

Keep It Growing!

Strengthening Your Friends of the Library Group

Outline of 2-hour workshop, presented in two program slots
at NYLA Annual Conference, Saratoga Springs NY
Saturday, November 5, 2022

Developed by Lisa C. Wemett for the
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Short Description of Part I:

In this two-part workshop, explore some exceptional ways to engage today's volunteers who are looking for meaningful work that makes an impact on their community, using their well-honed skills and expertise. How can the Friends reimagine their group's leadership, with presidential teams, committees, and task forces to allow volunteers flexibility and reasonable time commitments? Clear expectations, open communications, and delineation of roles for staff, trustees, and community volunteers are all vital. Encouraging leadership development, succession planning strategies, and volunteer recognition each play a role in building meaningful relationships which will help to retain members long-term. Our trainers from the FLS/NYLA Executive Board will emphasize best practices using ideas culled from Friends groups in NYS and beyond. Participants are requested to attend the entire presentation over two program slots, with a short break.

Short Description of Part II:

This is a continuation of the "Keep It Growing" workshop offered in the previous program slot. Come explore some practical systems for volunteer recruitment and engagement in Friends of the Library groups. Membership drives and other tactics for "Friends-raising" will keep your library's Friends group vital, helping to sustain the organization long-term. Networking within your community and constantly sharing your message will revitalize your core supporters and maintain the group's crucial advocacy work for the library. Our trainers from the FLS/NYLA Executive Board will emphasize best practices, using tried-and-true ideas employed by Friends groups in NYS and beyond.

Handouts:

To be sustainable, handouts will not be distributed at these sessions. In most instances, the handouts can be shown briefly in the PowerPoint. None of them are covered in detail in the presentation; they are generally all supplemental materials.

Handouts are listed in order of appearance in the workshop.

The following Keep It Growing handouts are **posted on the FLS Resource Page**, ["Resources for Friends Groups Supporting Small and Rural Libraries"](#) (posted June 2022). **Each handout has a hotlink within the outline.**

Part I:

- Where Can I Learn More About Friends Groups? Resources about Friends of Libraries
- Guidelines for Volunteer Programs Coordinated by the Friends of the Library
- Volunteer Job Description Template
- Sample Volunteer Job Description: Book Sale Sorter and Assistant
- Working Together—Roles and Responsibilities Guidelines

- Keepin' It Friendly! Communications Tips for Library Staff, Trustees, and Friends of the Library
- A Primer on Friends Operating Agreements/Sample Memorandum of Understanding
- Guidelines for Expenditures of Funds Raised by the Friends of the Idyllic Public Library
- Planning for Smooth Transitions: Tips for Friends Preparing for Leadership Succession

Part II:

- "Membership-Raising" - Tips about Memberships for Friends Organizations

The following Keep It Growing handouts will be emailed to the participants after the conference (4 handouts total). ***These are handouts are proprietary to "Keep It Growing" and are not found elsewhere on the FLS webpage.***

Part I:

- Recruiting Today's Volunteers
- Committees and Task Forces for Friends Organizations
- Care and Feeding of Friends: Keeping in Touch and Volunteer Recognition

Part II:

- Catch 'Em in the Library: Membership Drives in the Library

Keep It Growing – Part I

9:30 – 10:45 a.m. - 1¼ hrs.

Handout: [Where Can I Learn More About Friends Groups? Resources about Friends of Libraries](#)

Engaging New and Active Volunteers

- 1) How today's volunteers are different from previous generations
 - a) Retirement and Baby Boomers
 - b) Factors retirees consider before volunteering
- 2) Millennials: ages 19-40 yrs.
 - a) [Millennial Impact Report](#) or the [Case Foundation](#); further details: (https://casefoundation.org/blog/key-takeaways-from-a-decade-of-millennial-research/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIwZD42Mie-wIVSAGtBh1IDQFFEAAYASAAEgK7MPD_BwE)
- 3) Impact of the numbers of both groups and passion for causes
- 4) Doers and "cause engagement"
 - a) Doers volunteer at least once a week
 - b) Personal connection to a cause or charity
 - c) Corporate climate promoting volunteerism to employees
 - d) Re-framing a Friends book sale as a "cause"
- 5) What volunteers want
 - a) provide expertise
 - b) autonomy

- c) see tangible results
- d) finite tasks (a beginning and an end)
- e) work where they are: onsite and virtual
- f) fewer meetings
- g) time commitment in bite-size blocks: micro-volunteering

Proprietary Handout (not posted): Recruiting Today's Volunteers

- 6) Today's volunteers choose how they are engaged with a project they relate to: "free will"
 - a) "Volunteer" is a verb. To volunteer is "to offer one's services freely."
 - b) Flexibility: Volunteers are busy; have less time to volunteer; want to set own schedule
- 7) Clear expectations; written up-to-date job descriptions; procedural manuals; mentoring
- 8) Other large-scale Friends projects involving volunteers on their own schedule (e.g., Adopt-A-Shelf, Internet sales, remainders from book sales)

Handout: [Guidelines for Volunteer Programs Coordinated by the Friends of the Library](#)

Handout: Volunteer Job Description Template

Handout: Sample Volunteer Job Description: Book Sale Sorter and Assistant

[Both of these handouts are Word documents which can be easily customized to any Friends group; the links can be found on the "[Resources for Friends Groups Supporting Small and Rural Libraries](#)" page under Leadership.]

