

Strengthening Libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries

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Public Libraries Are Tackling the Okla. Literacy Rate

Oklahoma's literacy rate is alarming. In 2022, just 24 percent of Oklahoma fourth graders tested proficient or better on National Assessment of Educational Progress reading tests, a lower share than all but two states. Having literate citizens improves their quality of life, increases their potential earning power, and helps them become informed electorates. Educated citizens also contribute to the economic health of Oklahoma.

In May 2022, Oklahoma graduates showed only 6 percent of students were prepared to begin college courses in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Edsurge reports that 58% of U.S. children ages 3-5 are not fully healthy and ready to learn. "Most young children who start school behind are more likely to stay or fall further behind." Oklahoma libraries are starting early with pre-literacy skills development in programs and services. Story times, pre-kindergarten classes, creative play opportunities, music programs, and other activities encourage learning and make reading fun.

Parent education and support groups are provided by many public libraries. Programs like 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, Build a Reader, and Grow Like a Read are sponsored by libraries to encourage parents and children to read and learn together for 15-20 minutes each day.

Sixty percent of low-income families have no books in the home. Children need to have access to books in their homes. Having books helps develop language and critical thinking skills and shows the importance of education and learning.

Books for Babies at some libraries, provided by the Friends of the Library (FOL), give a book, library card info,

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Fall Friends of Libraries Conference

Make plans now to attend the FOLIO Splash (a workshop for statewide Friends of Libraries) on Saturday, October 12, at the Moore Public Library, 225 S. Howard (East of I-35 and S. 4th).

Programs are planned from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A panel of Friends will discuss their variety of takes on selling books from ongoing library sale strategies, antique malls, and online sales, to advice on event book sales. Representatives from Moore, Metropolitan, Chickasha, and Shawnee Friends will share their insights on successful book sales.

The freedom to read is such an important right, and Friends need to be aware of their advocacy role to make a difference. Cassidy Edwards, Chickasha Public Schools, will explain the current landscape around access to materials.

An Oklahoma Book Award author, Gwendolyn F. Mukes, will be featured. Ms. Mukes won the Lynn McIntosh Award of Excellence at the Oklahoma Book Awards this spring for her book *Gwen Didn't Care*.

A panel will discuss creative fundraising successes that have worked in their communities - Mustang and Seminole. Have you had special events, annual events or virtual fundraising events that were great successes? Bring your ideas to share.

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From the President. . .



Stepping into the President's role on the FOLIO Board is both exciting and a bit daunting. My predecessors have been exceptional leaders, guiding this organization with great success. For several years, I have been actively involved in my local friends group, Friends of the Chickasha Public Library,

serving as President, chair of the annual Chocolate Celebration fundraiser, and chair of the Bill Wallace Literary Landmark®. When I was elected to the FOLIO Board a few years ago. I shared my deep appreciation for libraries. I believe it's essential to keep sharing our stories, so here's mine again.

Libraries and books have always been integral to my life. My mother was an elementary school teacher, and every day after school I would spend time in the school library, waiting for her until her day was done. The librarian, Mrs. Bryson, had a significant impact on me, ensuring I always had the books I wanted and often recommending others. My small hometown had a small public library housed in a community building that served the entire community. I can't imagine where the town would be without that vital community hub.

While I do buy a lot of books today, the library remains a crucial place for me. More importantly, I see the profound impact it has on the community, the resources it provides, and the young lives it shapes. As Friends members and volunteers, we need to be sharing our stories. We are advocates for our public libraries, speaking to city and state officials, and raising funds to support these vital institutions in our communities. Keep reading and keep sharing your library story!

Angie Lewis, President

FOLIO Board Action

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

- Approved the new FY25 budget, which includes increases in all Awards - Best Friends to \$1,000; FOL Week - \$500.
- The Endowment Committee reported that FOLIO received over \$6,000, to receive the matching grant of \$2,000 from the Kirkpatrick Family Foundation. [*"Thank you" to all our contributors.*]
- The new Tony Hillerman Oklahoma Literary Site is planned for late May, 2025 in Shawnee.
- The ambassadors gave some exciting reports about new libraries and possible friends groups. Some legal questions have been received, with recommendations given to contact attorneys.

