

Blount County Friends of the Library

Annual Report 2008 - 2009

Introduction

We are pleased to present the highlights of the Friends of the Library activities for the fiscal year 2008 - 2009. Our goal is to support the Library financially and to promote the use of the library by all of the citizens of Blount County.

Achievements

Financial Status

Because of the generous support of our members and donors, as well as the success of our fundraising activities such as the book sales, the Friends of the Library are in sound financial condition. Here's an overview of how the money was raised and how it has been spent:

Where does the money come from?

Membership dues =	13%
Book Sales =	72%
Donations =	14%
Miscellaneous=	1%

Where does the money go?

Library Equipment =	15%
Library Programs=	56%
Matching grants =	18%
Operating expenses =	11%

Making New Friends

The Membership Committee has been working hard to increase the number of Friends of the Library. As of May 26th, the memberships were:

Life memberships	104
Individual memberships	286
Family memberships	574
Student memberships	6
<u>Complimentary</u>	<u>18</u>
Total active memberships	988

Book Sales

Currently held four times per year, these sales are the single largest fundraiser for the Friends of the Library. Ninety-five percent of the books are donated by the public, and we often receive over a thousand volumes in a week. More than 40,000 books are offered at each sale. The four book sales from July 2008 through April 2009 raised nearly \$45,000.00. Dedicated members of the Friends volunteered more than 4000 hours. In addition to the regular book sales, books were also distributed to a variety of non-profit groups, including:

- Local nursing homes and assisted living centers (Ex Libris Program)
- Blount County Correctional and Youth Detention Centers
- Blount County Adult Education Center
- Outreach programs in Cambodia and Africa
- The Girl Scout Literacy Program
- The Books for Soldiers program
- Elementary School Libraries (Mary Blount, Rockford, Union Grove, Walland)

BCFOL Website

Thanks in large part to Board member Carole Trammell and volunteer Walt Smith, The BCFOL website has been completely redesigned and updated. It now provides patrons and other interested persons with up to date information on Friends' activities, Library programs, book sale schedules, online newsletters, and contact personnel. Check it out at www.bcfol.org/.

Books for Soldiers

The Books for Soldiers program provides books and other items for our military personnel serving throughout the world. During the past year, eight dedicated volunteers packed and shipped 238 boxes containing approximately 4299 books and 150 other audio/visual materials. All of the shipping costs (\$1341.00) came from donations at the quarterly book sales or from the books for soldiers volunteers themselves. The committee receives many letters of thanks from the troops. If you would like to read some, many of these letters are posted at the book sales. The program is looking for some new volunteers who would really like to make a difference in the daily lives of our troops. Contact Vivian Selecman at the Friend office in the library if you are interested.

Ex Libris Library Extension Program

Beginning in 2004 as "The Book Club" at Morningview Transitional Care Center, Ex Libris is a community outreach program bringing a wide variety of resources from the library to residents of four local assisted living facilities. Through carefully constructed programs featuring short stories, poetry, anecdotes, humor etc., volunteer readers provide bi-monthly life enrichment to that segment of the community no longer able to get to the library. Since July

1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, a total of 84 programs will have been given with a projected 706 people attending. This represents 252 volunteer hours. New volunteers are being sought and a Demonstration Program of Ex Libris is scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2009 beginning at 11:00 a.m. See website for more details.

Blount County Book Discussion Group

The Book Discussion Group, originally founded in 1994, still meets once a month and continues to be a dynamic forum. Thanks to the BCFOL “seed money” which was instrumental in the establishment of this long running association, many county residents have enriched their literary education by reading and discussing literally hundreds of books. Future titles up for discussion, dates and times of meetings and other information on the Book Discussion Group are shown on the Library website.

The BCFOL Newsletter

A professionally prepared and printed newsletter, ***Between Friends***, is published up to four times a year. Sent to each FOL member, and available online, it contains news of library events, upcoming displays, exhibits, new Library projects and book sale schedules. Each issue usually tells a little bit about a dedicated library employee or a FOL volunteer.

Supporting the Bookmark Café

Our library is unique in having it's own café. The Friends were instrumental in getting the Bookmark Café started, and while the café is now generally self-supporting, the Friends help replace worn equipment as needed.

Program support and sponsorship

Here are just a few of the programs the Friends are currently supporting:

Edible Book Contest – The Friends provide prize money to the winners who construct the most innovative and clever edible books representing book titles.

Hot Summer Nights – The Friends donate refreshments and provide volunteers to help with this popular series of summer concerts.

Children's Summer Reading Program – Provides books, craft supplies, and many other items for the popular children's program.

Adult Summer reading program – Purchasing books and supplies to encourage reading in the adult community.

Shakespeare on the Lawn - The friends provide volunteers and financial assistance to help with productions from the Knoxville Shakespeare Company.

Veterans History Project – Documents the service and experiences of retired military personnel living in Blount County.

Native American Festival – This year the festival featured Mr. McDonald, one of the Navajo code talkers from World War II. The festival also honored all war veterans and featured native American crafts, songs, and dances.

Employee and volunteer appreciation programs – Just a small way we can thank everyone for their dedication and hard work.

Library programs and supplies – The friends have helped purchase everything from book carts and bike racks to matching funds for grants to upgrade electronic catalog systems and improve online access to library programs.

We hope you will consider volunteering your time, ideas and imagination.

“Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.”

Author Sidney Sheldon

“In hard times, libraries are more important than ever. Human beings need what books give them better than any other medium. Since ancient nights around prehistoric campfires, we have needed myth. And heroes. And moral tales. And information about the world beyond the nearest mountains or oceans.

Today, with books and movies more expensive than ever, and television entertainment in free fall to the lowest level of stupidity, free circulating books are an absolute necessity. They are quite simply another kind of food.

For those without money, the road to the treasure house of the imagination begins at the public library.”

Columnist Pete Hamill, New York Daily News