

Increasing Volunteer Involvement (Friends)

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Finding Volunteers

Where to Look for Volunteers

- In the library, at the Friends book store
- At book clubs
- At all Friends events
- In high schools
- Through corporations
- At service clubs
- In churches
- At genealogy association meetings
- At United Way events
- At real estate offices, Welcome Wagon materials



Finding Volunteers

How to Promote Volunteer Opportunities

- Create a volunteer application form, take it to events
- Talk to friends, acquaintances and anyone you meet who you think may have potential to be a good Friends volunteer (keeping in mind skills your Friends group needs)
- Send out a volunteer request/survey with your newsletter or your library's newsletter
- Utilize free publicity from local media, the library's website, Friends section of the website, Facebook and other social media, posters in local businesses, etc.



Clear Communication with Potential Volunteers

What Potential Volunteers Need to Know

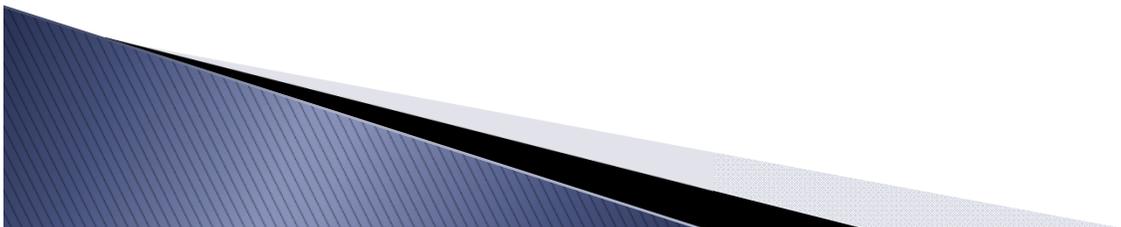
- General information about your Friends group, the kinds of activities you do
- How their skills can benefit your organization
- Specific tasks they might be interested in or which might match their skills
- What time commitment might be required
- Responsibilities
- Deadlines
- Assistance provided
- Training



Clear Communication with Volunteers

Volunteer Screening and Training

- Have a clear screening policy – ideally it should be the same as the library's; at least reference checks and a personal interview
- Training should include an overview of what your Friends group is all about and what you hope to achieve
- Training should be task specific; it can be helpful to have another volunteer who is familiar with the task do the training
- Include new volunteers as soon as possible in the project or task they will be helping with



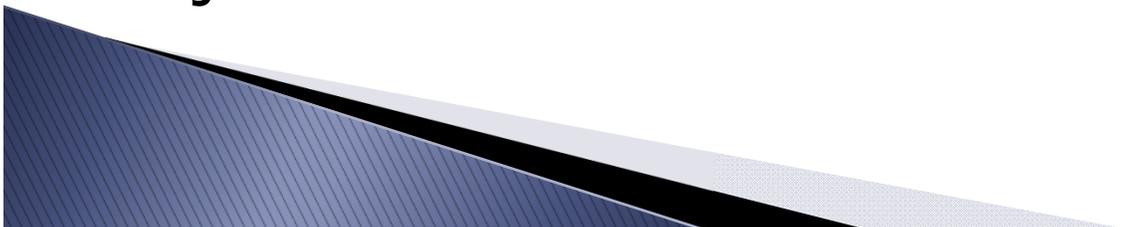
Volunteer Involvement

- ▶ Create a welcoming environment
- ▶ Ensure everyone has an opportunity to meet other volunteers and socialize
- ▶ Encourage volunteer feedback
- ▶ Be flexible and willing to alter the volunteer task
- ▶ Be willing to move volunteers to another task if they are becoming bored or find the task is not what they expected
- ▶ Ensure tasks are manageable



Volunteer Involvement

- ▶ Get to know the volunteer, find out what skills they may have or if they want to learn new skills
- ▶ Utilize the volunteer's skills; don't try to convince a volunteer to take on something you need done, but which they may not want to do
- ▶ Help volunteers acquire new skills
- ▶ Respect the volunteer's time
- ▶ Be willing to write a letter of reference or provide contact information as a reference for a job resume if the volunteer has done a good job



Thank Your Volunteers

- ▶ Thank volunteers verbally on a regular basis
 - ▶ A spontaneous thank you is often better than a recognition gift
 - ▶ Many volunteers do not want another certificate!
 - ▶ Get to know the volunteers and find out how they would like to be recognized
 - ▶ Consider a social gathering for all Friends volunteers so that they can meet other volunteers they may not know
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Challenges

Challenges

- The nature of volunteering has changed and Friends groups need to recognize this and be willing to change how they do things
- Baby Boomer volunteers may have certain expectations
- Accommodating volunteers who have paid jobs and/or family commitments
- Being realistic about the time commitment required for specific tasks and communicating this clearly
- Many other volunteer organizations want the same type of volunteers you want; you will need to be enthusiastic and convincing



Opportunities

Opportunities

- ▶ Engage everyone possible to promote your Friends group
- ▶ With a little creativity, optimism and flexibility, Friends can find wonderful, committed volunteers who believe in contributing to their library by being involved in your Friends group
- ▶ We have more promotional opportunities now than in the past. Utilizing social media will make a greater number of potential volunteers aware of what your Friends group does



Contact Information

▶ Friends of Canadian Libraries

- www.accessola.org/focal
- focal@accessola.com
- Check out the great resources about volunteering on the FOCAL website.
- Other exciting resources on fundraising and other topics are also on the FOCAL website.
- FOCAL thanks the OLA for their continuing support, particularly allowing for our web presence on their platform.