- FOLIO's Facebook ads during last fiscal year have targeted the 10-mile radius around each member Friends group at least once. Ads for the last quarter were for National Library Week, Children's Book Week, and Summer Reading/Learning. www.facebook.com/FOLIOOKFriends
- A FOLIO social media policy was adopted which includes the type of content FOLIO will post and appropriate conduct.
- The new website - okfriends.net - went live on June 11. This user-friendly software will provide faster news release and lower postage costs. (See a *detailed article on p.5.*)
- New Seeds for Success Grants were approved to reach preschoolers with books. Be watching for details in the Fall newsletter and on the website.
- The next FOLIO Board meeting is the biennial planning retreat August 16-17. *If you would like to be involved or know someone you would recommend, please contact any board member or email president@okfriends.net.*

Public Libraries Tackling the Oklahoma Literacy Rate

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and an introduction to library services to parents as they leave the hospital with their newborn. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library, partially funded by the State Dept. of Education, is provided by FOLs and other local groups with books mailed directly to homes. FOLs and libraries have used other creative ways, such as book giveaways and Little Free libraries, to give books to kids. Public libraries have year-round materials and programs for elementary-age and youth. In 2007, the National Center for Education Statistics showed a significant correlation between reading scores and public libraries' children's reading materials availability. American Progress reports, "Time after time, the evidence has indicated that access to print reading material helps drive improved literacy outcomes" both in school and public libraries.

STEAM programs, book clubs, read-a-thons, summer reading/learning, and other literacy-based activities are also available at public libraries. Libraries also have opportunities for students to meet authors and illustrators. Online tutors, skills development databases, and other online resources are available.

Many libraries sponsor or work with local literacy groups to assist patrons in improving their reading skills. English as Second Language classes are also offered for those needing to develop skills. Some libraries are providing high-school completion for adults.

Libraries also provide a safe, calm, and supportive environment, encouraging curiosity and self-directed learning.

Annie C. Casey Foundation. *2024 Kids Count Data Book*. (2 July 2024) www.aecf.org/resources/2024-kids-count-data-book



Q - Our Friends Board doesn't understand who does what. How do we define responsibilities so that we accomplish all of the legal have-tos and fulfill our mission?

A - As a nonprofit organization, the Friends Board needs to develop bylaws, which should incorporate the job descriptions of each officer and the board members.

The Friends board members have three primary legal duties:

Duty of Care: Ensure careful use of all assets, including people and good will.

Duty of Loyalty: Make sure the Friends' activities and transactions are, first and foremost, advancing its mission; Recognize and disclose conflicts of interest; Make decisions that are in the Friends' best interest, *not in the best interest of the individuals or for-profit entities*.

Duty of Obedience: Follow applicable laws and regulations, the Friends' bylaws, and adhere to the Friends' purpose/mission.

The Board also contributes to the Friends' "culture, strategic focus, effectiveness, and financial sustainability, as well as serving as ambassadors and advocates," according to the National Council for Nonprofit Organizations. Friends also serve as important resources in multiple ways, sharing library info, knowing the community, etc.

It's important that all Board members fully understand what's expected and needed of them, then hold themselves responsible and accountable. Board management is the responsibility of all board members. Come prepared for each meeting, reading through all the documents beforehand. Each member can help keep the meeting focused on the agenda.

Mary Beth Harrington (SinhaRoy article) suggests these specific attributes for effective Friends board members:

- commitment to the Friends' mission;
- understanding of the Friends' roles;
- active involvement in Friends' activities and committees;
- thinking and acting strategically;
- abiding by the duties of care, loyalty, and honesty; and
- supporting the organization financially and through advocacy.

Having an agenda calendar is helpful - what needs to be covered by what deadline. Example: Have an audit at the end of fiscal year. Make sure the IRS 990 is filed at appropriate time.

Robert Thorpe overviews officer responsibilities.

President is the executive officer who supervises the board and its many responsibilities. This officer acts as a liaison between the board and the Library director, helping to ensure that the other board members are fulfilling their duties. In addition, the president makes the agenda and runs board meetings, appoints committees, recruits and orients new board members, leads strategic planning process, and serves as Friends' spokesperson.

Vice President serves as backup leader for the president and completes special duties, as requested.

Secretary is responsible for preserving and protecting all official records of a nonprofit. Responsibilities include recording the minutes and attendance, maintaining membership lists and contact information, and sending out notices.

