

Strengthening Libraries in Oklahoma through Friends of Libraries

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FOLIO Splash on Oct. 10

Hey, come rub elbows with some great Standout Friends from around the state and discuss library-related topics with other library supporters at the FOLIO Splash.

Jump in. Let's make a splash together for Oklahoma libraries. The day is filled with networking and learning from each other about current issues in libraries.



FOLIO Splash Workshop

Saturday, Oct. 10, 2026

10:00 am - 2:15 pm

**Southwest Oklahoma City Library
2201 SW 134, Okla. City**

Register today for \$10 at:

okfriends.net/splash

The schedule is packed with information you can use.

10:00 am - Welcome and Early Literacy Programs - Several Friends groups and librarians will share their early-literacy projects, emphasizing the importance of giving books to young children.

11:00 am - Neighbors and Friends: Helping Address Intellectual Freedom Challenges in Your Community, led by Pauline Rodriguez-Atkins

11:30 am - Lunch and Standout Friend Recognition

12:20 pm - Authors Jim Ross and Shelly Graham will share their Oklahoma Book Award-winning book, *Route 66: The First Hundred Years*.

1:15 pm - Book Discussions session will

Plan to Vote Nov. 3

Friends of Libraries are active in advocacy for education, as well as stable library funding.

Contact those running for office during the mid-term election and ask their opinions and share your ideas on supporting libraries.

SQ 847 would reduce funding for library systems, some nonsystem libraries, schools, technology centers and other local services.

SQ 847 would decrease the assessment cap on property taxes for homestead and agricultural property in Oklahoma from 3 percent to 1.75 percent. The cap for other real property, including commercial property, would decrease from 5 percent to 4 percent. For seniors with income above the current limit for the senior freeze program, it would add additional assessment cap tiers ranging from 0.35 percent to 1.75 percent, depending on income.

According to the nonpartisan Oklahoma Policy Institute, "Lawmakers have said SQ 847 is meant to give Oklahomans some relief from property taxes. However, it could end up raising yearly property tax bills. Local governments may need to raise millage rates to make required bond payments for local projects that have already been approved by voters."

"In Oklahoma, property taxes are a primary source of local revenue that helps fund public schools, CareerTech, county governments and other local services. Property tax revenue stays in local communities rather than going to the state."

"Lower assessment caps would further limit how much taxable property values can grow year to year. That can slow future property tax increases for property owners, but it also would slow the growth of revenue available to schools and local governments."

Plan to make your voice heard at the Nov. 3 election.

Find further info at: shorturl.at/IXIVH

From the President. . .



Summer 2026 has flown by, and Fall is almost here. Fall is usually a time when the leaves begin to change colors and fall as temperatures cool down. However, due to the extreme heat and drought this year, the leaves began to fall early. Now rain has finally come, the temperature has dropped significantly, and we are so thankful for the change and cooler weather.

Although the heat has been miserable this summer, Friends across Oklahoma have been busy planning activities that support their libraries. Our FOLIO Board has also been busy planning for the 3rd Annual Splash Conference on October 10th at the Southwest Oklahoma City Library. Among other programs, authors Jim Ross and Shelly Graham will discuss their book, **Route 66: The First Hundred Years**. You can register for Splash at okfriends.net/splash. It should be an informative and fun event! I hope to see you there!

The FOLIO Board of Directors is also in the process of planning programs for FOLIO Day at the OLA Annual Conference March 10-12, 2027, at Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center in Norman. Those plans include two educational sessions, a talk by Oklahoma author Desiree Webber, an awards session, and the quarterly FOLIO Board meeting. Early conference registration will begin in December on the OLA website. More FOLIO Day information will be announced later. Stay tuned!

I hope that you have begun to plan special activities for National Friends of Libraries Week which will be October 18-24, 2026. It will be a good time to promote your group in your community, raise awareness, and promote membership. Also, your group could be the recipient of one of FOLIO's three Friends of Libraries Week \$750 awards! To apply for this award or any other FOLIO award, go to www.okfriends.net.

We need to always communicate how important our libraries are to our communities and citizens. I would like to extend a special "thank you" to each of you for your support and advocacy of your public library! Keep up the good work!

