

F O C L P O I N T

Show Community How Library Can Help Solve Its Problems

Then Do the Asking, Expert Tells Friends

Friends groups and libraries in general can be reluctant or even afraid to ask for money from community groups or governments.

But they might be more successful if they show how the library can

"Some things are going to work. Some things are going to bomb. All you can do when they bomb is try to find out why and eat a pint of ice cream."

Amy Greer

Doctoral student, librarian and former campaign worker



at Central Connecticut State University.

"Often when we think about asking, we think about what the library needs. But we need to think about what the community needs," Greer said.

The best way to approach a group is to ask them what they need or what their concerns are, she said. Get to know them. You will have something to help.

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Friends From Farmington Valley Towns Team Up To Share Book Sale Tips

Book sales remain the No. 1 way for library Friends groups to raise money. But some groups are more successful at this than others.

Three volunteers from groups in the Farmington Valley -- Barbara Leonard and Lisa Berman of Avon and Linda Chapron of Farmington -- shared what works for them, starting with meeting with other nearby library book sale chairwomen and chairmen.

"It's a great sharing opportunity for everyone," Chapron said. Her group had terrible signs, she said. So they borrowed some from Simsbury and found the new signs really worked. Now Farmington is buying its own.

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Linda Capron of Farmington, left, and Lisa Berman and Barbara Leonard, both of Avon tell how they share book sale ideas.



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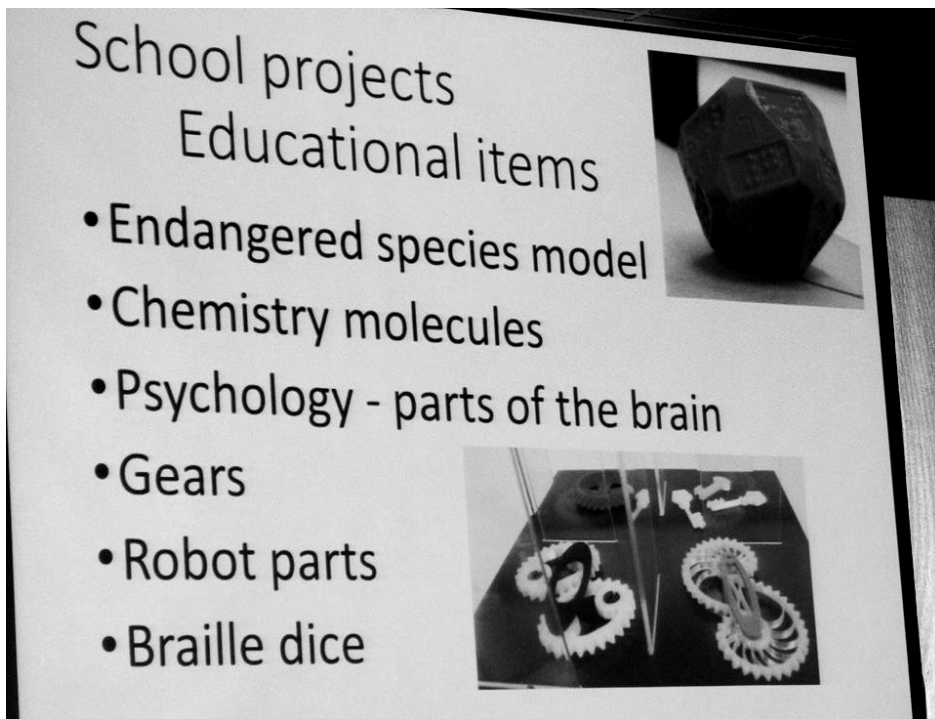
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Trumbull Branch Finds Technology Draws People Into Library



Jenny McLachlan of the Fairchild-Nichols branch of the Trumbull Library explains how the library uses its 3D printer and runs its Creators' Corner.

When the Fairchild-Nichols branch of the Trumbull Library demonstrated its new 3D printer for the first time, staff and volunteers didn't know how many people would show up.