Treasurer is responsible for maintaining timely and accurate accounting records, preparing the financial reports, maintaining a bank account and managing cash flow, keeping the Friends Board informed of the financial condition and helping set the financial policies.

Communication is key. Communicating effectively may be one of the most difficult things to do. Friends' boards can be proactive in improving communication.

Sharing information and clarifying any misunderstandings go a long way for board success. Each board member can use these strategies for better communication.

- Be an active listener. Try to understand what the speaker is saying.
- Make it a two-way conversation. Restate what the speaker is saying and ask relevant questions.
- Create a mutual understanding of expectations to build trust.
- Have face-to-face meetings to improve relationships.

More information:

Glasgow, Ellen. "The Top Five Strategies for Building Strong Volunteer Board Communication." (21 Jan. 2024). www.boardeffect.com

Hoy, Toni. "Nonprofit Board Positions: Structure, Roles & Responsibilities." BoardEffect (12 June 2023). www.boardeffect.com/blog/nonprofit-board-positions/

Huntsberger, Alex. "The Six Basic Nonprofit Board Responsibilities." Neon One (21 July 2023). neonone.com/resources/blog/nonprofit-board-responsibilities/

SinhaRoy, Sanhita. "10 Things Every Board Member Needs to Know." American Libraries Magazine The Scoop (1 July 2024). americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/10-things-every-board-member-needs-to-know/

Thorpe, Robert. "A Guide to the Nonprofit Board." Non-profit Megaphone (n.d.). nonprofitmegaphone.com/a-guide-to-the-nonprofit-board/

Fall Friends of Libraries Conference

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We'll also hear about the Standout Friends that Friends groups from around the state have nominated. The stories of outstanding friends will be exciting in this inaugural recognition as we Stand Up for Standout Friends. See the back page of this newsletter for details or go to okfriends.net and select Awards.

Dr. Liz Willner, Education Program Coordinator of the Community Literacy Centers, OKC, will discuss their project of "Reading Partners: A New Way to Support Struggling Adult Readers." As we wind up the day, some brand new grants will be announced, opening new possibilities for Friends' groups to provide books for children.

Please plan to join us on Saturday, October 12. Registration is \$10. Lunch will be furnished by the Friends of the Moore Public Library. Registration deadline is Sept. 28, 2024. Register at okfriends.net.

Meeker Friends Support Library & Community

Meeker Friends of the Library (MFOL) has had a very busy spring/summer with ongoing activity. Starting in March, BINGO night raised monies for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library fund. On April 5, the MFOL held their annual Bean Supper which everyone enjoyed. During the City-Wide Garage Sale on May 11, the MFOL cleaned out cupboards and sold items for the library. The funds received purchased more library books.

Our summer reading program started on June 5 with 25 children. Smokey the Bear entertained and read to the children. Programs are planned for each week in June. Along with the reading program, Meeker was able to receive the NO COST MEALS food program. The first date was June 3 with 200 boxes distributed.

The Friends are very proud of our librarian, Delanya Wolford, for all of the work and commitment she has for our library and town; therefore, the friends presented her with an appreciation certificate and a gift card.

The MFOL also assisted with several community-wide support efforts. On April 2, the Friends presented stuffed animals to the Meeker police department to be given to children as a source of comfort. The Friends participated in the City Clean-up day, helping keep our town litter free on April 20. The Meeker Chamber of Commerce held the annual Golf Tournament on May 31. The MFOL cooked the pork roast [for pulled pork sandwiches] and made dozens of cookies for everyone. It was a beautiful day, and we had a great time serving the lunches.

On July 19 the MFOL will have their second BINGO night. Everyone shared laughter and had a great time. Bingo only costs \$5.00 for three cards and \$5.00 for a sandwich/chips/cookies/drink. How can you go wrong!!!!
Donna Weber, Vice President, MFOL



Friends of the Library served at the Chamber Golf Tournament, from left - Carol McQuerry, Tama Province, Donna Weber and Charlotte Blansett. Below are Officer Raymond and Officer James with donated stuffed animals.



Friends of Libraries Week Awards



It's time to start planning for National Friends of Libraries (FOL) Week for 2024! It may seem like a long time away, but October 20-26 will be here before we know it! Friends of Libraries Week offers an opportunity to celebrate Friends, to promote your group in the community, to raise awareness, and to promote membership. Many dedicated library users/patrons don't even know about Friends groups. Now is the time to let them know what you do and how they can get involved and ramp up their support for the library.

