

FUN-Raising: Big and Small Ideas on Ways to Raise Funds, Friends, and Have Fun Along the Way

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**United
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Association of Library Trustees,
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A division of the American Library Association

United for Libraries resources on fundraising:

- *The Voice for America's Libraries*, a bimonthly newsletter full of best practices and great ideas for Trustees, Friends, and Foundations (plus digital access to all archived issues).*
- Access to digital publications, including 101+ *Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends* and *Even More Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends*.*
- *The Good, the Great, and the Unfriendly: A Librarian's Guide to Friends Groups* by Sally Gardner Reed (available for purchase at a discount to United for Libraries and ALA members through the ALA Store).
- Networking opportunities with other fundraisers through email discussion lists for Friends, Foundations, and State Friends groups (coming soon: online communities via ALA Connect).
- Access to the recording of the "FUN-Raising" program at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference (free to conference registrants — visit www.eventscribe.com/2017/ala-annual/index.asp, log in, select "Sessions with Audio," then select "UNITED" as ALA unit and submit).

For more information United for Libraries, visit www.ala.org/united, call (800) 545-2433, ext. 2161, or email united@ala.org.

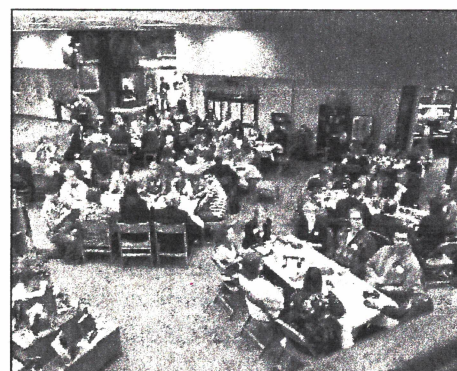
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Friend-Raiser: The Art of Books

Every spring the Library Foundation for the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library (Bismarck, N.D.) holds an event to thank their donors and to draw people to the library. Last year, the event was called "The Art of Books." Local artists created art depicting images from books or inspired by books. The Friends then held a silent auction to sell the items. The Foundation takes 30 percent and the artist gets 70 percent.

The event draws an audience of about 100-120. The event is fairly casual and includes pizza, locally-brewed beer, wine and a dessert (chocolates) table. People can wander around, eat, visit, listen to music and view and bid on the art.

The Friends also do a trivia event with a local company that hosts great trivia events. At that time, people all gather at tables and form teams for the trivia.



Crowdfunding for Friends of the Library

BY CHARLES HANSON

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What is crowdfunding?

The most common definition of crowdfunding is “the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the internet.”

Why use crowdfunding?

In 2016, the board of the Friends of the Library and Archives (FOLA) at Kettering University in Flint, Mich., made a decision to change the strategy for fundraising from a membership-focused organization to a donor-focused organization. Crowdfunding lends itself well to fundraising projects that are narrow in scope, and where donors can see the impact of their gifts. It is generally a low-cost and low-effort way to invite your audience to give and is very convenient for donors. It also gives us a way to reach out to a much larger group to solicit support for the library and potentially discover new donors. With the assistance of staff in the University Advancement Office, FOLA began its first crowdfunding campaign during Love Your Library month in February 2016.

What were our steps to implementing crowdfunding?

- We selected and set up a crowdfunding page utilizing the platform GiveCampus so people could give electronically (www.givecampus.com).
- We decided upon a timeline, limiting our campaign to one week, and chose a realistic and attainable goal.
- We created a compelling video, less than 60 seconds in length, that told a story and included “an ask” (www.givecampus.com/schools/KetteringUniversity/love-your-library).
- We developed an outreach strategy, raising awareness through e-blasts

and social media.

- In advance of the launch, we asked our Friends of the Library board members to visit the site and explore the tools they could utilize to promote giving and encourage advocacy.
- During the campaign, we shared regular updates to maintain enthusiasm with our board members.

We tied this campaign to February’s “Love Your Library” theme, and even designed a specific logo for it. The library hosts an annual Valentine’s Reception, so we tie into that as well. Last year we kicked the campaign off with the party. This year we concluded the campaign at the party, and asked students to pose for photos holding up signs to thank our donors. We will use the photos in personalized email thank you messages as well as on university social media.

What were the results of crowdfunding?

In 2016 we set a goal of \$5,000 for our crowdfunding campaign, and we came very close to achieving that goal during the week-long posting of the site. We just completed our second year and reached a little over 50% of our new goal of \$6,000.

As we look back and compare the income raised with our previous membership-based model, we saw a 250% increase in donations using crowdfunding in 2016 compared to membership revenue in 2015. Although we fell short of our goal in 2017, we still saw a 128% increase in funds as compared to 2015.

We will debrief the most recent campaign as a board and continue to refine our approach. Crowdfunding is new to us, so we are still in the discovery phase of what works best for our audience. Our plan is to keep using this tool for at least a few more years in the hope that with improved peer-to-peer interaction and greater brand recognition, the Love Your Library campaign will gain momentum.