Over the course of four demonstrations, more than 200 people flocked to the library.

"People of all ages are interested in new technology," said Jenny McLachlan, who both works and volunteers at the library. Young people are especially interested, she said.

McLachlan spoke at the Fall Conference of the Friends of Connecticut Libraries. She is coordinator of what the library calls its Creators' Corner, a place to try new technology. At the moment this consists of:

- A 3D printer

- A Linux workstation, which is for people learning to program computers
- A Raspberry Pi, which is a complete computer the size of a deck of playing cards that plugs into a TV and a keyboard
- A basic robot powered by remote control
- And a Lego Mindstorms EV3 robotics kit to build and program a robot.

The library has had 3-year-olds trying robots, McLachlan said.

This new technology center is funded by a private grant that covers the cost of all supplies so they don't have to charge people to use it.

A spool of the plastic material that the printer uses can cost from \$43 to \$130; \$130 is for glow-in-the-dark material. But the spools last a long time, with the

library still using some they bought when they opened in March 2013.

Space was created by cutting down on the reference area and creating a 10 x 20-foot room.

"We provide an environment to help people learn about technology," McLachlan said.

The space is open to all, whether they are Trumbull residents or not. Anyone age 10 and older can sign up for a 3D printer demonstration.

High school students often teach people how to use the devices, she said.

"They come for the volunteer hours and they stay," McLachlan said. "I have the best human library working for me that you can imagine."

(Continued on page 3)

Technology, continued

(Continued from page 2)

Not everything works the way it is intended but that's OK, she said.

"We don't have failures in the Creators' Corner. We have things that we investigate why."

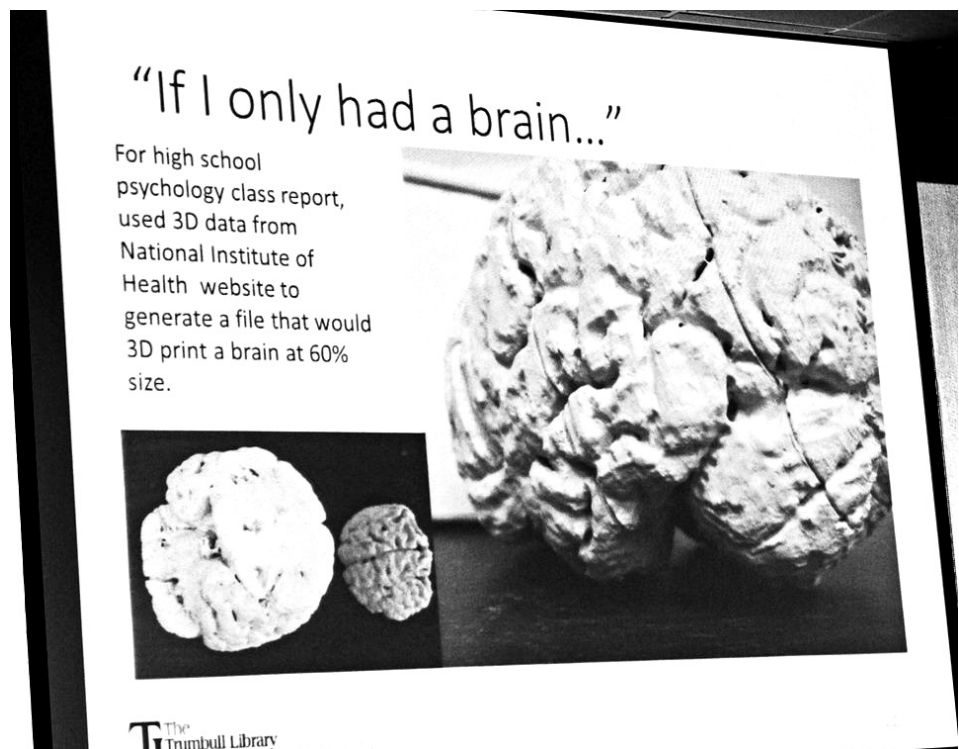
One woman came in, saw the 3D printer and came back the next day with a friend, McLachlan said.