FOLIO has two \$500 awards to recognize local FOL Week 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, with awards to be presented in December. Friends' groups must be FOLIO members to apply for the award. There are many ways to celebrate and promote your Friends group to library users and the community.

Some ideas on how to celebrate the week include:

- Plan a special display, membership drive, or bookmark contest.
- Tell your city 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.
- Hold a 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.
- Celebrate what is unique about your group, library staff, and library services.

Get more ideas at: www.ala.org/united/events/conferences/folweek

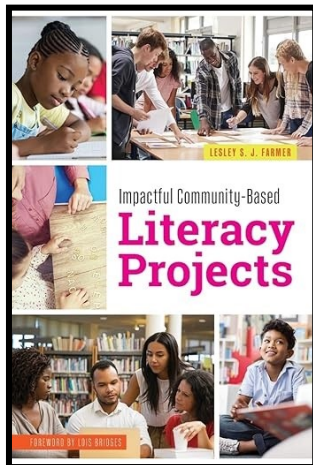
Find the FOL Week Award application at okfriends.net under Awards.

Plan your Celebration now!

Linda Pye, FOL Week Committee Chair, FOLIO Board

Review of Impactful Community-Based Literacy Projects

Lesley S. J. Farmer's book, *Impactful Community-Based Literacy Projects*, not only provides a detailed, research-based explanation of literacy but also promotes a methodical, comprehensive approach to literacy projects. Farmer begins the book with the importance of literacy and the consequences of illiteracy to individuals, as well as societies. On the individual level, illiteracy can lead to economic problems, bad decision making, and poor self-esteem. On the societal level, illiteracy can lead to less productivity, unnecessarily high healthcare expenses, and less community involvement.



Farmer details the process by which people learn to read and follows up by outlining the literacy issues that different age groups encounter starting with early childhood and culminating with adult learners. She reminds the reader that "sustainable literacy development is a lifelong endeavor."

Farmer identifies several successful literacy projects such as Little Free Libraries and Mother Child Education Foundation then goes on to caution potential groups to take note of the abundance of research on literacy before launching a project. She also cautions that monitoring and assessment are essential to a successful literacy project. Forming partnerships with other entities can be beneficial, and the book lists several potential literacy partners such as libraries, schools, government agencies, and both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Farmer emphasizes that groups should comparison shop before purchasing literacy materials from for-profit literacy organizations. On the other hand, commercial businesses may be willing to partner with a literacy group as a way to support the community and generate positive publicity.

Farmer identifies impediments to literacy, such as physiological problems and psychological deterrents like anxiety and lack of motivation. Further, she explains how societal and cultural issues affect literacy. Because we live in a technology-driven world, using technology to further literacy makes sense; however, the author points out the lack of availability of certain technology among some target groups. She goes on to remind literacy groups that while government agencies can be vital partners, some governments "feel threatened" by a literate citizenry.

The book devotes a chapter to the various kinds of literacy. Health literacy has become more difficult in our age of mass media. Misinformation abounds and consumers are challenged to discern truth from fiction. Also, the complexity of insurance policies presents problems for many. Fiscal literacy is another essential life skill discussed in the book. Farmer emphasizes that a person's need for financial knowledge changes as they grow older. Because we increasingly live in a global society, cultural literacy is needed for diverse communities.

Farmer concludes the book with the steps to planning a successful literacy project. Again she emphasizes researching, identifying potential partners, setting goals and objectives, and finally continually assessing for improvement. For groups wanting to start literacy projects, *Impactful Community-Based Literacy Projects* provides a comprehensive look at literacy programs and a workable guide for starting a project. In addition, Farmer meticulously documents her research and provides lists of helpful references. Some small groups, such as Friends of Libraries, may be planning projects on a smaller scale, but they can still use the book as a valuable reference tool and make use of Farmer's practical advice and the many sources listed at the end of each chapter.

-Judy Haight, FOLIO Past President

FOLIOs New Website is Launched!



If you haven't already explored FOLIO's new website, click on www.okfriends.net, and explore all it has to offer. Credit and appreciation goes to Kirk Baird, our Treasurer Candace's husband, for his efforts to create the website and willingness to be our Webmaster.

