



MHLS RECOGNIZES VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDS

On October 20, 2005 MHLS held its first annual Friends Recognition Event, **FRIENDS MATTER**. Over 75 Friends attended, representing 23 member library Friends groups. Keynote speaker **Doug Roesemann**, current president of Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA), encouraged those present to continue to stand up for their libraries, noting that *“... Libraries are for the people. If the people don’t stand up for libraries, who will?”*

A C R O S S T H E

B O A R D

B U I L D I N G A N E F F E C T I V E F R I E N D S G R O U P

Over 35 MHLS member libraries have an active Friends Group and quite a few more want to start one or revitalize one. MHLS offers consultations to Friends Groups—helping them to form, solidify and grow while also building up other resources to support them, much as we do for trustees. Our goal is to help Friends Groups become stronger, so that our member libraries have the support they need to succeed.

R O L E S

The key to a successful Friends Group is a good working relationship between the Friends and the library’s Board of Trustees, especially clarity and understanding of each other’s roles. In fact, the **Number One** area of conflict that we have observed involves one side or the other overstepping their prescribed roles. Here’s an easy way to understand the roles of the three major stakeholders:

- ◆ The Board of Trustees govern the library, setting direction and policy for the organization and hiring a qualified library director.
- ◆ The director carries out board policy, leading the organization in the direction set by the board and managing the day-to-day operations of the library.
- ◆ The Friends support quality library service through advocacy, fundraising and volunteering in ways that promotes the policies and long-range plan of the library.

G O O D R E L A T I O N S

Friends will be among the library’s strongest allies and advocates. To insure clear communication between Friends and Trustees:

- ◆ Hold an annual meeting with the Friends to establish fundraising and advocacy priorities for the year. Things go smoother when you’re all on the same page.
- ◆ Involve your Friends Group in the long-range planning process. They make a great focus group, often hearing what library services are a priority in the community.
- ◆ Make sure the Friends are aware of your long-range plan. Perhaps your director can walk through the final plan with the Friends’ executive committee to make sure it is clear and to answer any questions they may have.
- ◆ Assign a board liaison to the Friends. This person should attend Friends meetings and report back to the Board.
- ◆ Ask the Friends to assign a liaison to your Board and invite this position to attend Board meetings. Create a place in your Board meeting agenda for a report from the Friends.
- ◆ Make sure the Friends are aware of the library’s policies.
- ◆ Attend Friends events and show your support of their efforts.
- ◆ Join the Friends. Being a member is fine; however, it is not advisable for a library trustee to also serve on the Friends board.

O P E R A T I N G A G R E E M E N T

Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) suggests an “operating agreement” be established as a written document agreed on by the Friends and the library board. The idea behind this document is to codify that all Friends’

gifts (of money, time or talent) match up with the highest needs of the library. Here are some suggestions from FOLUSA as to what considerations should be included in an operating agreement:

- ◆ Will library administration and a Trustee attend all Friends board meetings? Will a member of the Friends executive board attend all Trustee meetings? Will there be an opportunity on each other’s meeting agendas for a report from the visiting liaison?
- ◆ What support will the library give the Friends for publicity, mailings, labor for the book sale, space for the book sale, office space, office staff support, etc.?
- ◆ How will the Friends group be incorporated into the library’s planning process?
- ◆ Are Friends authorized to spend their funds on organizations, agencies, programs or projects that are not directly linked to the library and, if so, under what conditions? This will be included in the mission and bylaws of the Friends group, but it is good to be clear about it upfront. Money spent for other purposes can be a point of contention between the library and the Friends and may even adversely affect the Friends’ 501(c)3 status if significant funds are spent in areas outside the group’s mission.
- ◆ Will the Friends group engage in advocacy campaigns on behalf of the library and, if so, who will be involved in the design and message of those campaigns?
- ◆ What role and authority will the Friends have for developing and implementing programs?