"They were on their way to a funeral but said they had time," she said.

With the 3D printer the library has made chemical molecules, parts of the brain, gears, robot parts and Braille dice. Many items are displayed at the library where anyone can handle them.

"We decided early on that if something breaks, we can reprint it," McLachlan said.

Some children made projects for the Connecticut Invention Convention. A summer camp group came another day.



Students found many uses for the 3D printer including a brain for a science class. Below right, space was made for the printer and other technology.

When the library first showed the computer, they were told not to attract more people than they could handle. They put signs in front of the building, posted it on the website, printed brochures and sought volunteers.

After elementary school teachers saw a demonstration, they must have told their students about it. The teachers' visit was followed by a flood of curious students.



Creators' Corner



Friends Around the State

We encourage all Newsletters editors to put us on their mailing lists so we can have a rich exchange of information to pass on to fellow Friends organizations. If you'd like to see your news here please put Friends of Connecticut Libraries, Middletown Library Service Center, 786 South Main St., Middletown, CT 06457 on your newsletter mailing list, or send by email to friendsctlibraries@gmail.com. Note: We only include events run, sponsored, or funded by Friends Groups. To make our job easier, in your newsletters, please include that information when describing events.

Groton Public Library Circle of Friends, at its annual business meeting, presented an update on the library's plans to expand the local history room and relocate the computer lab, among other projects. They also talked about how the "Friends can ensure that this important project is a success!"

Junior Friends of the Groton Public Library organize service projects and fundraisers that benefit the library and the community. Recent projects included Paws for a Cause! Pet Food Drive for which they accepted cans and bags of dog and cat food



at the library for the Groton Pet Food Locker,

and Crafting for a Cause, for which they made ornamental fall magnets for residents of nursing homes and assisted-living facilities and angel ornaments for the library's homebound delivery service recipients. They raised funds for their projects by selling refreshments at the library's family films.

The Junior Friends just celebrated their first anniversary with a review of the year's accomplishments, planning for future events and pizza and Popsicles.

(Membership in Junior Friends costs \$1 a year.)

Friends of the Shelton Libraries presented a mystery dinner theater, *Murder Takes a Cake*, a comedy/mystery, written and directed by local author Amanda Malloy Marrone.

Friends of the Watertown Library held their annual meeting, followed by a wine tasting excursion to the Miranda Vineyard in Goshen. Connecticut Wine Trail Passports were also included. They also



held a Christmas luncheon at the Watertown Golf Club where goodies were available for purchase.

One added note: The Friends celebrated Queenie Mraz' 90th birthday in September at the library!

Andover Friends of the Library had their first-in-10-years



book and bake sale in October. In November they had a holiday book sale and

bake sale, which included hand-made beaded bookmarks and a

raffle for a beautiful holiday-themed basket.

Friends of the Library in Oxford held a cookbook and craft book sale in October. They followed it with a military and historical book sale in November at which veterans got half off all purchases. In December they had their annual holiday fundraiser with baskets, gift certificates and trees.

Friends of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington sponsored Shakespeare Sundays to mark the 450th anniversary of



William Shakespeare's birth. The film series ran for four consecutive

Sundays and included four critically acclaimed film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Henry V*.

The annual Friends Wine and Cheese Social will be held Jan. 23 in the library. Included will be wine and beer tasting, savory refreshments, a themed basket raffle, musical entertainment and lots of opportunity to socialize.

Friends, continued



The Friends of the Bethel Public Library opened a book store and gift shop in the library basement.

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Friends of the Bethel Public Library announced the opening of the Friends Book Cellar, including a gift shop, in the library basement. There are vintage books, new gift items, and an ever-changing variety of gently used fiction and nonfiction selections, including many children's books.

In lieu of a meeting at the end of October, members of the Friends were invited to a pre-concert wine and cheese reception. The concert, which was open to the public, featured Cool Struttin' performing standards from the great American songbook.