Linda Pye, President

FOLIO Board Action

The FOLIO Board met on September 3, 2026, at the Southwest Oklahoma City Library. Major actions include:

- The Best Friends Awards were increased to three with two awards for Friends groups in cities serving under 10,000 population.
- The Friends of Libraries Week Awards were increased to three. The FOL Week Committee will decide on the awardee criterion based on submissions.
- Dr. Bill Hagen was presented the FOLIO Hall of Fame Award. *See the article on p. 6.*
- The FOLIO Board members were encouraged to comment to the FCC on proposed elimination of E-Rate discounts for libraries and to vote on Nov. 3 with SQ 487 impacting library funding. *See the article on p. 1.*

Welcome, Kim Bishop

Kim Bishop has rejoined the FOLIO Board. She is currently the President of the Friends of the Metropolitan Library System and has volunteered for the Friends book sale for several years.



Mrs. Bishop received a Bachelor of Science degree from Oklahoma State University. After several years of working in different laboratories at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and the University of Tulsa, she made the decision to attend law school. Mrs. Bishop received a Juris Doctor Degree from Oklahoma City University. In 1991, she became Staff Attorney for the Oklahoma House of Representatives. She served in that position until she retired in 2016. Later in 2016, she became Staff Attorney for the Oklahoma State School Boards Association. She retired on January 1, 2026. She resides in Edmond, Oklahoma, is married, and has a 23-year-old son.

Mrs. Bishop has been a volunteer at the Oklahoma City Zoo since 1993. In 2020, she completed the Nature Conservancy Oklahoma Conservation Leadership Academy, and in 2022 she completed the Oklahoma Biodiversity Steward Program, sponsored by the Oklahoma Biological Survey. In addition to volunteering at the zoo, she also serves on the board of the Friends of the Metropolitan Library System and enjoys gardening.

FOLIO Splash on Oct. 10

(continued from p. 1)

include successful tips for leading a book discussion, information about Let's Talk About It, and ways to encourage family reading.

1:45 pm - Working Together: Friends and Library Administration, led by Wayne Hanway

2:05 pm - FOLIO: Benefits and Awards, led by President Linda Pye

Congratulations to these Standout Friends

These Standout Friends will be recognized at the Splash workshop. They were nominated by their Friends of the Library for this statewide recognition of their volunteer assistance to the Friends group. Their outstanding contributions will be highlighted at the Splash conference and featured on FOLIO's Facebook page in October.

Bartlesville – Diana Williams

Beaver County – Rosie Smith

Blanchard – Sue Bramow

Elgin – Beverly Kirkpatrick

Elk City – Misty Musick

Lawton – Fermin Vinuet

Meeker – Carol McQuerry

Metropolitan – Kim Bishop

Stillwater – Dan Armstrong

Tulsa – Helmerich – Sherry Spurrier



Thank you for being a

Standout Friend!

FOLIO Scholarships



FOLIO awards several scholarships annually in March during the Oklahoma Library Association Conference.

The Lillian Born Norberg and Mary Lou Atkinson Support Staff Scholar-

ships are offered to full- or part-time employees of a public, academic, or special library in Oklahoma who are in the process of furthering their education. The scholarship amount will be a minimum of \$1,000 for up to three recipients, depending on committee selections. The online scholarship application will open on Dec. 7, 2026 and close on Jan. 14, 2027. For eligibility, requirements, and more information see okfriends.net/scholarships

- Dr. Karen Neurohr, Scholarship Chair

Jump-Start Grants

FOLIO Jump-Start grants are available for up to \$425 each to help with forming, reorganizing, or revitalizing a friends group to support a local library. Grants can help with the possible legal



expenses of incorporation and the creation, duplication, and communication of promotional materials.

Applications are due the first day of the month in September, December, March, or June. Friends groups applying for the grant should have at least three members and a checking account to receive the grant funds.

To qualify, there must be an existing group with a bank account, officers, and plans for grant usage. This grant may be used to establish or revitalize a Friends group. 501(c)3 status is not required to get a Jump-Start Grant; the grant funds may be used to help pay to apply for 501(c)3 status. Find the Jump-Start Grant application at:

okfriends.net/jumpstart

“Libraries are for everyone.

That’s worth investing in”

Charlene Bradley wrote an opinion piece about the importance of libraries. On any given day at the library, you might walk in to find a toddler singing with her mother at story time, a new resident brushing up on English, a teenager using the 3D printer, and a job seeker logging on for a virtual interview — all under the same roof, all for free.