(Excerpted from *Friends and Libraries: Working Effectively Together* © Friends of Libraries USA, Sally G. Reed, Executive Director)

M O R E R E S O U R C E S

FOLUSA provides a number of very helpful resources on their web site, <http://www.folusa.org/>. Especially check out their *Fact Sheets*, linked on the right-hand side of their home page. Here you’ll find tips for starting or revitalizing a Friends group and roles of the Friends board. Membership in FOLUSA grants you access to the password protected “**Friends Zone**” where Friends will find access to great resources like scripts and MP3 files of sample Public Service Announcements that can be used to create a publicity campaign. There is also an extensive toolkit for starting or revitalizing a Friends group, sample volunteer applications, and special deals for Friends to help with publicity and fundraising.

MHLS provides a number of resources for libraries hoping to start a Friends group and for Friends groups themselves. Check out the Friends section of the MHLS web site at <http://midhudson.org/funding/fundraising/friendsgroups.htm>. Many FOLUSA links are listed here along with: sample mission statements and bylaws; tax exemption information; recruitment materials and resources to help a Friends group fulfill their responsibilities. New to the site are MHLS area Friends groups with web sites and volunteer management resources.

The MHLS **Friends & Fundraising Listerv** is devoted to helping library staff, trustees and Friends of member libraries learn about fundraising trends, ideas and opportunities. This list is also a great place to ask your questions

and connect with others in the area. To join this list, contact Rebekkah SmithAldrich, Coordinator of Member Information, rsmith@midhudson.org.

MHLS also offers a menu of consultations for Friends to choose from, just like we do for Trustees. Options include: *Advocacy 101*, *fundraising*, *bylaws and policy review*, *long-range planning* and *running effective meetings*. Check out the full listing at http://midhudson.org/funding/fundraising/Friends/consultations_fr.htm. As always, if you don't see what you need just give us a call!

Friends have the same goal that Boards have—to help make the library a *viable*, *vital* and *visible* organization in the community. You can help them support you in making the most of the library for patrons by understanding their role and yours, facilitating regular communication and saying *thank you*.

New resources for Trustees are now available on the MHLS web site, <http://midhudson.org/trustee/main.htm>:

(1) The 2005 edition of the Handbook for Public Library Trustees of New York State is now available. Visit the Trustee Resources section of the MHLS web site to access an online version of the handbook, or contact Rebekkah Smith Aldrich at x39 or rsmith@midhudson.org to obtain a print copy.

(2) MHLS staff recently made a presentation at the New York Library Association Conference in Buffalo, New York: "Board Leadership Begins with You: Tips and Techniques for Good Trustee/Director Relations." Handouts from the session are available on the Trustee Resources section of the MHLS web site.

SAVE THE DATE...

... for the New York Library Association (NYLA) Advocacy Day on **MARCH 14, 2006** at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, Meeting Room 6, Albany, New York. Trustees and Friends are the *Number One* advocates that State Legislators want to hear from on Library Advocacy Day. By sharing your passion for your library you can effectively deliver the message that libraries matter to policymakers. MHLS makes the day as simple as possible for those who choose to speak up for library and system funding:

♦ **Transportation is arranged.** Watch the MHLS Bulletin, the MHLS **Advocacy Network** e-mail list (<http://www.midhudson.org/MHLS/listserv/listservs.htm>) or **Advocacy Central** (<http://midhudson.org/funding/advocacy/main.htm>) for seat reservation information. Pick-up points along the NYS Thruway usually include: Newburgh, New Paltz, Kingston and Saugerties.

♦ **Driving?** Maps for parking and the Concourse Level will be available at **Advocacy Central**.

♦ **Meetings** with all 13 MHLS service area legislators are set up by MHLS staff, avoiding conflicts between overlapping Senators and Assemblyman. The schedule will be posted at **Advocacy Central**.

♦ **Talking Points** are provided. An MHLS staff person will be at each meeting to make sure all points are covered.

♦ **MHLS staff** is on-hand to guide you through the day and help you find your way around the capitol.

