

friends of kansas LIBRARIES

Assist - Support - Educate

FoKL POINT Newsletter — January 2026

Make a Difference with FoKL Membership

Libraries are the heartbeat of the community. As a library Friend, you recognize the ways the library serves your community. Whether in after-school programs, outreach to daycare and senior centers, technology support for job seekers, a place to meet for tutoring, hosting book discussions or a voter registration drive, the public library is involved.

Friends of the Library groups support these efforts by raising awareness as well as funding programs that exceed the library's budget.

Enter Friends of Kansas Libraries! We are here to help:

Assist – When starting a Friends group or revitalizing one, we offer a Start-up Grant.

Support – Grants provide matching funds, and outstanding volunteers are recognized.

Educate – First Friday with Friends guests share ideas that work in other communities.

You are the heartbeat of FoKL. We are here to work with you and your Friends of the Library to encourage and support your group's efforts to improve library services.

Your membership sustains FoKL. We have nonprofit status from the IRS and operate as a volunteer organization. Our budget emphasizes our mission – 75% annually is spent on grants to Friends groups and recognition of outstanding Library Friends. Visit www.fokl.net for an overview and application forms.

See the ways you can join FoKL in the box on the right. Let us know how we can serve you and your Friends organization.

Thank you for being a Friend!

Carolyn Little
FoKL President

First Friday with Friends



Is your Friends group thinking of another way to support your library? Join us for *First Friday with Friends* as Susie Scott (Friends of Wichita Public Library) leads a discussion on successes and pitfalls of starting merchandising. Ideation, ordering, distribution, sales, inventory and more will be discussed.

Bring your ideas and questions to share!

Join us on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88484969231>

Ways to Join

- Watch for your mailed membership renewal form.
- Print and mail in the form on the last page of this newsletter.
- Visit our [membership page](http://www.fokl.net) on the FoKL website (fokl.net) where you may join online with a credit card or print a mail-in membership form.

Focus on Friends

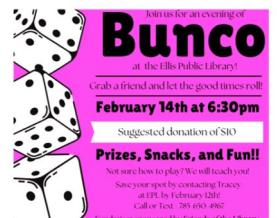
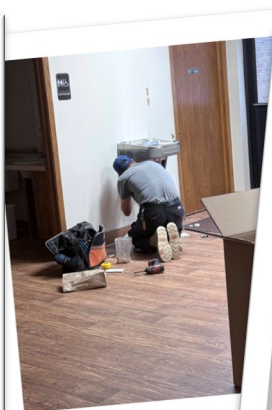
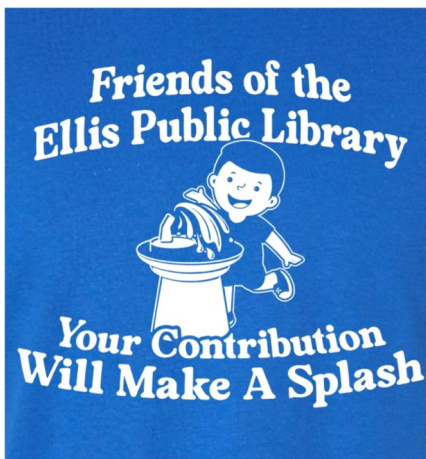
Friends of Ellis Library Celebrate First Year of Library Friendship

The Friends of the Ellis Public Library hit the ground running in their first year of returning to operation after a hiatus since 1994. Director Tracy Andrews calls them a creative, motivated group that gets things done. The Friends have taken on fundraising and grant writing projects, and now offer a variety of programs and support that benefit the library and community. Highlights of their year —