Friends of the Queen Anne’s County (Md.) Library host first-ever adult spelling bee

Chthonic — that’s the word that made the Wanna Bees the winner of the first-ever Friends of Queen Anne’s County (Md.) Library Adult Spelling Bee on Thurs., Oct. 20. The Friends challenged local teams to “bee” the best speller in the county!

Ten teams of intrepid spellers competed, including the Autocorrectors, sponsored by the Gunston School; Book Bees, sponsored by the Library Books in Bars Discussion Group; Centerville Town Clown-cil, sponsored by the Town of Centreville; Eddie and the Miz Spellers, sponsored by the Queen Anne’s County Library Centreville Library, and Rockin Rotarians, sponsored by the Centreville Rotary; Service above Spelling, sponsored by the Centreville Rotary; Spellbound Sisters, sponsored by the Kent Island Yacht Club Book Club; Spellcasters of “Bee” Long Point Road, sponsored by the Long Point Road Book Club; Symphony Village Queen Bees, sponsored by the Symphony Village Outreach; and Wanna Bees, sponsored by the Queen Anne’s County Library Board of Trustees.

The final round came down to two teams: the Wanna Bees and the Autocorrectors. After 28 words each team spelled correctly, the deciding word, chthonic, which was defined as “of or relating to the underworld,” enabled the Wanna Bees to take home bragging rights and well-deserved ribbons.

With 10 teams participating, everyone enjoying spellbinding treats and elegant elixirs, and lively bidding on library-themed raffle prizes, the Friends of Queen Anne’s County Library raised over \$1,900 to benefit the library’s programs and services.

Over 60 “bee watchers” were in the audience cheering their favorite team. Some audience members wore tee shirts of their favorite team and others held up placards when their team was announced. It was impossible to determine which team brought the loudest cheering section.

Fundraising

Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit program where Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organizations selected by their customers. Friends groups can and should register as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit with this program. Simply search "Sign up charity Amazon Smile."

Ithaca, N.Y.

Tompkins County Public Library Foundation invites the community to Help us build a 21st Century Library one LEGO brick at a time! Beginning in May, The Tompkins County Public Library, with the community, will be building a 6-foot by 6-foot LEGO model of their reimagined library, featuring the soon-to-be-constructed new teen center and 21st century learning lab. The first project of its kind in a public library in the county, the TCPL LEGO Build will bring together library lovers and LEGO enthusiasts of all ages to support the 21st Century Library Campaign. For every \$50 each person or team raises, they get to build one module. Each module will represent a part of the library. When it's all done, roughly 100,000 bricks will be assembled together, module by module, to create a model of their public library.

Portland, Ore.

During the month of March, the Friends of the Multnomah County Library partnered with a local department store, Toms, which hosted a book drive to support Friends. The public was invited to drop by and drop off donations anytime during store hours. Those who donated a book received 15% off their purchase! A great partnership for a favorite store or business in any community.

Oklahoma

Chocolate was the theme of two recent fundraisers in Oklahoma. The Friends of the El Reno Carnegie Library sponsored a chocolate festival to

benefit the renovation of the historic Carnegie Library. They provided chocolate treats, take out chocolate, cash bar, and a live jazz band. Tickets were \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. Elsewhere in Oklahoma, the 10th Annual Friends of the Mustang Library Chocolate Festival was held at the town center. An array of chocolate treats were on hand for attendees to taste or to purchase as gifts. Tickets were \$8 for eight tastes. Children were invited to decorate their own cupcakes. Winners were chosen by popular vote and announced before the end of the evening. A silent auction was also held. Proceeds supported the library's summer reading club.

Phoenix, Ariz.

The Friends of the Phoenix Public Library made an online end-of-the year appeal to their members. Here's what they said:

"Over the last few weeks, we've shown you some great, easy ways to support your local libraries at no cost to you [by shopping through their online store] or by shopping at our bookstore. But if you love what Phoenix's public libraries do for our community and you're in a position to make a financial gift to literacy this holiday season, we graciously ask you to consider making that donation today.

Your tax deductible donation to the Friends of the Phoenix Public Library provides funding for the library programs and services that make our community stronger. In 2014, your generosity allowed us to support more than 500 programs across Phoenix's 17 public libraries – such as the Stuffed Animal Sleepover at Cesar Chavez Library, Read-to-Me Dog programming at Cholla Library, and software to help the College Depot staff track their students."

A donate button was highly visible to provide for easy online giving along with what each \$20, \$30, etc., donation would buy for the library.

Rochester, N.Y.

The community in Rochester is invited to remember someone by publishing their name on the Giving Tree. The Giving Tree is a huge metal sculpture that is mounted right near the front door of the library. Donors are asked to fill out a Giving Tree Donor form and make a minimum donation of \$1,000 to include their honored recipient on the Tree. In addition there is also a Donor Bookshelf lined with donated engraved book spines. Those who'd like to "publish" a book, are asked to download a Book Spine Donor Form.