Friends of the Guilford Free Library sponsored a bus trip to the Thames River Valley. It included guided tours of the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in Ledyard.

Friends of the Mystic and Noank Library sponsored their Second Annual Local Authors Expo in September on the grounds of the library. Local published authors presented their books, which were available for purchase. The expo is "a way for the Friends to acknowledge and promote the many local authors" in the community.

Special Notice: The Farmington Valley Book Sale (Store) Group

made up of representatives from several Friends groups, is planning a new help and share session on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 10 a.m.-noon at the main branch of the Farmington Library (Snow date Jan. 27). They are looking for suggestions for the agenda, encouraging everyone to bring "stuff" that they use (maps, sale prices lists, posters/flyers, bags, etc.), and suggest you bring a Friend from another library. For more information contact Linda Chapron (Farmington Friends) Ichapron64@gmail.com or Lisa Berman (Avon Friends) bermanbooksale@gmail.com.



Learning Something New

Sue Harkness of Ashford, center, and Bill Hopf from Fairfield, join others at the Friends of Connecticut Libraries Fall Conference in November at Central Connecticut State University.



Andrew Mollo, center, of Shelton, discusses issues with his tablemates.

Fall Conference Also Gives Members Chance To Mingle, Enjoy Delicious Buffet



The soup and salad buffet is always popular — and delicious.

From the
outside of
Memorial
Hall at
Central
Connecticut
State
University it
was easy to
see who was
meeting.



Friends Should Plan for What Library Can Do Tomorrow

Friends are always associated with book sales but Friends do so much more."

That was the message from Dawn La Valle, director of library development for the Connecticut State Library, when she spoke at the Friends of Connecticut Libraries Fall Conference on Nov. 15.

Friends are the biggest advocates for libraries.

"You're the ambassadors to your library," La Valle said "It's just as critical as the relationship the director has or the staff have."

But first Friends have to know their community, its needs and what is important to its people.

"Knowing your library is not what you're doing now but what you can do tomorrow," she said.

Five areas important to some libraries are job assistance, young children, businesses, technology and young adults (what libraries call teens):

Job programs: Several libraries set up these during the most recent recession, often funded by Friends groups. Programs consisted of resume writing, networking groups, educational opportunities and much more.

And although people might think that such programs are no longer needed as the economy has improved, the need is greater than ever, La Valle said.

Young children: Most communities want to reach children, but libraries might be scary to some, she said. How can



Dawn La Valle tells of five areas libraries might focus on.

Friends make the library experience more inviting?

Early literacy is still a big issue, La Valle said. Some people still don't know how important it is to read to little children.

Business people: Your library may already have information or databases that businesses would use if they only knew about them. Perhaps one of your Friends could ask them: What can we do for you? Then the next time you can ask: What can you do for us?

Technology: Because new gadgets and devices are being developed all the time, people want to know how to use them. Some libraries have "petting zoos," where volunteers or staff demonstrate or teach patrons to

use the devices.

Young adults: This group consists of the most important users now, La Valle said. When the White Plains, NY, library added space for young adults, people thought the number of books would drop. However, it grew as teens wanted books on subjects such as new technology.

"They're the future users" of the library as well, La Valle said. She reminded the Friends that teens can also be good volunteers.

And finally, make sure that any time your Friends sponsor a program you let people know that your group is doing so. La Valle recommended posting signs, having Friends applications out and including a giving bowl.

Ethics , Transparency and Accountability

As part of the Hartford Public Library Non-Profit Program, Priya Morgenstern, program director for the Pro Bono Partnership, presented "Ethics, Transparency and Accountability for Nonprofits."

Morgenstern offered a compelling case of why nonprofits should pay attention to this subject, citing Warren Buffet:

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. When you think about that, you'll do things differently."

Morgenstern identified a number of ethical and transparency hotspots. She recommended that small, volunteer non-profits focus on financial integrity and conflicts of interest.