The website, which went live on June 11, offers all the same important information about FOLIO and its activities as the old website, but it is now linked to a membership management system. The new system replaces the Excel database that had been kept for many years by Gerry Hendon, who did an outstanding job. However, with close to 700 people and organizations on the mailing list, and with the mailing of quarterly newsletters and the conducting of the annual endowment campaign, managing it was difficult and time consuming, and mailing to all those addresses is very expensive.

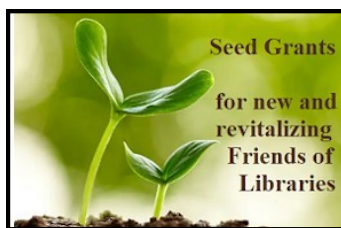
One benefit to members will be that, rather than all membership renewals coming due in July, renewals will be due after one year in the same month they were received. Members will receive their renewal notices by email with a link to conveniently make their payment. Newsletters, monthly updates, endowment requests and donation receipts will also be sent by email.

Over the years, names of individuals, as well as Friends of Library organizations and libraries, have been added to the database without email addresses. We will continue to mail newsletters to those organizations for a while but we are in the process of calling to obtain these email addresses so we can eliminate the need to pay for mailing. If you aren't sure if we have your email address, please send it to Melinda Howard at membership@okfriends.net.

Melinda Howard, Membership Chair, FOLIO Board

Grants for New or Existing Friends Groups

Seed Grants for amounts up to \$425 are available from FOLIO for “new Friends groups in the process of forming, or from existing Friends groups re-establishing themselves.”



Applications are due the first day of the month in September, December, March, or June. Information and an application form are available at the FOLIO website - okfriends.net and select Awards.

Friends groups applying for the grant should have at least three members and a checking account to receive the grant funds.

The FOLIO application requests names of those who will be responsible for the grant; the group should have elected officers, one of whom will submit the application. It will help approval if the group can show evidence of planned or ongoing activities in support of their local library. Specifics on how the requested funds will be used will assist the grantors, as well.



Voter Registration Day - Sept. 17

Organizations like libraries and Friends of Libraries are becoming partners in National Voter Registration Day (nationalvoterregistrationday.org/) by providing information on how to register and where to get nonpartisan information. Patrons may have moved, become a new citizen, changed their names, or turned 18, all needing to register. Social media ideas, stickers, and posters are provided free.

The Government Documents RoundTable of the American Library Association, has a web site specifically for Oklahoma Voter registration, ID requirements, finding a sample ballot: godort.libguides.com/votingtoolkit/oklahoma Watch Facebook for other resources.

Brainstorm program or service ideas:

- Hold a candidate forum.
- Host an information session on local issues.
- Make a bookmark with voting dates & library services.
- Write a letter to the editor about library resources/exhibit.
- Provide information literacy sessions on vetting sources.



Need funding for a humanities-based project? Oklahoma Humanities (OH) can help with that! Since 1971, OH has shepherded funds from the nation's capitol directly to Oklahoma neighborhoods and annually awarded over \$250,000 in federal funds to cultural organizations at the local level—places like libraries, museums, cultural organizations, and more—in rural areas as well as urban.

OH is now accepting applications for **Major Grant** awards of up to \$10,000 for humanities-based projects like exhibits, lecture series, oral history collection, digitization of collections, reading and discussion programs, and more. Just like your projects, OH grants are not one-size-fits-all. Major Grant applications are due August 1.

Consider a **Quick Grant** of up to \$1,500 for smaller projects. Quick Grants are a great place to start for new grant writers and rural libraries. Applications are due 90 days before your project takes place.

Nonprofit Friends groups can easily support high-quality cultural programming at their local libraries through grants. Browse all OH grant categories and begin an online application today: www.okhumanities.org/grants. Contact Kelly Burns at kelly@okhumanities.org or (405) 235-0280 with questions.

- Kelly Burns, Senior Program Officer, OH

Dr. Bill Hagen, FOLIO ambassador and board member, encourages exploring grants from Oklahoma Humanities. Friends can find information on **larger grants**, up to \$10,000, for specific projects “that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life.” Of particular interest for libraries and Friends groups supporting them is the **Humanities Discussion** category, which “supports living history programs, conferences, community conversations, symposia, lectures or lecture series, reading and discussion programs, analytical discussions of museum collections or theater/musical performances.” Applications are due in August and March. These are worth checking out.

