friends of kansas LIBRARIES

Assist - Support - Educate

FoKL POINT *Newsletter* — July 2026

Join us on August 7 at 9AM as we review and discuss the activities held in honor of Wichita Public Library's 150th birthday. You will find inspiration and ideas for your Friends group that can fit any size community - big or small!

Find us on Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88484969231

Friends of Ellis Public Library

Friends of Ellis Public Library hosted a Bunco Night this summer that they say was "a wonderful evening filled with laughter, friendly competition, and great community spirit."

The proceeds from the event will help fund the Friends' newest project — replacing the Little Free Libraries at Playworld, Creekside, and Southside Parks in Ellis. These outdoor libraries will be maintained by Friends members and are available for everyone in the community to enjoy.

The group announced, "Whether you're looking for your next great read or have a favorite book to share, these libraries are for you. Take a book, leave a book, or do both! Together, we're helping foster a love of reading and making books accessible to all. Thank you for making this project - and our community - even stronger!"

- Friends News Briefs -

- Local businesses are helping the **Friends of Basehor Library** support the library through donations for the group's monthly Business Partner Raffle. The July basket, donated by First State Bank & Trust, contains snacks, Iowa Jerky, First State Bank Merch, a stuffed horse, and a gift card to Bass Pro. The Friends group promotes the participating businesses and the library through their active social media outreach.
- During the July 11th Haysville Hometown Market, the **Haysville Friends** hosted a free "Decorate a Dinosaur Cookie" event on the library's north lawn near the car show.
- **Friends of the Louisburg Library** teamed up to offer its members exclusive Beanstack codes worth two adult raffle tickets during the library's SummerBASH.
- **Friends of the Bradford Memorial Library** held a summer fundraiser at Arby's, with a percentage of qualified proceeds going to the library.

Friends of Dorothy Bramlage Public Library

Friends Night at the Ball Park

The Friends of the Dorothy Bramlage Public Library recently stepped up to the plate at a Junction City Brigade baseball game, spending an evening connecting with fans and sharing information about the library and its many programs and services. The Friends of the Library paid for all Friends members to attend the game.

The Brigade Baseball team is a collegiate baseball team comprised of student athletes from colleges and universities throughout the country. The Brigade gives these students a venue during the summer to continue developing their skill in a highly competitive environment.

The first pitch of the game was thrown out by Friends member and retired Library Assistant Director, Cheryl Jorgensen with her grandson behind the plate as Brigade catcher — a special family moment that made the occasion even more meaningful.

Throughout the game, Friends members greeted attendees, answered questions about the library, and highlighted the important role the Friends organization plays in supporting special events, programs, and projects that enrich our community. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, celebrate hometown spirit, and remind residents that the library is much more than a place to check out books.

During the 7th inning stretch, Friends of the Library members were invited onto the field to play "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." The catch was that they had to perform it on kazoos handed out at the start of the game. They say, “While our musical talents may not earn us a recording contract anytime soon, the performance provided a whimsical and hilarious highlight of the evening, bringing smiles and laughter to everyone in attendance.”

The Friends of the Library continue to make a lasting impact through their enthusiasm, volunteerism, and unwavering support. Whether at the library or out in the community, they are exceptional ambassadors for the important work at the library. The Friends knocked this event out of the park!

Friends of Salina Public Library

The Salina Friends sponsored the library's annual Bookmark Contest.

The theme for 2026 was “Books Are Just the Beginning.” Participants got creative and showed how the library sparks their imaginations. The winning bookmarks are being made available at the Youth Services self-checkout kiosk while supplies last.

The Friends said, "Thank you to everyone who participated and submitted their fantastic artwork! Congratulations to our winners!"

Focus on the FoKL Board

The FoKL Board met at the Manhattan Public Library on July 17. This group, with members from across the state, works to encourage local Friends groups and libraries. In addition to our grants and awards programs, FoKL is supportive of new groups forming and encourages advocacy for library services. We spread the word through our newsletter and social media, and also in-person at KLA conference and the Kansas Book Festival. If you are interested in serving on the FoKL board, we encourage you to reach out to us at friendsofkansaslibraries@gmail.com.

We recently asked some board members a few questions . . .

What drew you to working on the FoKL board?

Dalton Torneden (Eudora): FOKL does a lot of great things to support groups across the state of Kansas -- from assisting new Friends groups with getting started to grants to advocacy. As a member of my local Friends group during the Pandemic, I can say that the First Friday Zooms were and are a great way to connect with others across the state to talk about ideas and to learn from one another. Stronger together is always better. Having positive experiences with FOKL and feeling energized by its purpose, I wanted to give back to an organization who supported me and others during a challenging time.

Jan Schmidt (Salina): I wanted to learn what other Friends groups in Kansas were doing. What fund raising events did they sponsor, for example. I wanted to be part of a great organization and learn all about Friend groups.

Cheryl Sylvester (Perry): I have worked with Friends groups in each of the six libraries I have worked at. I feel strongly that Friends need other Friends. FOKL provides the opportunity for local groups across the state to learn from each other and receive support. Various commitments made me step away for a few years, but being able to rejoin the group just re-enforced in me how important education, support and assistance are for local groups to have someplace to turn to. Libraries have systems, Friends have FOKL.

