

Minutes of FLS Connections!

Topic: **SignUp.Com and Organizing a Book Sale Crew**

June 16, 2022 4:00-5:15 p.m.

The session had 24+ participants (some logons were multiple viewers) which included 17 Friends of the Library groups from all across the state.

Lisa C Wemett, First Vice President and Coordinator for Professional Development, introduced Laura Brecher and the topic for today's presentation.

Laura explained how she uses SignUp.Com (<https://signup.com>) to schedule volunteers for [The Corner Bookstore](#), a brick-and-mortar store operated by the Friends of the Fairport Public Library. Laura is one of three volunteer co-managers of the store.

While Fairport Friends use the free version of SignUp.Com, which only allows for one administrator on the account, there are other versions with more sophisticated features (e.g., multiple administrators) and options available for a monthly fee. SignUp.Com is easy to use both for the administrator and for volunteers.

Fairport has been using this tool since 2017 to schedule 35 volunteers for the 28 store shifts each week. Volunteers are invited to log-in and sign up to cover the store when it is convenient for them. Volunteers get an automatic reminder of their shift 48-hours in advance. Laura receives emails about unfilled shifts and any cancellations.

Using the site is very intuitive. Some of the features on the website include fundraising ideas and suggestions [see notes below], the ability to generate reports, and a tutorial to help users navigate the site.

Laura also uses SignUp.Com to fill slots on donation days (Mondays, 10-2 only, limiting donors to one bag/box). At the beginning of June, Laura used this tool for the first time to schedule 20 book sale volunteers during Fairport's two-day Canal Days festival. She had a set-up and tear down crews, cashiers, and runners/restock volunteers—50 hours of coverage from beginning to end.

SignUp.Com can be used for any large-scale event needing crews for set-up, staffing, and tear down tasks. Laura can be reached at laurabrech@yahoo.com if you would like to ask specific questions about using this type of account. You may also want to look at the Frequently Asked Questions or videos on the SignUp.Com website: <https://signup.com/Help>

Laura took questions at the conclusion of her presentation:

Do you communicate with volunteers through this site?

Answer: Yes. You communicate with volunteers via email through the website. Laura clarified for David Smallen of the Friends of the Kirkland Town Library that the administrator first shares a link to interested Friends which allows them to log in and sign up for shifts. Once the system is set up, any interested volunteer can respond if they want to help with the event.

If a link is created for one event, does the link stay the same from year to year?

Answer: Yes. Other links can be created for other events, but the link remains the same and connected to that particular event.

Does SignUp give you an opportunity to describe what the volunteer position (responsibilities) would be?

Yes. You can add “extra details” when you create a Spot (a.k.a., Job/Task/Shift) that can give specifics about the position.

Can you have a co-administrator?

Answer: No. Julie Ann Price commented that for the Friends of the East Greenbush Public Library, they use a generic sign-on so they can have co-administrators.

The Friends of the Cornwall Public Library asked **where Fairport gets their volunteers**. Laura pointed out that on the group’s membership form, members can indicate where they would like to volunteer to help the group. Culling emails from those forms created the basis of a list to contact with a message about signing up for the book sale. See a copy of the form from the Friends of the Fairport Public Library attached to these minutes.

Did you have training for the volunteers? (Shirley Roat, Friends of the Macedon Public Library)

Answer: No. The site is very intuitive. If the volunteer needs assistance, they contact Laura for guidance, but with 30+ volunteers, there have been few questions on how to maneuver around the site. One issue is not storing the link to sign in and Laura just sends the volunteer the link again.

Chris Beck uses SignUp.Com at the Fairport Public Library as a volunteer. From a volunteer’s point of view, SignUp.Com is very flexible. Because it is Internet-based, Chris is able to respond when she is available, even when she is out of the area. It’s great!

Laura Brecher mentioned that there is a site called SignUpGenius (<https://www.signupgenius.com>) which is different from SignUp.Com. Julie Ann Price, book sale chair for the Friends of the East Greenbush Public Library, commented that she uses SignUpGenius, which is also free, but notes that SignUp.Com has more features. If she were choosing a service to use now, she would choose SignUp.Com.

Fundraising resources on the site: www.signup.com/nonprofit-fundraising-ideas

Making an annual fundraising plan, ways to find new donors, and fresh ways to acknowledge your donors are all short articles that can inspire you when you want to embrace being a fundraiser. Under the “Fundraising Planning Center,” find ideas for fundraising by season (e.g., fall), via social media, virtual fundraisers, and using Stripe and PayPal for credit card donations. (You do not need a SignUp.Com account to access these articles.)

Lisa Wemett then invited everyone to turn on their cameras and unmute themselves so that they could share their own experiences using SignUp.Com or other methods for organizing Friends volunteers for large-scale events.

Cheryl Ladouceur from Ogdensburg Public Library (<https://ogdensburgpubliclibrary.org/>) commented that their Friends use SignUp.Com for their used bookstore; the previous administrator of the site has left their group. They just ran a very successful "Family Game Day" with many games for young folks. Kids could claim a prize after having their game card punched at a certain number of games which included kickball, croquet, hula hooping, large-scale dominoes, ring toss, etc. They also had "Touch a Truck" and a BBQ. It was a big hit and everyone had lots of fun. Cheryl would like to be able to use SignUp.Com for more events like the one they just held. It works well for the Friends bookstore, and it would be great to create more events on the site. Laura Brecher will reach out to the group and guide them through the process of adding new events on the site.

Shelia Wood from Friends of the Gates Public Library in Rochester uses a phone system to gather volunteers.

Barb Long from Friends of the Penfield Public Library has been using a crew of volunteers to make phone calls to alert volunteers when they are needed. They do one book sale per year in the fall. She will be switching to SignUp.Com. She asked how to know when someone has responded through the site. Laura answered that once the administrator has logged on to the site, the responses are right there. Email is an absolute necessity for this to work.

Adria Ripka, a member of the [Friends of Salina Library](#) in Mattydale (near Syracuse) commented that they are a small library with two book sales a year. They currently use email and telephone to schedule their volunteers.

Karen Sperrazza from the Clayville Library explained that they have a very good group of volunteers that respond whenever they are called. However, they do not want to be in a "Friends group" at the present time. No dues, no meetings, just call me when needed. Leslie Riley mentioned that it took about 10 years for their Friends group at Cornwall Public Library to really get going, so, there is still hope for Clayville Friends!

Paula Yandow-Reilly from the Friends of the Ogden Farmers' Library (west of Rochester) currently sends out an email blast to the Friends when they are needed for an event. While this system has been working, she thinks that SignUp.Com would be better and she plans to begin using the site in the future.

Toni Kowek from Hudson Area Library sends an email blast when volunteers are needed. The message includes an attached sign-up sheet and a poster so everyone can help advertise the event. <https://hudsonarealibrary.org/friends-of-the-hudson-area-library-news/>

Leslie Riley from the Friends of the Cornwall Public Library has not used SignUp.Com. Their Friends-operated bookstore is open 25 hours per week and they have a core group of volunteers who staff it. She is interested in looking further into using this site.

Many thanks to Karen Sperrazza, FLS Immediate Past President, for taking notes on this gathering! We are also grateful to Karen Ash, Friends of the Angelica Public Library, who monitored the "chat" throughout the presentation.