

fact sheet #6

for Friends and Foundations

HOW TO ORGANIZE A FRIENDS OF A SCHOOL LIBRARY GROUP

A Friends group can have a truly positive impact on the school library or media center. Friends can provide a source of volunteers, a source of additional funding, and can be an effective pressure group when the library's funding is threatened.

1. If you are an interested parent or faculty member wanting to start the group, be sure to include and get the support of the librarian before proceeding. The librarian should be involved in all aspects of the planning process.
2. Determine the primary purpose for starting the group. For example, this might be to create a volunteer core for the library. The primary purpose, however, should not eliminate other avenues of activity such as fundraising, programming, and advocacy. Let your mission help you determine who best to recruit for a steering committee: parents, student leaders, faculty, or all of the above and begin recruiting members who will be active leaders and volunteers of the group.
3. Meet with the school librarian so he or she can acquaint the group with the basic philosophy and requirements for an effective library program. He or she should explain policies and procedures as well as pertinent state and national standards.
4. Meet with the school's administration to get their approval and support.
5. Define the organizational structure for the group. Create a strategic leadership team to determine what activities will be needed to accomplish your goals and who best to lead each task forces to carry out these activities.
6. Develop a dues structure that will allow students to participate at a very low level and community business leaders to contribute at much higher levels with incremental levels in between.
7. Embark on a membership campaign. This might include a direct mailing to parents, handouts for student membership in the library, and a special invitation to join for faculty members. Have students create a social media campaign. Target community business leaders for a "special" category of membership. Be sure to solicit volunteers for "active" membership and follow up.

8. Keep the group active through regular meetings and fun activities that will benefit the library and give it high profile within the school and in the community.
9. Join United for Libraries to get access to Toolkit #2, “How to Start a School Library Friends Group,” along with a host of other materials!

United for Libraries

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