

## **Title: Pre-Conference: Show Me the Money: Fundraising for Your Library**

### **Presenters:**

- Sally Reed, executive Director, Friends of Libraries USA
- Carol Eckart, Friends of the Salem Public Library
- Betty Coykendall, Friends of the Farmington Library
- Patty Foley, Friends of the Lucy Robbins Wells Library, Newington,

**Sponsor:** Friends of Connecticut Libraries

**Reporters:** Mary Engels, Louise Brundage

Keynote speaker Sally Reed, executive director of Friends of Libraries USA, has been an admirer of library Friends throughout her entire career as a librarian. In each of the libraries that she has directed she has seen that Friends make all the difference in enabling a library to connect to its community. Her passion for Friends and their efforts on behalf of their libraries was evident to the audience of nearly 100 Friends, librarians and trustees who attended this pre-conference.

The overriding theme of Reed's address was the connection between Friends' fundraising and effective advocacy for their libraries. Every fundraising project shows the community what an important role the library plays and how vital a part of the community the library is.

"Right now we are at a crossroads," said Reed. "Friends need to make their voices heard in support of libraries. The more fundraising you do the better advocates for libraries you are."

She recommended that Friends have an annual mini-strategic planning session with library staff and trustees to talk about library services, what's happening in their community, and then come up with a vision and goals for the coming year. Friends need to be educated about what's going on in the library in order to provide effective support.

Reed then encouraged audience members to share their fundraising success stories with one another. We heard about a variety of fundraisers, from a heritage wall to a parade of pooches; from commemorative bricks to goods and services auctions; from a wine tasting to an evening of shopping to benefit the library. The importance of having fun while fundraising was highlighted again and again.

According to Reed, "The best fundraising is in advocacy. It is the gift that keeps on giving. Once you are successful advocates for better funding in the library's regular budget, future library appropriations build upon that." She reminded the audience to emphasize that money Friends raise is to "complement" the budget, not lessen the amount budgeted by the town.

Reed's keynote was the perfect way to kick off an entire day of conversations about Friends activities, and a panel session to discuss recruiting Friends followed. Carole Eckart reported that Salem PL doubled its membership by adding two new suggested amounts to donate. They added perks such as early entrance to their book sale, and required book dealers to join the Friends. Betty Coykendall, Farmington Library, said that her library sends membership invitations with return envelopes by bulk mail, and they send monthly town calendars and two newsletters to current members. Every three or four years they send recruitment letters to the whole town, using the assessor's list and new names from realtors. Patty Foley said that the Lucy Robbins Wells Library in Newington, recruits at the polls and sends special brochures to potential new members.

Panel discussions on book sales and grant writing, and a display of items sold by Friends followed in the afternoon. Be sure to check out the detailed reports on these sessions at

[www.ctlibraryassociation.com](http://www.ctlibraryassociation.com). They are filled with dozens of useful tips and ideas from Friends groups across the state.

**Title:** Preconference: Show Me the Money. How To Become A Grant-Writing Guru

**Presenters:**

- Laurie Rayner, Director, Heritage Programs, CT Humanities Council
- Jennifer Eifrig, Assistant Director, Heritage Programs, CT Humanities Council
- Seth Godfrey, Jobs and Nonprofit Services Librarian, New Haven Free Public Library

**Sponsor:** Friends of CT Libraries

**Reporter:** Peggy Brissette

Grant writing is becoming increasingly important for libraries and Friends groups, alike, although many groups are unsure of where to start or how to go about this important process. Laurie and Jennifer offered many ideas on how to write a successful grant, as well as giving many resources on where to go for prospects. Much of their presentation consisted of questions – the kind each group must ask itself as it contemplates applying for a grant, as well as many others as the process continues. Why apply for a grant? How much time do you have? Do you have people in place to carry out the project and write the grant? Which funder to approach? Who is involved? What will happen as a result of your project being completed? Jennifer stated grants are successful because they are the right idea, right time or right place, or perhaps just luck. These are often out of the control of the grant writers. The top reasons grants are not approved include: your proposal did not follow the guidelines or was a mess, it was wrong for the funder, the strategic importance was unclear or the evaluation strategy was not clearly thought out. These factors are all under the control of the writers and it is imperative that you do your homework before you sit down to write. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the geographic and programmatic priorities of the funder, read the guidelines and follow them, and make personal contact before submitting a proposal or letter of intent. Write clearly – have someone not associated with the project read your proposal and see if it makes sense. Be sure your proposal is perfect before you submit it. When asked if a group should apply to more than one funder at the same time, Jennifer answered “it depends”: most funders talk to each other and sometimes it can benefit a group to look for support from several places, if the project is large enough. Know your funders – some want to be sole source of funding, others don’t. Occasionally groups don’t communicate within their own building; you should be sure that you are not in competition with the director or the staff for funding and it might be helpful to include a recommendation letter from the director stating approval of the proposal.