Public libraries are where the community comes together to learn, create and connect. Public libraries are among the rare spaces left in America where people from all walks of life can come and spend time together. In an era when it is easy to feel divided, the library is a place that reminds us of what we share. There is no subscription required, no purchase necessary, and no judgment at the door.

Public libraries bring us together, and they connect people to the resources and opportunities they need. For young people they serve as safe havens, places to get homework help, and places to discover new opportunities. For entrepreneurs they are places to turn ideas into reality. And for older adults they are lifelines, places that facilitate full participation in community life.

Public libraries offer a model for the kind of society we want to live in — one where anyone can find what they need, get together with their neighbors, and access opportunity without cost or condition. The vibrance of libraries demonstrates why this vision is worth investing in.

Reprinted from Twin Cities Pioneer Press

shorturl.at/6AUid

Seeds for Success Grants Applications Due Dec. 31

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents," says children's author Emilie Buchwald. Indeed research shows that early-childhood literacy is boosted by books in the home for parents to read to their children. Sadly, many homes, particularly economically challenged households, contain no books for children. Friends of Libraries can help remedy the situation by providing opportunities for young children to select their own books.

The FOLIO Seeds for Success Grants program awards money and books to implement projects that give books to young children. Friends groups who are members of FOLIO may apply for \$500 grants and/or 100 books to bolster early-childhood literacy in their communities. Applications are due December 31, 2026, and can be obtained at okfriends.net/seeds-for-success-grant-application.

Judy Hought, Seeds for Success chair



The Friends of the Library of Enid gave away free books to preschoolers, as part of their FOLIO Seeds for Success grant.



The Seeds for Success event at Weatherford Public Library had an enthusiastic group.



FOLIO Annual Meeting

held in conjunction with the
Oklahoma Library Association will be

Friday, March 12, 2027

Embassy Suites Hotel, Norman.

**FRIENDS GROUPS,
JOIN FOLIO**

Friends group FOLIO memberships are just \$25 annually. In addition to the networking, learning opportunities, newsletter, FOLIO offers \$1,000 Best Friends Awards, \$750 Friends of Libraries Week Awards, \$500 Seeds for Success Grants, Standup Friends Recognition, and up to \$425 for Jump Start Grants. Join at: okfriends.net/join

Ambassadors are available to answer or find answers for your Friends group challenges. This year they have had questions from how to organize a Friends group and insurance concerns to the role of the Friends group.

Facebook ads are being run in member Friends group areas during special library events - like National Library Week, Take Your Child to the Library Day, etc. During September the ad was run for Library Card Sign-Up Month in Chickasha, Guthrie, Hydro, Stillwater, Pryor, Shawnee, Talala, Waurika, and Wilburton, inviting all to get a library card at their local public library. Ads will reach each groups' area (10-mile radius) at least once per year.

Member Friends groups may have a web page on the FOLIO web site. The FOLIO Webmaster will be happy to work with your group to feature activities. See okfriends.net/focus.

Meeker Friends

The Meeker Friends of the Library group has been very busy this year.

Right after the celebration of our 25th anniversary in February, the group held a Spaghetti Dinner on April 24th. Many teachers purchased tickets beforehand and had their meals delivered to them at the school. We had a great turn out and made enough money to buy a new Book Drop for outside the library.

The Friends volunteered to assist with the Summer Reading Program on

Wednesdays. Almost 30 children attended programs each week around the dinosaur theme. Our volunteers really pitched in and helped with reading to the children and playing games. The children had a great time learning all about dinosaurs and asked many questions. One of our police officers dressed up in the dinosaur's costume on the last day, and everyone was treated to a snow cone.



Children enjoyed stories led by volunteers, a dinosaur visit, and snow cones at the Meeker Public Library.



The Meeker Library offered a "No Cost Meals" program with the librarian and volunteers handing out many boxes every Monday. This continued through the first week in August. We also had a summer BINGO party with many items accumulated for prizes.

Meeker Friends' upcoming events include:

- Spaghetti Dinner in September
 - Annual Fall Festival in October
 - Christmas Bake Sale in December
- As you can tell, we are a very active group of volunteers.