St. Paul, Minn.

The Friends of the St. Paul Public Library held a "Get Loud at the Library Event." Loud at the Library had everything to love — live music and craft beer — in an unexpected venue: the middle of the library. Attendees were asked to bring their library card and photo ID to receive a free beer courtesy of sponsor Summit Brewing! In between bands, there was a tour the library's Innovation Lab that has a 3D printer and even a sound studio. The best part? Attendees were supporting their community — proceeds benefitted the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library. Tickets were \$5 or members, \$10 for non-members.

Portland, Ore.

This past Mother's Day, the Multnomah Library Foundation held a fundraising campaign called "A Labor of Love," saying that as children, we are shaped and inspired by the adults in our lives. Through example and instruction, we learn how to better ourselves, make use of our talents and navigate challenges in life. For many of us, the most inspirational adult in our childhood was a parent or teacher. They nurtured and inspired us, helping us to become who we are today. This year, Mother's Day and Teacher Appreciation Week fell within days of each other. It was the perfect opportunity to honor those

who helped us grow. Donors could honor the person who inspired them to learn with a tribute gift to the Library Foundation. Gifts supported Multnomah County Library's literacy programs. Donors had the option of their honoree receiving a note telling them of the gift.

Charleston, S.C.

The Friends of the Charleston Public Library teamed up with a local restaurant to raise money for the library. Guests were invited to "sip specialty drinks for a good cause." Cocktails included the Muscadine Mojito, and half the proceeds went to the Friends. During the event, the Friends also offered books for sale at \$1 for a paperback and \$3 for a hardback.

Mountville, Pa.

The Friends of the Mountville (Pa.) Branch Library held a very successful used costume jewelry sale. The idea was borrowed from the Friends of the Oro Valley (Ariz.) Library, who recently held their second annual costume jewelry sale. Each of these Friends groups has a sister in common that Skyped across the country about the jewelry idea. The Friends of the Mountville Branch Library



The Foundation of the Ironquoit Public Library (Rochester, N.Y.) is raising money for their new library by offering patrons and supporters to purchase a leaf for \$1,000 that will become part of a beautiful and permanent sculpture. The names of the donors will be inscribed on each leaf.

solicited donations of used costume jewelry from the public and were showered with beautiful (mostly!) used jewelry. The jewelry was then priced individually, with a knowledgeable Friend who makes jewelry overseeing their pricing. The jewelry was very reasonably priced and displayed in interesting ways for the enthusiastic shoppers. Not only did the sale raise much-needed funds of \$2,100, the Friends and their numerous shoppers had a great time.

Los Angeles, Calif.

The Library Foundation of Los Angeles presented their annual "Stay Home and Read a Book Ball," a "non-event" featuring chair Louise Steinman. Participants were invited to read "in a tent with a flashlight in hand, in the middle seat on an airplane, curled up on a papasan..." and suggested attire was "maybe paisley or stripes or polka dots or plaid..." Donors could give on levels from \$25 to \$1,000, and were invited to let others know how they were celebrating via social media.

Newington, Conn.

Friends of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library held a "Bakeless Bake Sale" for two years, raising \$1,380 in the first year and \$1,045 in the second. The group asked for donations in lieu of baked goods.

Cupertino, Calif.

Cupertino (Calif.) Library Foundation featured "90 Reasons to Love Your Library" on its blog. The Foundation asked library supporters to donate \$1 per reason that resonated with them to the library via the PayPal link on the website, and to share why they #LoveYourLibrary with a comment on the blog.

Wine Toss for WiFi in Manchester

When the Manchester City Library turned 100 in 2014, the Foundation sponsored a number of events to celebrate – including a visit by best-selling author Dennis Lehane and a successful open house in November. Another year passed since then and in order to revitalize the Foundation after that successful and busy year, it was time to raise money and bring the library-loving community back together.

Enter the "Wine Toss for WiFi" event held in the fall of 2015. Library Director Denise van Zanten came up with a simple and effective idea – why not have a wine toss in the big and beautiful rotunda of the library? With donations of wine from a local winery and from members of the board, all that was left was to provide refresh-

ments and send out invitations to the donor list and to the general public.

Once the rotunda was decorated with lots of wine-toss stations, the attendees were invited to buy three rings for \$5. When the ring dropped over the neck of the bottle, the lucky winner got to keep the bottle of wine. The event was short and yet raised several thousands of dollars from the approximately 100 people who attended.

The event is being planned for another year. What is being done differently? Denise reported that they will be seeking corporate underwriters for the event and also having it catered so the consumption of wine would be permitted under New Hampshire state law. Denise also gives acknowledgement to the Foundation president, Matt Johnson who is always willing to give new ideas a try!