- The group's first major event was to host a library **Open House** and membership drive with hot dogs, beverages, and games. The group's FB page said, "The library was buzzing with excitement. Children lit up the room with their laughter and energy during Book Bingo, while adults enjoyed reconnecting and catching up in our welcoming space. The sense of community was truly heartwarming." In addition to gaining new members, the event raised over half the funds needed for their first big project — installing two ADA-compliant refrigerated water fountains with bottle-filling capabilities.
- Their **Bunco Nights** are fun fundraisers with a great turnout.
- **Wednesday Coffee** is now a weekly library feature with the coffee bar established by the Friends. Conversations are lively, with recent discussions centering on recipes "made by memory."
- Group members serve as **Volunteers** with community events including the Ellis Polar Express and mini carnival last night at the Ellis Jr Free Fair. They were also seen at Ellis's "Christmas in July" event and helping with trick-or-treat at the library.
- The group celebrated **Project Success** for their first major fundraising project when the two water fountains were installed in October (photos below).
- To attract new people to the library, all visitors can now get a free ticket for the **Friends Monthly Give Away**. This month's drawing is for a candle warmer with a built-in timer.
- Coming up, the group will celebrate their first year of accomplishments at their **Annual Meeting** on February 1 at 2pm. Angela Bates will present "Children of the Promised Land," a program made possible by Humanities Kansas.

Note: The Ellis Friends received a Start-Up Grant from FoKL in 2025, and we are so pleased to see how much they have achieved.. [Click this link](#) to learn more about these FoKL grants and how they could help in your community!



Clay Center Friends

The Clay Center Carnegie Library has a nice collection of Tonieboxes, a Yoto Player, and figurines available for check out, thanks to their Friends of the Library group.

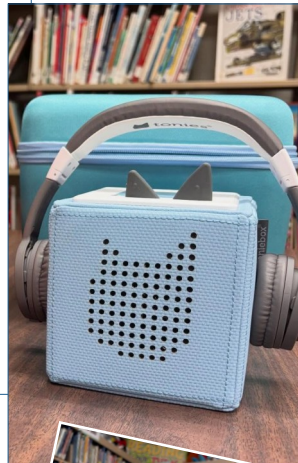
The librarians report that the Friends had the idea for this addition to the library's collection, and purchased all of the equipment, including headphones and accessories.

The players have been extremely popular with patrons, who say they love the experience.



**BOTH OF THESE
AUDIO SYSTEMS
ENHANCE DIGITAL
LITERACY BY:**

- ENGAGING CHILDREN WITH AUDIO STORYTELLING AND FOSTERING LISTENING SKILLS AND COMPREHENSION.
- ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENT LEARNING THROUGH INTERACTIVE PLAY AND EXPLORATION OF VARIOUS CONTENT.
- SUPPORTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT BY EXPOSING CHILDREN TO DIVERSE VOCABULARY AND NARRATIVES.
- PROVIDING SCREEN-FREE ALTERNATIVES, ALLOWING FOR FOCUSED AUDITORY LEARNING WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS.
- FACILITATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN READING BY ENABLING ADULTS TO GUIDE AND DISCUSS CONTENT WITH CHILDREN.



Douglass Friends

The Douglass Friends of the Library have created an attractive and informative poster for their membership drive, which serves as a good model for a publication with a dual purpose as annual report and an appeal for support.

**Over \$5,000 in projects
funded in 2025**

- Provided Friends of the Library Week prizes
- Purchased a foam cannon
- Participated in Frontier Day and Trunk or Treat
- Purchased Adventure Packs (Botanica, Sedgwick Co. Zoo, Tanganika, Cowtown and more)
- Provided funding for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for children under 5 years old in the 67039 postal code
- Purchased WhaZoodle speaker sidekicks for kids
- Contributed to the Community Tank mural at the Douglass City Pool

**BE A PART OF
DOUGLASS
FRIENDS
OF THE
LIBRARY**

**Just \$20 for a
membership**

Forms available
at the library or by e-mailing
foldouglass@gmail.com

Membership Perk
All members can check out
Adventure Packs with passes
to local attractions!

All memberships purchased after
December 1 will be valid until
December 31, 2026



KLA Legislative Day Reminder & Tools for Library Advocates

On Tuesday, January 27, 2026, KLA will hold its annual Legislative Day at the Kansas Statehouse in Topeka.

