

## Chapter 20

# Friends of the Library and Foundations

### A. Friends of the Library

- Every library needs friends.
- The Friends of the Library organization is the right arm of the library.
- The Friends can have fund raising campaigns, book sales, etc. to help with the needs of the library beyond what the library can do, either financially or legally.
- Friends groups can buy incentives for summer reading programs, food as a drawing card for teen programs, or recognition programs for volunteers and staff. The list goes on and on. It is only limited by the imaginations of the Friends members and the funding they have to develop and carry out the dreams of the library.
- Friends also help the library as volunteers, advocates and lobbyists.

For more information, join:

#### Friends of Indiana Libraries (FOIL)

<http://www.ilfonline.org/units/friends-of-indiana-libraries-foil/>

- Operates as a clearinghouse of information about the activities of local Friends of the Library groups
- Can help local communities establish a Friends of the Library group and coordinate a network of volunteers working for passage of library legislation
- Individuals and local Friends of the Library groups may become members of FOIL
- Presents a program on issues of interest to Friends groups at the annual ILF Conference

#### United for Libraries (formerly ALTAFF)

<http://www.ala.org/united/>

109 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 117B  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161  
(312) 280-2161  
[united@ala.org](mailto:united@ala.org)

Electronic Discussion Group for Friends (Listserv)

To join, send an email to [sympa@ala.org](mailto:sympa@ala.org). In the subject line of your message type:

subscribe friends Firstname Lastname

Insert your own first name and last name as indicated. Leave the body of the message blank (remove any signature that is automatically included). Send the message. In a few minutes you will receive a welcome message and you can then begin posting emails to the electronic discussion group.

The mission of United for Libraries is to support citizens who govern, promote, advocate, and fundraise for all types of libraries.

United for Libraries has the specific responsibility for:

- Educating through a continuing and comprehensive program for library Trustees to enable them to discharge their responsibilities in a manner best fitted to benefit the public and the libraries they represent.
- Encouraging and assisting the formation of and development of Friends of Library groups and Library Foundations.
- Providing a means for Trustees to have access to information and ideas that will prove useful to them in the governance of their libraries.
- Providing Friends of Library groups and Library Foundations access to information and ideas that will prove useful to them in fundraising, library promotion and the operation of their organizations.
- Promoting strong state and regional Trustee and Friends of Library organizations.
- Providing to all who value libraries the materials and support they need to be effective advocates for their libraries on the local, state and national levels.
- Making the public aware of the existence of formalized citizen groups such as Trustees, Friends of Library groups and Library Foundations and the services they perform to encourage and develop expanded citizen participation in the support of libraries across the country.

### **1. How to Organize a Friends Group**

- Determine the purpose of and need for the group. This should be done with the librarian and a small core of concerned citizens.
- Select a steering committee to reflect your community and the needs of the group. It is important to have access to an attorney, public relations and advertising talent, and high profile leaders.
- Join the Friends of Indiana Libraries (FOIL).
  - [www.ilfonline.org/units/friends-of-indiana-libraries-foil/](http://www.ilfonline.org/units/friends-of-indiana-libraries-foil/)

- Work on the Federal tax-exempt status (501©(3)). Here is some general information about the 501c designation.
  - [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/501\(c\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/501(c))
  - [www.501c3.org/what-is-a-501c3/](http://www.501c3.org/what-is-a-501c3/)
- The following IRS URLs will provide helpful information.
  - [www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=96099,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=96099,00.html)
  - [www.irs.gov/charities/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/index.html)
  - [www.irs.gov/publications/p557/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p557/index.html)
- State tax-exempt status at
  - [www.in.gov/sos/business/2426.htm](http://www.in.gov/sos/business/2426.htm)
- Many organizations use a lawyer’s services. The 501c3 designation is required so that
  - 1) the Friends group can legally sell items donated to your organization by the library (IC 36-12-3-5(c); and
  - 2) when the Friends group collects dues or donations, they will be tax-deductible. A tax advisor can furnish more guidance.
- At the same time, work on a constitution and by-laws.
  - Define your dues structure and membership categories.
  - Decide on membership brochure, artwork, and how you will reproduce and distribute the brochure.
  - Begin the publicity campaign in your community. Be sure to involve elected officials, trustees, and other interested parties.
  - Determine a tentative schedule for the first year, in order to involve new members on committees as soon as they join.
  - If fund raising is important, have a campaign in place and set goals. People like to know where their money is going.
  - Set the opening meeting. Plan the program carefully. Have a brief agenda for the first annual meeting.
  - Develop a long-range plan for Friends. Re-evaluate after the first year.
  - For more information and ideas, join the Association of Library Trustees, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF – a division of the American Library Association, ALA), [www.ala.org/altaff/](http://www.ala.org/altaff/)

## **2. How to Revitalize Your Friends Group**

- Define problem areas for group (or board of directors). Confidential phone calls to directors or member dropouts will help.

- Give a party for members and past members only. It should be fun, with refreshments and music. Use any reason for the party: holiday, author, recognition, social evening. A private home will make it special.
- Be sure to include the dropouts and get a little help from many people to ensure attendance. Have various people be responsible for bringing food and necessary articles.
- Send out pre-event and post-event publicity with names and photos. Make the Friends look like a fun and meaningful group.
  - Reevaluate your goals and objectives with the information you should now have.
  - Did you have too broad a mission?
  - Were you stressing fund-raising to the neglect of other activities?
- Reorganize the board of directors, adding positions and breaking down responsibilities so that individuals do not have too great a burden. Enlarge committees.
- Review benefits of membership, making sure they are in line with what your community expects.
- Review communications to members; are they being kept informed? Are you taking advantage of the materials ALTAFF provides through “National Notebook” and “Idea Bank”?
- Consider enrolling of new members as a year-round effort, not limited to a certain period. Be sure brochures are available at every event and at the library desk.
- Be sure to appreciate and recognize efforts of every magnitude. Recognition is of primary importance to volunteers.

