge allows you to move from a potential sidetrack and get the conversation back to your message.
- Hook. This is a technique that can lead your listener to follow up on your first point, allowing you to get in a second point.
- Flag. Flagging alerts your listeners to what you consider most important.

The resource is available at: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/advocacy-action-planning>



My Favorite Book Writing Contest Announced



The Oklahoma Center for the Book in the Oklahoma Department of Libraries has announced the 2023-2024 My Favorite Book statewide writing competition for students in fourth through twelfth grades. Students attending public, private, charter, and home schools are invited to participate in the competition which requires them to write a letter to the author of a favorite book and explain how the book or one of the book's characters impacted their life. Timeline for submissions is October 2, 2023, through December 15, 2023.

Cash prizes are awarded with first-place winners receiving \$500; second-place \$250; and third-place \$100. In addition, the first-place winners will select their school or public library to receive a \$1,000 grant. An awards ceremony will be held in May 2024, at the Oklahoma State Capitol.

The My Favorite Book competition is sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, the Friends of the Oklahoma Center for the Book, and the Kirkpatrick Foundation.

"The contest is designed to encourage young people to think critically about the books they read," according to Connie Armstrong, director of the Center. "The letter writing exercise also emphasizes formal and important ways to communicate in a world filled with texting and social media posts."

For more information about the My Favorite Book writing competition and other programs of the Center, visit Oklahoma.gov/libraries/ocb, or contact Connie Armstrong at 405-522-3383 or connie.armstrong@libraries.ok.gov.



FOLIO is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for *The Lillian Born Norberg and Mary Lou Atkinson Staff Support Scholarships*. Up to three \$1000

scholarships will be awarded to full- or part-time employees of a public, academic, or special library in Oklahoma in the process of furthering their education. Applications are accepted until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 30, 2023. Information is available at www.okfriends.net/scholarshipshhtml.html. Scholarship awards will be presented at the annual FOLIO members' meeting held during the 2024 Annual Oklahoma Library Association Conference in March, 2024.

Teresa Jors, Scholarship Committee chair, FOLIO

Apply Now for the FOLIO Best Friends Award

- **The John Harkey Best Friends Award** of \$500 recognizes a Friends group in a city or town with a population of less than 10,000.
- **The Oklahoma Best Friends Award** of \$500 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 the calendar year 2023.
- 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.
 - *The approximate number of members of the local community 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 will be accepted but not required. Entries may be electronically submitted via e-mail. **The deadline is December 30, 2023.**

Awards are given at the Oklahoma Library Conference in the spring. Last year the award went to the Elk City Friends of the Library for several activities they sponsored in their community. Because they were the only applicant, they received both awards. Therefore, chances are high for receiving an award. Applications can be found at www.okfriends.net or by emailing Melinda Howard at mhoward6232@gmail.com.

Libraries - Empowering Lifelong Learning

Libraries are bustling centers of activity and learning. The role of libraries in fostering early childhood literacy and setting the foundation for lifelong learning cannot be overstated. These community hubs play a pivotal role in shaping a love for learning from the beginning of a child's life, setting them on a path of continuous exploration and education.

- A Gateway to Books and Imagination
- Early Literacy Programs and Story Time
- Parent-Child Bonding and Education
- Educational Play Spaces
- Accessible Digital Resources
- Encouragement of Curiosity and Inquiry
- Bridging the Socioeconomic Gap providing free access to educational resources.
- Enhanced accessibility and convenience

Libraries become the cornerstone of a literate and intellectually engaged society by providing a nurturing environment that promotes intellectual growth and a thirst for knowledge.

LISEDUNETWORK.. (Sept. 21, 2023) www.lisedunetwork.com/empowering-lifelong-learning-the-vital-role-of-libraries-in-todays-society/

Friends Really Busy in Beaver County



The Friends of Beaver County Pioneer Library are very active and act as volunteer assistants with all of the library projects in advertising and baking goods for the annual bake sale, furnishing pumpkins and pinecones for outside décor, and anything else the library needs such as ingredients for the gingerbread house.