Get the details about this year's event in the most recent issue of *Kansas Libraries Newsletter* [at this link](#).



See also the excellent article titled *Making the Most of your Ten Minutes* on page 2 of the newsletter linked above, which provides tools for this special occasion as well as for everyday advocacy.

News from Friends of Wichita Public Library

The Friends of Wichita Public Library is offering an opportunity to win two free tickets to a VIP author event and selling a new promotional sticker.

The [Wichita Library Foundation](#) is partnering with Watermark Books to host an author's event in February. Bestselling author, Kate Quinn, will be featured in a program that is open to the public on Thursday, February 19, at the Advanced Learning Library in Wichita from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Director of Wichita Public Libraries, Jaime Nix, will interview Quinn during the program about her latest book, *The Astral Library*, as well as her other historical fiction work. Signed copies of the new book may be purchased online in advance for \$32. [Reservations](#) are required to attend the free event and space is limited.



Prior to the public event, a private VIP reception will be held at the Advanced Learning Library (711 W. 2nd St. N.) from 5:30 - 6:30 pm, hosted by the Wichita Library Foundation. The ticketed event includes a signed hardcover copy of the new book as well as wine, bites and a signature cocktail. Tickets for the meet and greet are \$100 each and space is limited.

The [Friends of Wichita Public Library](#) (FWPL) is providing an opportunity to win two tickets (valued at \$200) to the VIP event. Existing Platinum and Library Champion members are automatically enrolled in the drawing as a membership benefit. Those who become a new Friends member or renew their annual membership at the Library Champion level (\$150) will also be entered to win. Library Champion memberships may be purchased online or in person at the Friends bookstore in the Advanced Learning Library. Memberships must be purchased by 11:59 p.m. on January 31, 2026 to be eligible. The winner will be notified February 6.



FWPL is also offering a new sticker for sale as a fundraiser for library programs. The sticker is 2.5 inches square and replicates the popular red yard sign that the organization started selling last year. It can be purchased for \$2 at the Friends used bookstore in the Advanced Learning Library during operating hours (Monday through Saturday from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm). Yard signs are also still available for sale at a price of \$10.

Friends of Mary Cotton Library

The Friends of the Mary Cotton Public Library in Sabetha are sponsoring a "Brighter Winter Read-Aloud" from mid-January through mid-March.

Families can choose from one of two books to read together as a family. Once registered, they will receive a tote bag with their selected book, as well as crafts/activities to do together as they read.

What a cozy idea!



Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain loving one another.

— Erma Bombeck

Contact us!

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ASSIST - SUPPORT - EDUCATE

Libraries: Now More Than Ever

Friends of Kansas Libraries (FoKL) works to encourage and support new and existing local Friends groups. We facilitate the exchange of useful information among organizations of Friends, advocate for excellent library services, and are committed to helping libraries meet the needs and expectations of their communities. If you are interested in contributing to this state organization, please join FoKL and become a supporter of Kansas libraries.

FoKL membership benefits include: • **Start-up Grants** to help establish new Friends groups • **Challenge Grants** up to \$500 to support special projects • Recognition of exemplary efforts through the **Outstanding Individual** and **Outstanding Friends Group Annual Awards** • Advisory support from the FoKL board. FoKL reaches out to the entire library community with our FoKL Newsletter and "First Friday with Friends," an interactive community forum where we share successful programs and ideas.

Join or renew with the form below or use the online form and payment link at www.folk.net.



Please fill out completely. Your personal information will not be shared with third parties.

Annual Member Levels: ☐ New or ☐ Renewal

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends' Group \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Library or Organization \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Best Friend \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookworm \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Carnegie Circle \$250 |

Name (or Contact Person) _____

Organization (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

☐ Cash ☐ Check (Check # _____ Amount _____ Date _____)

Make checks payable to: **Friends of Kansas Libraries**

Send to: **Friends of Kansas Libraries**
c/o NEKLS
4317 W. 6th
Lawrence, KS 66049

Contributions to FoKL, an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, are deductible to the full extent of the law.