Fundraising
for Friends Groups Supporting Rural and Small Libraries
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General Information
• Events popular in one community may not be popular in other communities
• Use local talent and assets of community members
• Use historical or natural resources in your community

Plan, Plan, Plan
• Check dates for other community events – may want to avoid, or schedule to coordinate with, other community events and festivals
• Make contingency plans for weather if necessary
• Connect with local businesses for donations or financial backing

Advertise, Promote, and Tell Everyone of the Event
• Social media outlets
• Community “hot spots”
• Word of mouth

Organize Volunteers
• Before – set-up
• During
• After – clean-up

Analyze
• What worked and why it worked
• What did not work and why
• Ways to improve the event if you want to repeat it
• Ways to expand the event if necessary

Types of Fundraisers:
• Book sales
• Raffles – possible items to raffle are almost limitless
• Auction – in person, silent auction, or online
• Bake sales
• Fabric sale, chair sale, Pursapalooza (handbags and jewelry). (People who want to support the library will buy almost anything depending on how it’s marketed!)
• Souper bowl cook-off (possibly tie-in to the Super Bowl)
• Food (beer tasting, wine tasting) is almost always a draw to an event or sale

The **Friends of Libraries Section** webpage, [https://www.nyla.org/friends](https://www.nyla.org/friends), has many resources dealing with fundraising, such as FLS webinars and programs presented at **NYLA Annual Conferences** including the perennially popular panels featuring fundraising ideas that do not involve book sales. On the FLS landing page, select **Events** to find links to FLS Annual Meetings, Webinars, FLS Programs at the NYLA Annual Conference, and FLS Friends Groups Meet-ups.

The following is a list by year of sessions from NYLA Annual Conferences which pertain to fundraising:

2014 – Fundraising with Annual Appeals (includes slides and examples of appeal letters from the Crandall Public Library and the Canajoharie Library and Arkell Museum)

2018 – Fundraising Without Book Sales – see inspirational slides in Fund-Raising Seymour from their auction of one-of-a-kind painted chairs, plus handouts on planning a fashion show and “Trunk Treasures” fundraisers by the Friends of the Irondequoit Public Library

2019 – Fundraising Without Books Sales – miniature golf fundraiser by the Friends of the Town of Ballston Community Library, charitable planned giving, and Friends-sponsored travel adventures

2021 – Virtual Conference OnDemand: Fundraising Without Book Sales

**Fundraising Without Book Sales – Suggestions:**

- Set up a targeted program, such as a “Whirl-A-Wish” coin funnel to attract loose change to fund children's programs.

- Attract local business sponsorships with a “Sponsor of the Month” program. For a specified minimum dollar donation (e.g., $500), publicize the business on your website, social media, and in your newsletter. A banner could hang in the library for a month naming and thanking the sponsor, including a statement from the sponsor about the importance of supporting the library.

- Harness the power of online shopping. Amazon Smile gives the charity 0.5% of the transaction when shoppers go shopping through this website. Find out how to register your organization here: [https://org.amazon.com/](https://org.amazon.com/).

- Start a “Clear the Board” initiative. One October, a rural library started a “Clear the Board by Christmas” program. They covered a board with 50 tags, each with a dollar amount from $1 through $50. Supporters took a tag off the board and made a donation. Various promotions were held, and the board was displayed at several library events leading up to the holidays.

- “Pave the Way”—Supporters can buy a paver or edging stones to enhance the library’s landscape or line a new green space like a gazebo and grounds around it.
• Have a Holiday Cookie “Bake-Off.” Everyone brings their best or favorite cookie (perhaps 3 dozen max) plus the recipe. There is a tasting and judging. Put the recipes into a booklet and sell the booklet.

• Start “Pop-Up Book Sales.” Buy the Box: books are pre-packed in boxes by genre (romance, children’s nonfiction, cookbooks, etc.). The whole box is sold, no peeking! The price per box ranges from $3 to $25.

• Offer an incentive for higher levels of giving. Example: One year fine free borrowing to any individual who makes a gift of at least $50 to the annual fund drive. If the donation is $100 or more, the benefit extends to the entire family living at the same address. In the circulation database, patron status is noted as “donor,” so the system cancels fines on items belonging to the library. Exclusions include materials that are borrowed from other libraries, holds that are not picked up, and materials that are lost or damaged.

• Don’t forget to thank donors with more than a letter. Consider holding a reception/open house.

• In responding to the Annual Fund Drive, thank each donor with a notice that they are now a Friend of their library, pointing out that it means no meetings, no dues. It’s a gesture of appreciation.

For more information on fundraising see the links below:

In April 2021, the Central New York Library Resources Council (CRLC) offered a wildly popular webinar on creative projects to raise money for the library in a socially distanced way, Fundraising Without Book Sales. To watch this free webinar in full, you’ll find the link on the CRLC webinar archive page: https://clrc.org/events-education/webinars/ You can also view the presenters’ slides separately.


DoJiggy provides fundraising software for schools and nonprofits. Their website offers ideas on crowdfunding, raffles, walk-a-thons, wine tastings, and silent auctions. https://www.dojiggy.com/library-fundraising-ideas/

https://www.ala.org/united/friends/ideasharing/fundraising

See these FLS Handouts posted on www.nyla.org/friends > Resources for Friends Groups Supporting Small and Rural Libraries > Fundraising:
• Guidelines for Expenditures of Funds Raised by the Friends
• Book Sales: Donations and Remainders

**FLS Friends News and Notes:** Past FLS newsletters have featured articles on fundraising that can provide some guidance and suggestions. Check out these articles on the FLS webpage, [www.nyla.org/friends](http://www.nyla.org/friends) under Publications.

- Fund-Raising Without Book Sales – December 2019, p. 4
- “Fund-Raising Without Books Sales” – auction of decorated chairs (Sit Right Down and Read); Trunk Treasures & Crafts Festival; participating in community garage sales – December 2018, p. 3
- “Friends Meet-Up with FLS Executive Board” includes a baker’s dozen of fundraising ideas – September 2018, p. 6
- “When Book Sales Just Aren’t Enough” featured ideas to implement during the pandemic, socially distant and low risk! – June 2020, pgs. 6-8
- Planned Giving and Legacy Gifts – August/September 2020, p. 5
- When Books Sales Just Aren’t Enough, Part 2; Library Giving Day – March 2021, pgs. 5-7
- Fundraising Beyond the Book Sale – May/June 2021, p. 6 (Recap of the webinar presented by CRLC mentioned above, with many details about Pursapalooza)
- Fundraising Without Book Sales – December 2021, p. 6

**United for Libraries: Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations,** a division of the American Library Association, offers many resources on their website, [www.ala.org/united](http://www.ala.org/united). Some of the information is available by simply visiting the website and some content is only available to members who log-in. FLS/NYLA is a member of United for Libraries. Contact [FLS.NYLA@yahoo.com](mailto:FLS.NYLA@yahoo.com) if you would like our assistance to research a topic on behalf of your group.

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