

POS Focus Group
Friends Groups
March 28, 2006

Issues/Challenges

- Recruitment
 - Getting new members
 - People want to support the group but not with their time
 - New members are usually frequently library patrons
 - Keeping current members
 - Finding group leadership/officers
 - How to capture, attract the non-residents that use the library?
- Publicity
 - Struggle to get local papers to run their event info either at all or with the correct info
- Clarifying the “purpose” of the Friends Group so that it is easier to explain to potential members
 - Do not see themselves as “fundraisers” primarily; see themselves as advocates
- Managing book donations
 - “Inundated”
 - not enough storage space
 - have run out of places to off-load unwanted donations
 - lacking volunteers to sort through donations to prepare for book sale
 - When to just throw out a book?
- Relationship with library board
 - Who decides how to spend the money the Friends have raised for the library?
 - Who makes the wish list?
 - How to deal with a board budgets for a specific amount from the Friends annually?
 - Not all groups have a trustee liaison attend their meetings/not all groups send a liaison to board meetings
 - How to get trustees to support the Friends/attend Friends programming?
- Annual membership meeting ideas
- Legal Questions
 - Association libraries & using the library’s 501C3 status
 - NYS sales tax on book sales
 - Raffles

System Services

- More general publicity about the value of libraries to raise the profile of libraries in the community
 - Promote Friends Awareness Week(?)
 - Negotiate discounted ad space in area papers for Friends
- System-wide effort to attract volunteers/friends to member libraries
 - Link on MHLS web site to help attract Friends and volunteers
- Links on MHLS-managed member web sites to explain how to volunteer and become a Friend
- Would like templates and samples from other groups available to them

- Would like more opportunities to network with other are Friends Groups
 - Quarterly meetings
 - Possibly held around the system
 - Opportunity to swap ideas
- Direct communication from MHLS to Friends
 - Email; Newsletter just for Friends
 - Bulletin