- Donna Weber, President, Meeker Friends of the Library

Starting a Book Discussion Group

"For most people, what is so painful about reading is that you read something and you don't have anybody to share it with. In part what the book club opens up is that people can read a book and then have someone else to talk about it with. Then they see that a book can lead to the pleasure of conversation, that the solitary act of reading can actually be a part of the path to communion and community." (bell hooks, from *All About Love: New Visions*)

Here are some considerations when beginning a book discussion group:

- Determine what kind of book discussion you want. Social? Academic? In between?
- Figure out who you want to invite. Family? Friends? People with diverse ideas? Bibliophiles? (8-16 members recommended.)
- Decide where the book club will meet (homes, club-houses, libraries, churches, online, and restaurants).
- Choose a literary genre or a mix of genres: fiction (current, classic), poetry, drama, mystery, sci-fi, current events, history, or biography.
- Decide how you'll choose the books (NoveList, many libraries have book discussion kits, ask a librarian).
- Think about how members will access books (physical books, audiobooks, eBooks).
- Plan the discussion. Resources include LitLovers, Reading Group Guides, Goodreads, BookClubs.com, and books sometimes include discussion guides.
- Communicate logistics. For frequency monthly works best for most clubs. Some meet every 6 weeks. Once you choose a schedule, try to stick with it. Email, social media, texting and even a phone chain are all valid options for communication.
- Give your club an identity so that members will be accountable and engaged. For example: Good Mood Book Club, Books on Tap, Fiction Revival, or just Lakewood Community Reads.
- Record your group's activity with a club journal. This can be as simple as a 3-ring binder to keep track of the books you've read; also plot summaries, discussion highlights, and members' opinions may be included.

Explore more:

Munro, Cassidy. "How to Start a Book Club: 8 Things You Need to Think About." Edmonton Public Library. www.epl.ca/blogs/post/how-to-start-a-book-club/

"Book Discussion Groups: Starting a Book Discussion Group." American Library Association. libguides.ala.org/bookdiscussiongroups/startguide

"How To Start a Family Book Club (Plus 11 Great Reads To Try)." We Are Teachers. www.weareteachers.com/family-book-club/

Hall of Fame Award to Dr. Bill Hagen



Dr. Bill Hagen was presented the Hall of Fame Award by Judy Haught, FOLIO Past President.

Dr. Bill Hagen was recognized at the FOLIO Board meeting and received the Hall of Fame Award. This award is not given every year and honors outstanding and dedicated service to FOLIO.

Hagen has been on the FOLIO Board since 2018 and has lent his expertise and skills in many ways. He has served on several committees, including Oklahoma Literary Sites, leading last year's site honoring Tony Hillerman. He has headed the Seed Grant Committee, now Jump-Start Grants, for several years. Hagen has been an enthusiastic ambassador for southeast Oklahoma, sharing insights with Friends groups in the region.

Advocacy Planning

The Friends of the Dallas Public Library started a campaign this month to convince the City Council to restore \$3.1 million to the library's budget. Friends of the Library were challenged to ten steps in advocacy.



Postcards were available to mail to the City Council members to tell their library story. Personal stories make a difference.

None of these steps are difficult. It takes dedication to follow through on each step to make sure officials know the importance of the library and can make an informed decision.

FOLIO Endowment

An endowment is an investment in the future. When the FOLIO endowment began in 2009 with \$12,000, the FOLIO Board envisioned its growth and available funds for the organization. Thanks to generous donations every year from our members and donors, matching funds from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund, the investment management of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation (OCCF), and the interest checks that FOLIO receives.

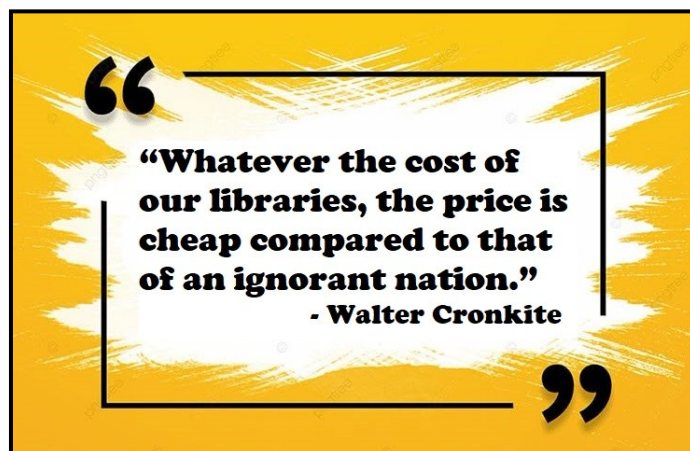
At the FOLIO Board meeting on September 3, Jennifer Meckling, Director of Nonprofit Endowments at OCCF, presented a check for \$8,615, which will help fund FOLIO's grants, awards and scholarships. OCCF brags about FOLIO often, because FOLIO has no staff. All funds go to projects with the leadership of our wonderful volunteers.