The Friends group sponsored several well-attended programs this year. The Adult Exercise program is held Tuesdays and Thursdays September through May with emphasis on arthritis, diabetes, and heart. The preschool children's Story Time is well attended, and they are learning to follow a routine, sit, listen, sing, and do crafts. Summer Reading for students through sixth grade was held weekly with presenters on themed topics and prizes to the students who read the most books each month.

The Friends hold a fundraiser in November before Thanksgiving to help with projects throughout the year. They also build a gingerbread house as a fundraiser by selling chances with a winner to be drawn, suggesting a donation to the Beaver County Nursing Home to be enjoyed by residents.

The Friends encourage preschool children to become involved in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and are proud to announce that one of our children was one of seven worldwide to be a winner in her contest.

We have a park area located on the south side of our Library building. With donations, we were able to acquire Dana Helms, an accomplished artist, to enhance the side of the building with a beautiful mural which really added a cheerful atmosphere to our park. Several people are using the park to sit and read under the trees or have lunch.

Betty Davis, Library Assistant and Friends member

Hybrid Events Are Fundraising's Future

Over the past few years nonprofit organizations have been inventive in planning virtual fundraisers. In-person fundraisers have unique advantages, too. Forward-thinking nonprofits are creating hybrid fundraising events, which combine the best of both in-person and virtual experiences, according to Network for Good. Here are some factors influencing why hybrid events are rising in popularity and the advantages they offer:

- From anywhere trend - With more people working and attending experiences online, they like to choose how they interact, online or in-person.
- Bite-sized content - Hybrid events are the perfect fundraising format for short content that people can easily digest.

- Schedules and other demands - Some supporters may not be able to attend events but can participate in a hybrid event.

Here are some unique benefits of hybrid events:

- Flexibility accommodating preferences - Donors may tailor the experience to suit themselves, attracting more participants.
- Keep attendees more easily engaged, including interactions with live components.
- Balance physical interaction and convenience - A hybrid event gives you the flexibility to provide physical interaction and offers a convenient online option for those that need it.
- Costs - In-person events have expenses, i.e., meeting rooms, refreshments, materials, and staff support. Hybrid events take a significant portion of the fundraiser online, reducing your expenses.
- Expanded reach - A hybrid event will attract those who like live experiences and those who live too far away to attend in-person or whose schedules prohibit in-person attendance.
- Repurpose content - The content you create as part of your hybrid event, including stories, videos, graphics, photo collections, and the sessions themselves, can be repurposed for marketing or donor education.
- Flexible sponsorships - Opportunities for both live and digital sponsorships give sponsors more incentives.

Network for Good. <https://www.networkforgood.com/resource/why-hybrid-events-are-the-future-of-fundraising/>.

Plan a Year-End Digital Campaign



Nonprofit organizations have found digital fundraising an effective tool. This is an ongoing process to start with online outreach techniques using websites, emails, and social media.

Successful digital campaigns should be memorable,

manageable, and measurable, according to Bryanne Krispin, Caroline Griffin, and Katelyn Baughan. Set a realistic goal. Ask your loyal donors: What inspires them to donate? What kind of campaign would they be excited to support?

Donors want to be on a winning team. Develop library stories that evoke a particular feeling—trust, joy. All of your communications should evoke that theme. The campaign should establish an emotional connection, build trust, and create loyal advocates. Real stories will show the impact the library is making. Communicate with your potential donors once per week during the campaign.

Optimize the library message, being clear and direct when communicating the need. Say “thank you” in a timely manner and answer questions quickly. Keep engaging with your audience throughout the campaign. Email has the potential to offer the highest return on investment out of any outreach strategy for fundraising. Calls for action that are personalized get increased performance results (15-20%).

Fundraising Ideas from Around the State & Country

Haunted Library in Stillwater

As part of the Library Centennial celebrations, Stillwater Public Library is hosting Haunted Library tours (October 19-21). “Ever heard that the library was haunted?” Lower scare tours are available for ages 8 and up (\$5) and moderate scare tours are for teens and adults (\$10).



The lower scare tours include spooky atmosphere and scenes, dark lighting, blood splashes and spooky-costumed characters. The moderate scare tours include jump scares and moderate gory objects.

The Haunted Library begins with the Cemetery of Authors, moves through the eerie library, and opens up into the Hall of Horror Stories, including *Hansel and Gretel*, *Macbeth*, *Dracula*, and *Harry Potter*.

