

Building Relationships: A Case Study with the John P. Holt Brentwood Library

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Here are some practical ideas for fostering relationships among your Library Board, staff, funding body, and Friends.

- Relationships take **deliberate effort!** Build the connections before you need them!
- **Stay in your lane!** Ensure that everyone understands their role in the big picture.
- **Play nice in the sandbox!**
 - Work to build consensus, not division.
 - Seek out partnerships with local groups, such as the Historic Commission, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce/Leadership programs, and other nonprofits.
- **Make education** about the library a priority.
 - Dedicate time at each Library Board and Friends meeting to learn about the library programs and services.
 - Build connections with staff as they present to the boards.
 - Share the information with Commissioners via email. Include the cost of the program and the number of patrons served.
- **Offer a tour** of the library for new commissioners.
 - Invite the Library Board Chair and the Friends President in addition to the Director.
 - Spotlight successful joint projects and current needs.
- **Schedule routine communication** among the Library Board Chair, the Director, and the Friends President.

- **Ask to speak to staff** during Inventory Day or Staff Development Day about the support Friends provides the library.
- **Consider adding a Friends Representative** as a non-voting member of the Library Board.
- Provide a **written monthly report to the Library Board** about Friends' activities, fundraising, and finances.
- **Show up to support the library**, not just when you want something.
 - Commission meetings, even if library business isn't on the agenda
 - Book sales
 - Library programming & events
 - Community events
- **Seek out partnerships** to make a big impact.
 - Offer to fund part of a project if the funding body provides the remainder.
 - Identify local organizations who would also benefit from the project and enlist their support.
- **Request a proclamation** from the governing body to recognize the Friends.
 - Select your organization's anniversary or National Friends of Libraries week.
 - Gather as many people as possible to attend the presentation of the proclamation.
 - Provide the commissioners with a membership brochure and one sheet of printed information about the Friends, including number of members, total hours volunteered over the year, total funds contributed, and how funds are used by the library.
 - Ask the commissioners to become Friends.
 - Take a group photo and post it to social media. Politicians love positive interactions with citizens.
- **Encourage all Library Board members & Commissioners to join Friends.**
- **Post everything on social media**, even if it seems like a small project!