Re-Imagining a Future Friends Group/Leadership Development

- 1) Friends Board becomes a "leadership team"
- 2) Board meetings as strategic planning sessions
- 3) Examining projects – division of labor; manageable chunks of volunteers' time
 - a) Committee Structure
 - b) Task Forces

Proprietary Handout (not posted): Committees and Task Forces for Friends Organizations

- 4) What tasks or volunteer duties need to be done continuously to keep the Friends functioning as a healthy, active organization to assist the library?
 - a) What projects are necessary to continue?
 - b) What's the "return on investment" – volunteer time versus actual revenue received?
 - c) Diversification of fundraising projects
- 5) Goals of the library: building plan/renovation; expansion of services/programs; access to changing technology
- 6) Shift in goals when a project is complete
- 7) Strategic plan for the Friends to provide stability
- 8) Clarify roles and division of labor (governance, operations, volunteer support)

Handout: [Working Together—Roles and Responsibilities Guidelines](#)

- 9) Communications and ex officio liaisons: Friends Liaison to the library's Board of Trustees, Trustee Liaison to the Friends, Staff Liaison to the Friends
- 10) Memorandum of Understanding

Handout: [Keepin' It Friendly! Communications Tips for Library Staff, Trustees, and Friends of the Library](#)

Handout: [A Primer on Friends Operating Agreements/Sample Memorandum of Understanding](#)

- 11) Discussions on using money raised on behalf of the library (not "Friends money")

Handout: [Guidelines for Expenditures of Funds Raised by the Friends of the Idyllic Public Library](#)

Succession Planning

- 1) Why do certain projects continue to work and others are less effective now?
- 2) Growing your leadership – steps to learning the organization
- 3) Succession: what do you do? Locate one volunteer for one task, etc. etc.
- 4) Leadership Teams: co-presidents; FLS webinar resource in NYLA archive

Handout: [Planning for Smooth Transitions: Tips for Friends Preparing for Leadership Succession](#)

Caring for the Members You Have

- 1) Keep in touch
- 2) Current, accurate recordkeeping
- 3) Database/data in spreadsheets
- 4) Provide letters of welcome/thanks for renewing that also inform and recruit
- 5) Value of membership cards; legal requirements for receipts from 501(c)(3) charities for tax-deductible donations
- 6) Communicate group's projects and successes
 - a) email blasts to all members, 2-3 times per year re: Friends activities
- 7) Personal touch – notes on donors' receipt letters

Volunteer Recognition: Care & Feeding of Volunteers

- 1) Annual meeting highlighting various groups
- 2) Awards, recognitions, contests for groups
- 3) Annual luncheon for volunteers
- 4) Social events (teas; soup luncheons; ball games); *esprit de corps*
- 5) Digital signage
- 6) Highlight interviews with members in newsletter or on Friends webpage
- 7) Bricks; bookplates; tribute ads in FLS newsletter
- 8) How do you thank your members?

Keep It Growing – Part II

11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. - 1¼ hrs.

Constant Contact: More About Keeping in Touch

- 1) To both Friends of the Library and community: benefits of membership and group's contributions to the library; publishing annual reports
- 2) No assumption that people actually know Friends' mission and activities
- 3) Newspaper article cumulative book sales total:
<https://www.crandalllibrary.org/support/friends-of-the-library/>
- 4) Webpages: donations; how to join
- 5) Credit to Friends on program fliers
- 6) Pitch for joining at programs
- 7) Name tags and IDs on lanyards for volunteers
- 8) Well stocked supplies of brochures
- 9) Work with staff

Volunteer Engagement and Younger Volunteers

- 1) Number of members; actively engaged volunteers
- 2) Engagement strategies; digital signage
- 3) Friendly and welcoming: not a closed organization
 - a) Publicize schedule of Board meetings (webpage); "open-door" enticement
 - b) time of meetings
 - c) considerations for remote meetings – open meetings/sharing the Zoom link via secure registration
 - d) résumé building skills
 - e) volunteers self-select tasks
 - f) photos and bios on webpage
- 4) Social media presence and influencer
- 5) Volunteer recruitment applications
- 6) Where to recruit
 - a) Career/placement offices on campus
 - b) High school guidance office
 - c) Volunteers who need community service hours (e.g., students, Girl and Boy Scouts)
 - d) Workplace groups (Day of Caring); Greek societies on campus