## **B. Public Library as a Foundation**

**Providing revenues to the library to enhance services is the most direct and observable activity of a library foundation, but a foundation has other advantages.**

### **1. Benefits of a Library Foundation**

- A foundation can give the library alternatives it usually does not have in its budget structure. Sometimes during a tightly budgeted fiscal year an unplanned opportunity or necessary expense presents itself. A budget has little flexibility, but the foundation may have resources to meet the unforeseen need.
- Many public libraries are limited in the amount of reserve or building funds they can accumulate. A foundation can be used for this purpose without interfering with annual budget proposals or negotiations.
- Another more subtle benefit is that people seem to have confidence in foundations. The word itself provides feelings of safety and security. So does the word “library”. When the two words are used together, and a list of prominent citizens who serve as board members and manage the foundation is added, potential contributors are convinced and willing to give support.

## **2. Forming a Foundation**

Before taking the legal steps to actually organize or establish a foundation for a public library, it is wise to take time to do some planning, decision making and educating.

- The success of a foundation hinges on the performance of the library in the community, the support of the staff and board of trustees for a foundation, and the careful choice of persons to serve as the board of the foundation.
- In addition to acceptance of the concept, the library should identify its roles and develop a mission statement and strategic plan.
- A long-range plan can help identify library needs and provide a sense of purpose to the foundation.
- Many libraries choose to start an account in a community foundation. These URLs lists 97+ community foundations and affiliate funds in Indiana. You can contact them for further information. [www.indianagrantmakers.org/locator/](http://www.indianagrantmakers.org/locator/)  
[www.tgci.com/funding/cfs.asp?statename=Indiana&statecode=IN](http://www.tgci.com/funding/cfs.asp?statename=Indiana&statecode=IN)

## **3. Choosing a Board**

- It is essential that foundation board members be influential residents of the community, able to garner financial support from their contacts and from business and industry, able to personally give financial support, and able to command respect for the library.
- The board should represent a good cross-section of the community.
- Another group to consider is the local Friends of the Library. If an active group exists in the community, consider whether the foundation should be created by the Friends with strong Friends membership on the foundation board, or whether the foundation would function better as an independent association. At least consider appointment of a Friends member to the Foundation Board, along with other civic groups with strong ties to the library.

## **4. Organizational Meeting**

- Once a list of potential foundation board members is selected, it is time to invite them to an organizational meeting. This is a vital moment in the life and success of a foundation.
- First impressions last.
- Outline the needs of the library, as well as the role a foundation and its board can play in fulfilling those needs.
- Be prepared for questions about the library and the perceived need for and value of the foundation.
- Point out how valuable this coalition would be to the community.
- Before they leave, try to gain a commitment from each individual to serve on the foundation board.

## **5. Articles of Incorporation**

Articles of Incorporation should be brief and contain only the most essential facts about the organization. These would include:

- name of corporation
- duration of the corporation
- purpose of the corporation
- address of the corporation
- management of the corporation
- name of the registered agent
- names and addresses of the initial board
- hold harmless clause (for protection for board members)provision of distribution of assets upon dissolution

## **6. Bylaws**

Bylaws are the guidelines and procedures under which the foundation will operate.

They include:

- location of corporation
- members
- meetings
- board of directors
- officers
- executive director
- committees
- fiscal year
- dues
- books and records
- contracts, loans, check and deposits
- dissolution
- amendments
- rules of order
- waiver of notice
- indemnification

## **7. Applying for Tax Exempt Status**

- Once the organization has incorporated with the state, received an employer identification number, and adopted bylaws, it is ready to file for recognition of exemption from federal income tax.

- The magic number at this point is 501(c)(3). Contact the local IRS center for the appropriate forms to complete.
- The forms can be completed while waiting for certification from the state and should be done by or reviewed by an attorney.
- The form asks the following:
  - signature of authorized person
  - employer identification number
  - previous tax returns
  - balance sheet of receipts and expenditures for current and preceding three years or a proposed two year budget
  - description of anticipated activities
  - articles of incorporation
  - bylaws

### **8. Announcing the Foundation to the Public**

Any time after adopting the bylaws, the new foundation may declare its existence and begin receiving contributions.

- The announcement to the public should be planned carefully. All persons involved in the foundation must be committed to the protection of the library's tax support.
- When a necessary and visible item is purchased for the library, the publicity surrounding its arrival can be used as a vehicle to acquaint people with the foundation.
- Each new public library foundation needs to find its own appropriate way of "going public".

### **9. Funding a Foundation**

A new library foundation needs money. There are various methods of encouraging contributions:

- deferred giving
- endowment fund drives
- direct mail
- special events
- raffle
- any other creative fund-raising idea that is legal

**Handouts that can be found on these website:**

- FOIL Group Membership Form:  
<http://www.ilfonline.org/clientuploads/FOIL%20Membership%202013.pdf>
- Indiana Libraries with Foundations and Endowments (updated 2008):  
<http://www.in.gov/library/files/08suppsec2.xls>
- Indiana NonProfits: [www.indiana.edu/~nonprof](http://www.indiana.edu/~nonprof)
- Indiana Nonprofit Resource Network: [www.inrn.org/](http://www.inrn.org/)
- Indiana Counties: Tax Exempt/NonProfit Organizations:  
[www.taxexemptworld.com/organizations/indiana-counties.asp](http://www.taxexemptworld.com/organizations/indiana-counties.asp)