Susie Scott (Wichita): Melissa Wilson, the Friends Operations Manager, encouraged me to get involved with FOKL in order to represent the Wichita Friends of the Wichita Public Library. I love learning what other Friends groups are doing.

What is your favorite part of serving on the FoKL board?

Carolyn Little (Topeka): I've found that my friends are often the source of good advice. The same is true with Friends groups who share ideas during First Friday with Friends. These monthly meetings (with occasional breaks) highlight an activity and/or a featured guest who offers tips on timely topics. I welcome suggestions for future First Fridays and invite you to add your spark to one of my favorite FoKL programs!

Barb Mathews (Eudora): After retiring from working at the Baldwin Public Library, I joined FoKL to stay active in the library world. It is easy to get so engrossed in one's own library world. Being on the FoKL Board has given me a wider and very interesting look at the public libraries throughout the state. I have really enjoyed visiting other Kansas public libraries and sharing ideas. I strongly believe in the mission of public libraries and FoKL is a strong contributor to their growth.

Sheryl Erickson (Winfield): I enjoy getting to visit libraries across Kansas in person and meeting and talking with Friends and librarians during FoKL First Fridays and at other meetings/ conferences.

Susan Bryant (Robinson): Of course the annual grant and award giving is my very favorite, but I also love traveling around Kansas and visiting other libraries when the board meets in person. It's wonderful to see these beautiful facilities and meet their enthusiastic and accomplished staff. It gives me a great deal of pride to know how important home-town libraries are to their Kansas communities.

Could you share your "elevator speech" about why libraries are important?

Carolyn: A library is the most democratic of institutions. The people who work in them educate, inspire, and respond to requests for information. When you need answers, go to the library!

Dalton: Libraries are important because they can serve as a community's connecting point. It's the one place people of all types and interests can go to connect, learn and grow. A public library has something for everyone and is often one of the few places in a community where there is little or no expectation of payment.

Susie: I am a life-long user of the library and appreciate the value and diversity of library collections. I am also amazed at the variety of programs and services that many libraries are able to offer; cool/warm place to be, computers and internet access, programs, training, and so much more!

Focus on the FoKL Board - continued

What is the most fun or unusual project your local Friends group has done?

Sheryl: For a hauntingly different Friends book discussion we had an after-hours session by candlelight. The book was set in England in the 1800's and is about a mother and daughter who are fine-work seamstresses. After the mother is sent to the poorhouse, the daughter finds she has the power to stitch misfortune into the garments she makes in retaliation for hers and her mother's mistreatment. During the event we moved around to different table activities and had some enchanted refreshments.

Susie: This summer our Friends group is handing out ice cream sandwiches at each branch on a Saturday afternoon. It has been pretty fun visiting with library patrons and giving them an ice cream sandwich.

What is one thing you wish everyone knew about libraries (or Friends of the Library)?

Christy Molzen (Newton): I wish everyone knew that libraries have so much more to offer than just books (even though the books will always be my favorite part). Libraries are the center of their communities, providing resources to all ages and interests. They are that essential "third place" where people can go and spend time without being expected to buy anything. They offer job hunting resources, Wi-Fi and computer access, after-school programs, study rooms, and a variety of events and programming that bring community members together. When I first moved to Newton, the library was the first place I went to meet people and make new friends. I've participated in book clubs, attended lectures, played scrabble and trivia, and can't wait to try speed puzzling.

Cheryl: I wish everyone realized how much value a library adds to the quality of life in a community. Libraries have limited resources but provide books, movies and computers for lifelong learning, plus programs for all ages all for free in a safe environment.

Dalton: That a well-funded and well-supported library can be your community's greatest asset.

Susie: Our communities need libraries and they have to be funded. I worry too many people don't realize how necessary it is to fund their local library.

Do you have any advice to give communities who want to start a Friends group?

Jan: Selecting your board of Directors is not done lightly. This is one of the most important decisions your organization makes. The board is responsible for fundraising, finances, governance, IRS reports, State Reports and many other things.

Tips for recruiting effective and productive board of directors:

- Board members and officers must contribute significant time and personal resources to the organization. They must also be willing to assume the legal and ethical duties of the leadership role.
- Board members are expected to serve as volunteers.
- Board members are also expected to make an annual financial gift. Much of the supplies, pencils, labels, etc., are provided by the board members.
- Board members are expected to help two to four hours a week at sorting books for book sales, helping to stock books on the sales shelves, and any other duties as directed,

So many duties and you learn many as you go. Your FoKL board is always available to contact for assistance.

Dalton: Find a connecting person or people in your community. Often this person has a mental rolodex that can be utilized to at the very least help you form your core group. Having someone like this is invaluable.

Barb: Find a group of 5 or 6 dedicated people. Ask the library what they need/want for their children's section. Set a specific goal (kid-size chairs, more picture books, kid-appropriate learning tech, etc.) and know the cost. Pick a fundraiser (bake sale, auction, bingo night, etc.) and crank up the publicity. Emphasize that it is for the LOCAL CHILDREN. Use this as a foundation event to get the ball rolling on getting your group organized going forward.

Susie: Be patient; it doesn't happen overnight.

Contact us!

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