At the OCCF check presentation were (L to R) Jennifer Meckling, Director of Nonprofit Endowments at OCCF; Linda Pye, FOLIO President; Dr. Melinda Howard, FOLIO Endowment Chair; and Candace Baird, FOLIO Treasurer.

"Thank you" to these generous donors to the FOLIO Endowment this quarter.

- Nancy Anthony
- Friends of the Elk City Carnegie Library
- Barbara Hogan
- Karen Neurohr
- Linda Pye, in memory of Kay Boies
- Anneva Sander



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
NEAmbassador@okfriends.net

Northwest

Terri Crawford
Linda Pye
NWAmbassador@okfriends.net

Southeast

Dr. Bill Hagen
SEAmbassador@okfriends.net

Southwest

Angie Lewis
SWAmbassador@okfriends.net



- FOLIO Splash registration deadline - Oct. 3, 2026
- Banned Books Week - Oct. 4-10, 2026
- FOLIO Splash Friends Conference - Oct. 10, 2026
- TeenTober - October
- National Friends of Libraries Week - Oct. 18-24, 2026
- Children's Book Week - Nov. 9-15, 2026
- Friends of Libraries Week Awards deadline - Nov. 13, 2026
- Seeds for Success Grant deadline - Dec. 31, 2026
- FOLIO Board of Directors Meeting Jan. 8 2027 (tentative)
- FOLIO Newsletter deadline - Jan. 14, 2027
- FOLIO Scholarships deadline - Jan. 14, 2027
- Best Friends Awards deadline - Jan. 31, 2027
- FOLIO Annual Meeting - March 12, 2027 - Embassy Suites, Norman

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.

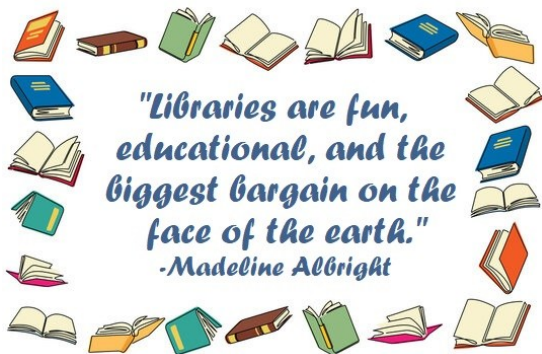
Dues Enclosed: _____

Gift Donation enclosed: _____

Designate gift for: ☐ Additional Support ☐ Endowment

FOLIO—We are Friends helping Friends!

Return Service Requested



Best Friends Award Increased to Three

For many years, FOLIO has awarded two Best Friends Awards to local Friends of Library organizations. The awards are:

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

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

At the June quarterly board meeting, the decision was made to increase the awards to three. This was made possible because of the increased interest from the growing FOLIO Endowment at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. Since we have more communities of a population less than 10,000, there will be **two** John Harkey Best Friends Awards for 2026.

The Best Friends Committee uses the following criteria for judging entries:

- Narrative summary describing a major innovative/creative event or series of activities that impacted your library and community for calendar year 2026.
- A narrative describing the process used for increasing the involvement of patrons in the local library.

- How the events impacted the patronage use of the library.
- The approximate number of members of the local community impacted by 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. PowerPoints or scrapbooks are encouraged, but not required. Entries may be electronically submitted via e-mail. **The deadline is January 31st, 2027.**

Awards are given at the Oklahoma Library Conference in the spring. You can find articles about previous winners and applications in the newsletters on our website.

Friends of Library organizations must be a FOLIO member to apply. The deadline for applying is January **31, 2027**. Applications can be found at www.okfriends.net.

- Dr. Melinda Howard, Best Friends Chair