Finally, don't overlook grants from the state Humanities Council for its popular “**Let's Talk About It**” book discussion series, usually involving 4-6 books on a given theme. Enough copies of each book are supplied for the discussion groups; a scholar makes a presentation on a given book and then discussion begins! A grant is made with some matching funds needed. Go to the Humanities website listed above for more information.

- Dr. Bill Hagen, FOLIO Board Member

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



- Stand Up for Standout Friends deadline - Aug. 31, 2024
- Library Card Month - September, 2024
- International Literacy Day - Sept. 8, 2024
- FOLIO Newsletter deadline - Sept. 15, 2024
- Voter Registration Day - Sept. 17, 2024
- Banned Books Week - Sept. 22-28, 2024
- TeenTober - October, 2024
- FOLIO Splash Friends Conference at Moore Public Library - Oct. 12, 2024
- National Friends of Libraries Week - Oct. 20-26, 2024
- Friends of Libraries Week Award deadline - Nov. 15, 2024
- Seeds for Success deadline - Dec. 31, 2024
- Scholarships deadline - Dec. 31, 2024
- Best Friends Award - Dec. 31, 2024

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: _____

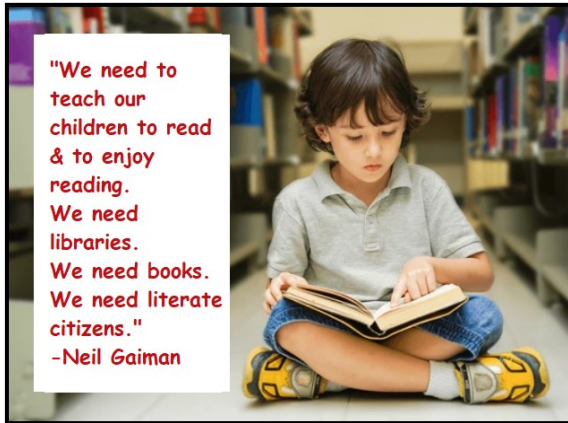
Gift Donation enclosed: _____

Designate gift for: __Additional Support __Endowment

FOLIO—We are Friends helping Friends!

P. O. Box 702585
Tulsa, OK 74170

Return Service Requested



New Award to Honor Standout Friends

Winston Churchill once opined that: “You make your living by what you *get* – but you make your life through what you *give*.” If judged by that yardstick, many Friends of the Library among us are leading extremely rich lifestyles.

FOLIO wants to help local Friends of Libraries (FOL) honor their outstanding volunteers with a new award recognizing Standout Friends. Each FOLIO FOL group member may nominate a Standout Friend.

FOLIO is privileged to regularly hear stories about volunteers across the state who go above and beyond in service to their local Friends of the Library. This takes many forms, helping revitalize a Friends group with more memberships, pouring time and passion into brand new fundraisers, or leading the herculean task of establishing a Friends nonprofit from scratch!

Most of these “Standout Friends” remain unsung heroes. In 2023, the Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO) created an annual Stand Up for Standout Friends program as a chance to spotlight and celebrate volunteers who go above and beyond. We want YOU to help make the FIRST inaugural class of Standout Friends!

In short, it is up to you! Some may wish to acknowledge a current or former board member or other friend for their contributions in a leadership role. Others may choose to honor a Friend who has been with their organization since the beginning. You are also welcome to bestow the honorific based on number of hours volunteered, amount of money raised, or any mix of these and other factors. Any Friend is eligible, provided he or she is part of a Friends of the Library group current in its FOLIO membership and is willing to have his or her name shared publicly on award materials distributed across the state.

Perks include a certificate from FOLIO, commendation letter to the mayor or official in each recipient’s hometown, a sample press release for the local Friends group to share with media, and a written featurette on the FOLIO Facebook page.

Standout Friends will be honored at the fall FOLIO Splash on October 12, 2024. Nominators will have 3-5 minutes to introduce the honoree.

The award application is available on the web site okfriends.net and select Awards. Your cover letter should address why your Friends organization wishes to honor this individual as a Standout Friend. The applications are due by August 31, 2024.