SO START RALLYING THE TROOPS. Trustees, volunteers, Friends, home-school families, community leaders, school groups and other library supporters are all welcome in this effort. Contact Rebekkah at rsmith@midhudson.org or 845.471.6060 x39 for more information.

2005 TRUSTEE SUCCESS STORY RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

The 2005 Trustee Success Story Recognition Award Winners were each awarded \$200 for their library at the MHLS 46th Annual Meeting on Friday, October 14, 2005 at the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park. The winners exemplify admirable public library Trustee qualities and have all demonstrated, in different ways, what it takes to make a library viable, vital and visible in our communities.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...



COLUMBIA COUNTY Dorothy Bowes, Philmont Public Library. Dorothy has been a Philmont Library Board Trustee for three years. Her willingness to work in "any capacity" to help the library has been a "steadying force" and inspiration to staff and fellow trustees. Together with a husband and wife team of local history buffs, Dot helps to design display cases for the library that are not only attractive but give Philmont's residents fond remembrances of days gone by.

These displays continue to draw large audiences and have done much to increase library patronage.



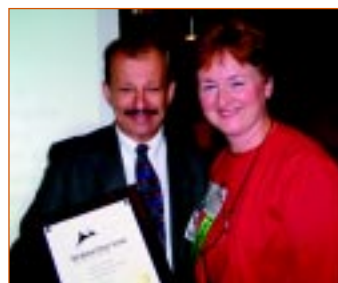
DUTCHESS COUNTY Anne Collins, Millbrook Free Library. Anne has served on the Millbrook Free Library Board for nine years. During her tenure as Board President she has accomplished quite a bit, leading the library through a \$2.5 million Capital Campaign; overseeing a major building renovation and expansion project; and working with the other Trustees on a successful 414 campaign in 2003, which resulted in tax support from

the Town of Washington for the first time in the library's 100-year history. Anne has also worked tirelessly on numerous fundraising projects over the years, including overseeing two annual fund drive letters a year.



GREENE COUNTY Maureen Forrester, Cairo Public Library. Maureen has served as a Trustee on the Cairo Public Library Board for 15 years. Her consistent dedication and service to the library is evidenced by her service as long-term Secretary of the Board, Treasurer of the Friends Group, and member of the Quilters (which does fundraising for the library). In addition, she continues to

organize and manage every book sale, and to volunteer to help with any projects undertaken by the library. Maureen is supportive of library staff and professional development and works to encourage other volunteers. Her dedication serves as an inspiration to all.



PUTNAM COUNTY Martin Miller, Patterson Library. Martin served as head of the library's successful 414 campaign in 2001. As a result, the library attained secure funding for the first time in its 50-year history and local library funding increased by 230 percent. Again, in 2004, under Martin's guidance the library placed a second budget proposition before the voters. This effort resulted in a 150

percent increase in library funding. Presently, the Patterson Library Board is embarking on an expansion project with the intention of increasing library space to at least 15,000 square feet. Mr. Miller sets a wonderful example for all library Trustees and encourages them to fully participate in improving the quality of library service for patrons.



ULSTER COUNTY Edwin Pell, Ph.D., Kingston Library. For over a year, Dr. Pell has sought artists, curated exhibits, and assisted in the publicity and implementation of a monthly exhibit of artwork on the walls of four main rooms of the Kingston Library. The exhibits enrich the environment of library patrons, give a venue to established and new and emerging artists, showcase a variety of

art styles, and provide an education into esthetics, design, color, content and spirit.

START THINKING NOW about who you might like to nominate for this annual award. Entries will be judged on (1) what the result was for the library, and (2) how easily this effort can be replicated.

Applications should be in the form of a letter, two pages maximum, to the Trustee Services Committee c/o Peggy Winn at MHLS stating (1) the name of the person being recognized; (2) the name and address of the library, name of the county and the director's name; (3) a description of the successful effort. Back-up documentation, if available, should also be submitted; for example, news releases, published articles, photographs.