

fact sheet #14

for Friends and Foundations

FRIENDS BOARD DEVELOPMENT

The quality of a Friends Board will determine the quality of the group. The Friends Board will set the tone for fundraising, inclusiveness, programming, and the quality of the relationship between the library and the Friends. Ideally, the board should act as a strategic leadership team to plan activities for the year and set up task forces to accomplish its goals. Here are a few tips on ensuring that your Board is as good as it can be.

1. Your constitution and bylaws should outline the composition of the board (officers and committee chairs, e.g.) as well as terms of office and how committee chairs and task forces are appointed. If your by-laws don't require terms of office, seriously consider amending them to do so. Established terms of office and rotation of leadership are vital to a dynamic organization.
2. Though turnover of a portion of the Board should occur periodically and should be a part of the by-laws of the organization, good members can be retained by membership on task forces or by asking them to serve again after a lapse of a year or two.
3. Develop job descriptions for all Board positions and consciously review the roles and responsibilities of the Board each year as changes occur on the Board and within the library institution.
4. The context of the mission of the group defines who should be on the Board. Choices might include: prominent citizens from various constituencies; emerging communities; politicians; specialists in law, marketing, computers, or accounting; and givers and doers in the community.
5. Non-voting liaisons to the Board should include a representative from the library administration. A member of the Friends board should be appointed liaison to the Trustees (see Friends and Foundations Fact Sheets #10 and #11).
6. A continuing long-term appraisal of the needs and performance of the board will help ensure that the board stays dynamic.

continued

7. Younger officers and key people in corporate settings and smaller companies are an excellent and often neglected source of board members. They can help with leadership, financial support, advocacy, and volunteers. They want to be seen as good citizens and should be given a visible role.
8. For more in-depth information, see the United for Libraries' toolkit "Tapping Into the Biggest and Most Active Group of Volunteers in Town - The Baby Boomers."

updated 9/12

United for Libraries

Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director
109 S. 13th St., Suite 117B
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
fax (215) 545-3821
www.ala.org/united