



Friends and Foundations, Part One: Separate organizations, similar goals

BY JANE RUTLEDGE

Friends of Tippecanoe County (Ind.) Public Library

Our local library serves most of Tippecanoe County, Ind., and is the home of a 44-year-old Friends group and a 12-year-old library Foundation.

The Friends of the Tippecanoe County Public Library is a group whose core project is book sales. Four book sales a year, plus a thriving on-line sales project, bring in about 80% of our \$100,000+ budget, with the remainder of our income coming from membership dues and contributions. We budget \$70,000-80,000 per year for library projects and try to keep our overhead at a minimum, so that most years we have some surplus, and we've been able to put aside funds for big projects.

We support all library programs – author visits, special speakers, children's programs, the summer reading club, and more. We annually award scholarships for staff members to continue their educations, and we pay for special continuing education programs for the library's staff day.

We try to fill in the gaps when special equipment or supplies are needed, and we fund staff recognition events, contribute generously to the staff social fund, and pay for the annual staff holiday dinner. We underwrite the publication of the library's newsletter.

Friends membership in recent years has hovered around the 650 mark. Fifteen years ago, when we began holding a members-only presale evening before each book sale, our membership increased dramatically, and at about the same time, a major direct-mail membership campaign centered around a "Gold Card" membership level (\$35 a year) brought in a large number of members who were generous donors.

Our basic membership remains at \$10 a year, but about 40% of our members join at a better-than-basic level, and nearly 10% qualify for our "Benefactor Bookplate" level of \$75 and above.



TIPPECANOE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY



TIPPECANOE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
LIBRARY FOUNDATION

A thriving book sale project requires lots of volunteer labor, and we have been fortunate in recruiting a pool of 100 or more members who sign up for shifts at the book sales, sort books year-round, and help with other activities. Volunteers, whether they help once a year at a book sale or every week in the sorting room, constitute a committed group of library supporters.

When the library board decided to explore establishing a library foundation, they very wisely made the decision to involve the Friends and to build on the goodwill that the Friends had established through the years. The Foundation's creators looked upon the Friends as a complementary organization, with goals very similar to those of the Foundation and yet with a very different focus.

The Friends group had specific funding goals and a book-sale-dependent budget, while the Foundation undertook to make the "big asks," encourage planned giving and bequests, and work on grant applications. The Foundation has undertaken fund drives for furnishing our two new branch libraries, for two major renovations at our main library, and for establishing an endowment for future growth.

Friends officers were brought into the planning process very early and were a part of the discussions leading up to the Foundation's official found-

ing. One piece of advice received early on, and followed, involved language. The Friends is a membership organization; the Foundation is not. The Foundation has donors, but not members, and we have been careful to keep those functions clear and to use the word "member" only in relationship to the Friends.

An important decision made in the early days was the make-up of the Foundation's board of directors. The library's Board of Trustees appoints a member to serve on the Foundation board, and the Friends board also makes an appointment to the Foundation board. This has proved in practice to be a valuable means of coordination and cooperation, as all three boards are always aware of the activities of the others.

Another cooperative venture has been the Foundation's fundraising software. When the Foundation staff began looking for a software program, they invited the Friends membership chair to participate in their research and discussions, with the goal in mind of consolidating our mailing lists.

All of the Friends members were already on the mailing list for the library's newsletter, and a software program was chosen that enabled the Friends renewal and volunteer information to be added to the same database. This simplifies updating of address information, and the Foundation's administrative aide supplies the Friends with current mailing information and membership lists as needed.

Consolidating the mailing information of course has added Friends members to the lists of prospects for the Foundation's fundraising efforts, and Friends members have been among the most generous individual donors to the Foundation's campaigns. Several of the large bequests that have come to the Foundation are from people with long and strong relationships with the Friends.

The Friends of the Library as



a group has also contributed to the Foundation's major campaigns. In appreciation, a children's activities room at one branch, an outdoor reading area at another, and a conference room at the main library now all bear the Friends name.

We're proud of our 12-year record of working together for the good of our county library. With the Friends continuing to develop community goodwill and personal commitments, as well as financing a range of library projects, and with the Foundation working to ensure sources of major funding for library improvements and expansion, we are a strong team making the future more secure for library services in Tippecanoe County.

For more information about the Friends of Tippecanoe County Public Library, visit <http://www.tcpl.lib.in.us/friends-of-tcpl>.

Jane Rutledge has volunteered for Friends of the Library organizations for more than 30 years. She has served the Friends of Tippecanoe County Public Library in various positions (book sale chair, membership chair, president, treasurer) and currently heads the online sales team. She has also served on the boards of Friends of Kansas Libraries, Friends of Indiana Libraries, and Friends of Libraries U.S.A.

This is part one of a two-part series on the dynamic between library Friends and Foundations. Part two will run in the March 2010 issue of *The Voice*. In part two, Peter Pearson, president of the Friends of the Saint Paul (Minn.) Public Library, will explain the workings of his combined Friends and Foundation organization.

St. Louis Public Library Foundation hosts a 'novel' benefit



St. Louis Public Library staff members Terra Sleep (left) and Chris Martin got into the spirit at the "Stranger Than Fiction" benefit.

The St. Louis Public Library Foundation hosted "Stranger Than Fiction: A Novel Affair" at St. Louis' downtown Central Library on Sat., Nov. 14, 2009. More than 600 people came to celebrate and support the St. Louis Public Library (SLPL). Guests were greeted by the Charles Glenn Gospel Choir, which sang an uplifting welcome as people entered the Great Hall.

Five top St. Louis caterers provided literary themed food, and the Hyatt Regency's Red Kitchen and Bar created signature cocktails with a literary "twist." Entertainment included everything from escape artists to belly dancers, a scavenger hunt to behind-the-scenes tours. The Young Literati of the SLPL sold raffle tickets; the winners' names will be used in an upcoming book by an acclaimed author. Build-A-Bear Workshop provided literary themed "bears" for silent auction.

Many guests and staff attended dressed as their favorite literary character, which made the party even more colorful and festive. A DJ and dancing in the Great Hall brought the evening to an close, with more than \$100,000 in net proceeds going to support the St. Louis Public Library Foundation's "Central To Your World" capital campaign to restore and modernize the nearly 100-year-old Central Library.



Wisconsin Libraries Say Cheese!

The Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries, a program of the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Foundation, has created a visual way to remind people of the variety and wealth of resources, services, programs, and activities libraries offer.

"Wisconsin Libraries Say Cheese!" is a promotional project by the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries that uses the Web resource Flickr to share digital photos that libraries across Wisconsin took on one day during the week of Nov. 1-8. The photos may be viewed at www.wisconsinlibraries.org/saycheese.

With the online sharing of photographs, the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries hopes to capture the "full picture" of library usage, along with the essence of what libraries are today. The goal is to strengthen libraries' existing base of support by presenting a better understanding of the kinds of resources, services, programs, and activities libraries offer, with the intent to strengthen the base of support libraries have among the public officials who fund them and the people who use them. The "Wisconsin Libraries Say Cheese!" site displays hundreds of reasons to speak up for libraries, and speak out for critical funding needs when local and state budget dollars are being allocated.

"Wisconsin Libraries Say Cheese!" is modeled after a successful program of the New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey State Library's Snapshot Day. The Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries is an ongoing, statewide effort that provides a collective voice for Wisconsin libraries of all types, focusing on developing and disseminating effective messages about the importance of all Wisconsin libraries.