Community partners are the Oklahoma Community Credit Union, OSU Department of Theatre, Prairie Arts Center, Town & Gown, Stillwater News Press, Lowe's, and Douglas Building Center.

Free activities include a no-scare, mini-maze in the story time room and carnival games. Refreshments are available for purchase.

“The Library’s goal is to raise \$100,000 during the Centennial year to help prepare the Library to tackle even more impactful projects in its second century.” Funds go to the Library Trust.

Chocolate Festival in Anadarko



Friends of the Anadarko Community Library had a Chocolate Festival in October, their most popular fundraiser. Individuals, businesses, and/or organizations were asked to sponsor tables at the Festival. Sponsors bring individual servings of chocolate treats (cookies, cupcakes, candy, fudge), display their names, decorate the library’s table, and serve to ticket holders. Tickets were \$7. Card holders could choose up to six treats from any table.

An auction of chocolate items (pies, cakes, plate of cookies) or any other donated item (garden tools, etc.) was held in conjunction with the Festival. Donors were encouraged to bring their donations ahead of time with information about the gift and donor.

The Royal Games



The Pioneer Library System Foundation was excited to present The Royal Games – a garden party filled with fun, games, and hands-on learning for children and their caregivers!

Activities included Painting, Garden Games, Costumed Characters, a Royal Photoshoot, Pioneer’s Mobile Maker Lab, Face Painting, Archery, Jousting, Story Time, and more!

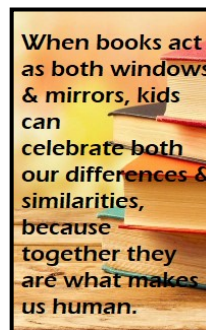
Tickets were \$10 per child and included refreshments and all activities! Royal or Medieval attire was encouraged. Proceeds from this event benefit programming and services in Pioneer’s McClain County branches in Blanchard, Newcastle, and Purcell. The Royal Games were made possible by generous community supporters.

Pie Contest



Friends of the Tonganoxie Public Library (KS) held a pie contest. The Grand Prize, First Place in fruit pie, and First Place in nut pie were announced. A large variety of pies were available: apple, rhubarb, Dixie pie, gooseberry/blackberry, and Dutch apple. Patrons purchased pieces of pie to raise funds for the library’s program, providing food and snacks for youth at the library.

Wishlist Helps with Library Needs



The Green Hill Academic School (WA) Library asked the community to purchase their wishlist with this appeal. “Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop coined the phrase ‘mirrors, windows and sliding doors’ while discussing the impact that books can have on readers. As mirrors, books allow us to see ourselves reflected in what we’re reading, helping to validate our experiences within the context of a larger world. As sliding doors, books shepherd us into new and unfamiliar places, exposing us to cultures and knowledge that we have never encountered. As windows, books allow us to see inside the lives of others, encouraging us to gain perspectives different than our own.”

Assisting with the wishlist helped connect the school’s residents “with their own windows, mirrors and sliding doors” by purchasing a book.”

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
clb99@swbell.net
- Karen Alexander
alexkeamea@yahoo.com

Northwest

- Dr. Karen Neurohr
Karen.neurohr@okstate.edu
- Linda Pye
lindapye23@gmail.com

Southeast

- Dr. Bill Hagen
whagen41@gmail.com
- Teresia Jors
tjors@stratford.k12.ok.us

Southwest

- Angie Lewis
angieslewis13@gmail.com
- Terry Jordan
thetjordan@yahoo.com



- TeenTober - October
- National Friends of the Library Week - October 15-21, 1923
- International Games Month - November
- Children's Book Week - November 6-12, 2023
- FOL Week Awards deadline - November 15, 2023
- Best Friends Awards & Scholarship deadlines - December 30, 2023
- FOLIO Newsletter deadline - December 30, 2023
- Next FOLIO Board Meeting - January 26, 2024
- Take Your Child to the Library Day - February 3, 2024

Yes! I want to join FOLIO and
Be a Friend of Oklahoma Libraries!

Join FOLIO! Being a Friend will. . .

