

# Membership



ILZE SWART

**Chairman of the Friends Indaba** (an umbrella organisation for all the Friends groups in the City of Cape Town)

**W**hy should people become Friends? Because they want to support their library in providing a superior library service to its community. It is good to have the support of prominent people who might not be able to participate actively, but who have valuable contacts.

Numbers are more important than the degree of involvement, to show councillors that a community cares about its library, and that different groups within the community are involved.

Make it easy to join by having membership forms at various points in the library. When people join the library, tell them about the Friends. Readers who regularly reserve books should know that the Friends circulate a list of new material received by the library. Keep Friends in the public eye by publicising their activities in the media.

Membership categories can include adult, family, pensioner, student and corporate, and fees will depend on what is affordable for the community. A system of renewals for the beginning of the new financial year should be in place. Nowadays people pay by EFT, so provide Friends banking details on the membership form.

## *Incentives to join Friends*

What incentives are there to become a Friend? Friends could receive a calendar of library events, a newsletter, a list of new books and other materials, book reservation coupons, or invitations to special events and programmes. Friends membership can be a prerequisite for volunteer work in the library.

Tie-in with other community groups to recruit Friends: reader's circles, seniors clubs, book clubs, literacy groups, teachers, ratepayer's organisations, et cetera.

## *Activities and event planning*

### ▶ **Library activities**

Include book repair and processing of new material; shelving; putting up exhibitions; services to special groups (for example,

seniors or children); sorting donations; tending the garden or indoor plants; or any other assistance the library may need.

### ▶ **Programmes/events**

Programmes can generally be classified into four groups:  
*social:* creating goodwill; meeting other Friends, for example, annual general meetings; Friends tea; a knitting or crochet circle  
*educational:* classes or courses, for example, Xhosa or literacy; tracing your ancestors (genealogy); flower arranging; writing; art, et cetera

*library related:* educating the community about the library and its resources, for example, library tours; Library Week activities; storytelling; children's programmes (for example, a magician show); exhibitions and displays. For example, a careers expo  
*book related:* meet authors/illustrators; quizzes; a readathon; book sales; poetry or writing circles; book discussion groups. (An event planning checklist appears at the end of this article.)

### ▶ **Publications**

Can include:

*membership forms*

*bookmarks:* to advertise the Friends

*brochures:* to explain what Friends do

*newsletters:* to appear at least quarterly, with information about the library and with annotated lists of new material

*banner:* this is an eye-catching way of drawing attention to Friends  
*recognisable logo:* a logo helps to establish the Friends 'brand' in the community. Bellville Friends' logo was designed by illustrator Piet Grobler and it appears on all stationery and forms.

### ▶ **Fundraising**

Sources of income for the Friends could be:

*membership fees:* which should at least cover postage. Encourage people to provide email addresses for quick, cost-effective communication

*donations:* which could be cash, a periodical subscription or regular donation of a title, furniture, et cetera. Donors must be aware that the Friends may dispose of donations as they see fit,



and that no conditions may be attached to donations

*photocopiers*: Friends who have copiers may continue with the service but no new copiers may be placed in Cape Town City libraries as the City has a contract with a service provider to place copiers in libraries. Outside the City this could be negotiated with the City Council

*book and periodical sales*: these are one of the biggest sources of income for Friends today. Offer to pick up books from donors if they do not have transport and take bags or crates along. Be aware of the prices that Africana commands and do not sell the books for a song. Ask dealers for professional advice if necessary

*markets*: charge per table or car at car boot, flea and craft market sales

*sale of items*: such as book bags and T-shirts – unfortunately one needs capital to order such items to sell at a profit

*raffles*: book or food parcel raffles are always successful and donations can be solicited from bookshops and local businesses

*admission fees*: to functions and programmes often need to be charged to cover the costs, rather than raise funds, for example, bridge drives; Bingo evenings

*sale of refreshments*: tea, coffee, cake, soup, wine tasting – depends on a library's facilities and what its community is likely to buy.

Acknowledge and thank a donor for every contribution, and emphasise that the funds are to be used solely for the benefit of the library. A donor board in a prominent place has proved an incentive to giving at Bellville Library. The names are removed at the end of the year, so that donors must give again for a place on the new year's board.

### ► Publicity/promotion/public relations

The Friends are able to speak to the press on library issues, unlike the LiC (librarian-in-charge) who may impart information only on library programmes. Publicity is the key ingredient in the success of any activity or event, and it may include:

*in the library*: membership forms in a neat, readable font; posters; notices; a banner; bookmarks advertising the Friends and their activities

*publications*: a regular newsletter, nowadays preferably an electronic one, with information about the library and Friends activities

*staff*: are they aware of Friends activities? Are the Friends treated as partners in 'the business' and kept informed of new developments?

*media*: knock-and-drops are among the most widely read; local newspapers and local radio stations are well supported; Facebook pages (for examples see those of Central Library, Rondebosch, Harare, Bellville and many others)

*city councillors and LIS management*: as the primary funders of libraries, they should be kept in the public relations loop

*networking with other Friends*: share activities and programmes that work well. In Cape Town, the Friends Indaba has an annual general meeting in August, which provides a platform for a valuable exchange of ideas.

### References

<http://www.ala.org/altaff/friends/factsheets>

<http://www.fola.org.au>

### Event planning checklist

#### Description of event

#### Date and time

#### Venue

Book venue, maximum number of people

#### Speaker

Name, phone number, and email address, fee or gift/flowers/wine

#### Master of ceremonies

Welcomes, introduces, thanks speaker

#### Requirements

Tables, tablecloths, chairs, lectern, white board and kokis, data projector; screen

Sound system

Water jugs, glasses

Reserved seats

Registration table, money for change

Sales (books or other items)

Stationery (pens, notepaper), handouts

#### Catering/kitchen facilities

In-house or caterers

Cutlery, crockery, glasses

#### Publicity

Invitations, RSVP to whom? How many seats available?

Posters, press release, signage to event

#### Library staff involvement

Who does what

#### Evaluation

#### Thank you letters

Speaker, helpers.

Ontoeganklikheid moet nie gelykgestel word met intellektueel, en toeganklikheid met dom nie

*Jeanne Goosen, skrywer en joernalis*

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Omdat ek opgelet het dat papier meer kos voordat daarop geskryf is (*toe hy gevra is hoekom hy nie iets neerskryf nie*)

*Sokrates, Griekse filosoof*

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Die eerste plig van 'n onbekende skrywer is om interessant te wees. Om vervelig te wees is die voorreg van reeds beroemde skrywer

*Emile Berr, Franse joernalis en skrywer*