How to Recruit Today's Volunteers

- 1) How to recruit today's volunteers
- 2) Subliminal messages versus personal ask
- 3) Reaching many people who have a volunteer mindset
- 4) Asking frequently, confidently, and aggressively
 - a) **Role-playing exercise:** Overcoming barriers to our overtures; counteracting resistance
 - b) Working to find a good fit for people's skill set

- 5) Webpage: volunteer application forms online
- 6) Recruitment posters and social media posts
- 7) Membership brochures: check off ways to help; work the forms!
- 8) Volunteer coordinator
- 9) Virtual volunteer recruitment websites (e.g., [VolunteerMatch](#))

Membership-Raising and Dues

- 1) What is a "successful" Friends group?
- 2) Participation rate: number of members divided by community's population = percentage of those residents who are Friends. Is it 1% or more?
- 3) More members = more advocates
- 4) Membership: source of income and base for activities
- 5) Dues structure: levels of membership, [Friends of the Plattsburgh Public Library](#)
- 6) Perks: **What's in it for me?** (WIIFM) – see handout "Membership-Raising" p.3
- 7) Constant, continuous job
- 8) Establishing relationships in community; recruit community leaders
- 9) Determining membership year; rolling enrollment preferred
- 10) Use second reminders to increase renewal rate

Handout: "Membership-Raising" - Tips about Memberships for Friends Organizations

Membership Drives Within the Library Building

- 1) Types of membership drives: patron brochures, mass mailing to community
- 2) Catch 'Em in the Library tactics: staffed table; tie to an event/week/month; gift basket drawing only for new members

Proprietary Handout (not posted): Catch 'Em in the Library: Membership Drives in the Library

Networking Within Your Community/Partnerships

- 1) Resource fair of agencies serving families and children; parents school open house
- 2) Festivals, parades, fairs ([Daniel Pierce Library](#), Grahamsville NY - Giant Pumpkin Party); Friends members serving on community organizing committee
- 3) Booth at Farmers Market; FLS officers' experiences with NYLA's trade show and NY State Fair (engage people: raffle, game, roulette wheel); county fairs
- 4) Fundraising and membership-raising combined: golf tournament; Italian wedding; murder mystery nights; mini golf in the stacks
- 5) Speakers bureau and PowerPoint presentation to service organizations, clubs
- 6) Serving on community boards/Friends liaisons; have a "signature color" for T-shirts, banners, handouts; join the Chamber of Commerce and merchants association (e.g., [The Corner Bookstore](#), Friends of the Fairport Public Library)

Revitalize Your Core Supporters

- 1) What makes a successful volunteer experience?
- 2) Be friendly and open to new members
- 3) Reach out to the community – target your efforts; displays in public spaces (e.g., banks)
- 4) Accept and recognize new ideas and suggestions: experiment!

- 5) Mentor new helpers; job-share
- 6) Increase the use of task forces; involve more members short-term
- 7) Analyze why you do what you do
- 8) Check back to new recruits and thank them

Concluding Remarks

- 1) FLS website – archives of events and newsletters as resources: www.nyla.org/friends
- 2) Join us! www.nyla.org/join
- 3) Mission of the organization will guide your way forward
- 4) Revitalize your group with a win: to sustain the group, focus on the triple bottom line for Friends of the Library groups: leadership, volunteer engagement, strong base of supporters
- 5) Don't overwhelm your group with too many changes/ideas all at once
- 6) Stay positive!
- 7) Teamwork
- 8) Q/A
- 9) Evaluations

Information on FLS Regional Workshops

https://www.nyla.org/4DCGI/cms/review.html?Action=CMS_Document&DocID=2547&MenuKey=fls

FLS has developed two classroom workshops that Friends organizations, libraries, or library systems can sponsor in their region. Our FLS Regional Trainers will travel to your training site to present these programs.

Workshop Descriptions:

Getting Started: Creating and Supporting a Friends Group for Your Library

Is your library thinking about starting a Friends of the Library group and you are unsure where to begin? Does your system want to encourage member libraries to establish Friends groups to expand their advocacy base? Learn the benefits of gathering community volunteers to support your library's programs and services. We'll utilize a checklist to develop your group: recruiting helpers for a steering committee, determining the Friends' mission, expanding membership, and growing the leadership to maintain an active organization.

Keep It Growing! Strengthening Your Friends of the Library Group

Continuing to develop your library's Friends group is vital to sustaining the organization long-term. Get tips on membership recruitment and volunteer engagement. Networking within your community and constantly sharing your message will revitalize your core supporters and help to maintain the group's crucial advocacy work for the library.

Each workshop is two hours in length, using a PowerPoint presentation, sharing among the participants, and a question and answer segment.

For [complete details](#) on hosting and to arrange these workshops in your region of NYS, see the FLS webpage. Contact FLS at FLS.NYLA@yahoo.com