- Provide networking opportunities to make new friends and to share information and ideas about programs, activities, fundraising, legal issues, and great books to enjoy;
- Award scholarships to library support staff;
- Recognize outstanding Friends of the Library with awards for annual Best Friends and Friends of Library Week;
- Showcase the work of Oklahoma Friends in the quarterly newsletter and on Facebook;
- Honor esteemed Oklahoma authors through Literary Landmarks;
- Assist Friends groups with incorporation or reactivation;
- Advocate for library support.

Find out more about FOLIO at
www.okfriends.net

and
Facebook—@ FOLIOOKFriends

Your membership dues and donations are the primary source of funds to support FOLIO's mission which is to strengthen Libraries through Friends of Libraries.

New members are always welcome.

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: _____

Dues Enclosed: _____

Gift Donation enclosed: _____

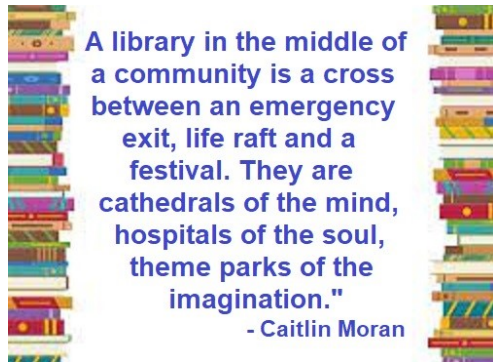
FOLIO—We are Friends helping Friends!

Mail to: FOLIO Treasurer
P.O. Box 702585, Tulsa, OK
74170



P. O. Box 702585
Tulsa, OK 74170

Return Service Requested



Advocacy - Grow Relationships

“Elected Officials Are People, Too” was the resounding phrase used in a recent advocacy webinar. Friends of Libraries sometimes think of “advocacy” as someone else’s job. But Friends need to be on the forefront of stakeholders for cities funding libraries’ operating budgets, state aid, funding for capital improvements, tax levies for libraries, and other legal aspects impacting libraries.

Get to know your state legislators. Visiting their web sites and social media pages will give you some insight about their strong interests. You can locate their voting records and determine what bills they have taken time to sponsor or co-sponsor. Note any personal interests. You want to interact with them as a person.

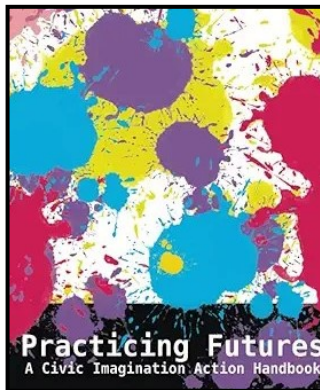
Take time to understand how governance works (schedules, processes). Fall is a good time to invite state legislators to visit the library. One library reported how excited a legislator was to attend the graduation for a recent Excel High School graduate through the library.

Building relationships should be part of your “to do” list. Make a point to meet with elected officials or their staffs every month so you can hear what is important to them. This is not a time to ask for anything. Just listen. Attend a governing body meeting even when the library is not on the agenda. Offer to provide regular updates.

Relate stories about how the library is positively impacting the community. Ideas for story development: “How to Tell a Library Story” on YouTube or “How Stories Connect and Persuade Us” from NPR.org.

Advocacy is a regular task. Don’t wait for a crisis, because it is too late to build the relationship effectively long-term when you need a favor right then. Small steps build big gains. Break down your goals into small steps and make sure to do one small step weekly.

Lori Fisher, Maine State Librarian



Imagining the Future

Practicing Futures: A Civic Imagination Action Handbook by Gabriel Peters-Lazaro and Sangita Shresthova (Peter Lang, 2020) gives leaders and change-makers a practical guide on envisioning change and possibilities.

By outlining its six key concepts, “this transformative book explores how civic imagination activates, mobilizes,

and empowers individuals. Readers will discover the potential of this tool for creating meaningful conversations and change. This book provides examples, facilitation notes, and handouts for workshops on brainstorming, collaboration, and action planning around civic engagement that will inspire librarians to think differently about how they foster those conversations,” says reviewer Araceli Méndez Hintermeister.

This is much like the process that was used decades ago to envision the beginning of the MAPS projects in Oklahoma City, including libraries and the arts.