Seth Godfrey spoke about his position in the New Haven Free Public Library, a city with at least 1,000 non-profit organizations. He detailed specific library resources for grant services, including knowledgeable library staff and the need for continual cross training, specific databases (which can be expensive), and the benefit of 1:1 tutorials to help grant seekers. Special collections of books and periodicals are useful in a balanced collection. He recommended offering workshops as a great way to present a different face of the library in the community and a good way to bring new people into the library.

Information about specific websites and databases presented will be included on the FOCL website.

**Title:** Show Me The Money – The Latest and Greatest Merchandise That Groups Sell

**Presenter:** Peggy Brissette, Friends of Mystic & Noank Library

**Sponsor:** Friends of CT Libraries

**Reporter:** Peggy Brissette

An email request for information about what different Friends groups sell was sent out to over 100 groups in February. Based on information received from 30 groups, Peggy prepared a spreadsheet containing the answers, which are as varied as the groups are from one another. As someone from a Friends group that sells several items, the biggest surprise was that not all groups have items for sale. Many groups only hold book sales. Some groups are in transition, being newly formed or their libraries are being renovated so they might offer something at a later date. Some groups offer promotional items such as bookmarks or pens for free. Many groups offer bags, although they also vary in size, shape, price and vendor; one group offers them as a convenience, not a big money maker. Most groups offer items for sale near the circulation desk and have the library staff collect money in envelopes for them, although some groups have their own stores or corners for display. Friends groups have tried several items that seemed like a good idea but were not successful sellers, or perhaps the first order sold well and following orders were less popular; being resourceful, groups either reduced prices, or offered the items in another form, perhaps as prizes or gifts for new cardholders. Many groups offer the same items every year, while others vary their items; one group attends a Gift Show in New York City and offers a wide variety of items that change continuously. Some groups bring out new designs, for tee shirts as an example, while others hold with the tried and true. Each Friends group is unique and offers what works best for them, their library and their community, which makes it great fun to visit different libraries and see what others do. Several groups brought items for display and attendees enjoyed checking out the variety of merchandise offered. Handouts were distributed containing information received from 30 Friends groups; this information will be posted on the FOCL website.

**Title:** Show Me The Money – Book Sales That Make Big Bucks

**Presenters:**

- Carolyn Aho, Friends of the Canton Library
- Charmaine Glew, Friends of the Simsbury Library
- Mimi Greenlee, Friends of the Westport Library

**Sponsor:** Friends of CT Libraries

**Reporter:** Peggy Brissette

Book sales are associated with Friends groups. Much about book sales is the same from one group to the next but because not all libraries are the same size or in the same types of communities, there was something to be learned from each presenter.

Carolyn Aho, representing a small library, discussed the particulars of how her group negotiates within a small building with shared spaces. They hold no programs in July or August, using their meeting room to sort books into 42 different categories. They can only collect books during this time period, which is limiting, but they use their time and space well. They discard many books directly into a dumpster, to keep discards from coming back. The day before their sale, they load up books on carts and take them to the sale room after a previous group finishes up. They hold a preview sale, charging \$10 admission, followed by the main sale on Saturday and a \$5/plastic bag sale on Sunday. The room must be clear by Monday and one person takes left-over books to a prison, and others go to a Hands Across the Water container. Their sales have increased from \$2,600 in 2002 to \$9,300 in 2006, after expenses, which is impressive.

Charmaine Glew, representing a medium sized library, presented the top ten list for book sales: #10 – location. Main St. in Simsbury gets heavy traffic, great for signs about collection dates and sales. #9 - triple looks, with books being discarded because of poor condition/odor, age/condition/value and a third look to be sure nothing of value slips by – they collect around 120,000 books and discard two-thirds to offer 40,000 for sale. #8 – handling discards, sending most to the dump and others sent to Hands Across the Water container at the end of the sale. #7 – categories, with 30 for non-fiction alone. #6 – good publicity, handled by one designated person. #5 – dealers. They assign designated helpers to each dealer to facilitate process. #4 – fair and reasonable pricing in an attempt to make as much money and get rid of as many books as possible. They have an \$8 grocery bag sale at the end. #3 - volunteers are essential. They have a crew of 12 faithful and 20-40 others to sort, and use the high school crew team to move books to sale location. #2 – coordination, with two coordinators to assign day, time and function to 150 volunteers on sale day. #1 – having fun. It is hard work but very worthwhile. Last year this sale raised \$25,000.

Mimi Greenlee, representing a large library, provided pictures of how her group raised \$80,000 at their July sale last year. All numbers were impressive – 25,000 attend the sale, 80,000 books were displayed, 64,000 books sold, 250 tables used, 300 volunteers for 7 day set up, 4 day sale, 700 ft. snow fencing, bags – 12,000 paper, 1,000 plastic – and the pictures clearly demonstrated exactly how this event occurs from beginning to end. Organization, communication, and energy are essential!