To provide financial integrity, Friends' boards need to:

- Establish fiscal policies in writing;
- Ensure the appropriate use of funds;
- Be able to demonstrate that donors' gifts are used as intended.

Conflict of interest for a Friends group is defined as doing

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. When you think about that, you'll do things differently."

**Warren Buffet, quoted
by Priya Morgenstern**



business with an insider, benefiting improperly from one's relationship with a nonprofit or otherwise putting one's own interest in front of the nonprofit.

Transparency and accountability are the best ways for a board to prevent conflicts of interest. A toolkit should include:

- A code of ethics;
- Legal compliance and public disclosure;
- Strong financial oversight;
- Responsible fundraising
- Training and maintaining an ethical culture.

Morgenstern strongly advised all nonprofits to adopt a code of ethics that summarizes the policies and priorities that are important to the organization.

A code should include such topics as:

- Personal and professional integrity
- Conflict of interest
- Legal compliance
- Openness and disclosure
- Governance

Morgenstern's full presentation, links to articles, standards and code of ethics and an example of a code of ethics is available on the FOCL website -- foclib.org -- under Resources in the Ethics Sections

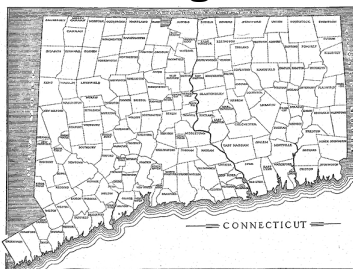
Pro Bono Partnership provides free business and transactional legal services to nonprofit organizations serving the disadvantaged or enhancing the quality of life in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

More information is available at www.probonopartner.org.

Anyone Willing To Host A Small Regional Meeting? FOCL Would Help

FOCL is interested in extending the fine work that Linda Capron and Lisa Berman started in Farmington to the rest of the state in the spring.

We are looking for Friends groups to host similar meetings for the Northeast, Northwest, Shoreline (Branford-Clinton area), Southeast and Southwest sections of Connecticut.



We will consider other areas also. FOCL will provide a stipend for refreshments and a moderator.

These regional meetings would take the place of a spring Boot Camp at the University of Hartford.

If your group is interested in hosting such an event please contact Carl Nawrocki at carlybilly@aol.com

Linking With Friends of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

In 2014, FOCL established a liaison with the Friends of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

The mission of this Friends group is to support the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Rocky Hill.

Library service to the blind was established by an act of Congress in 1931 to provide embossed books – books in Braille. Later laws and amendments added audio books, music and children's materials and expanded services to address the needs of individuals unable to read because of a physical handicap.

The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides services free to about 10,000 patrons throughout our state.

The Friends of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is a fledgling organization made up of a small number of the library's patrons. Its purpose is to enhance the services and resources of the library and to advocate for it.

The Friends group is seeking non-profit status and trying to increase membership. FOCL is providing both guidance and a \$200 grant to help offset start-up costs and fees.

Gaining membership and income to support their efforts is a daunting task. Communications between the Friends and their potential members is difficult and fundraising is currently limited to membership dues and grants.

Several FOCL board members have become members to help the

group pay fees and to allow it to communicate with other patrons of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

The group has a lot of heart, routinely overcoming obstacles that would make most of us quit.

If you or your Friends group wants to help them by becoming a member or making a direct donation, a form can be found on the FOCL website at foclib.org, using the Forms Link on the main page.

NOTE: If you know some who might benefit from services provided by the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, you can contact staff at 800 842-4516 or through the State Library website. The library is at 198 West St., Rocky Hill 06067.

FOCL Will Survey Members To Learn How To Better Help Friends Groups

Early in 2015, FOCL will survey our members as part of our mission to provide them support through advocacy, training and communications.

Feedback from the Fall Conference indicates an interest in a Boot Camp this spring that would bring Friends groups together to learn and discuss topics of interest. Attendees would also like to hold regional forums similar to those that have been held for book sales.

Topics suggested from the conference are familiar: used book sales, membership, fundraising and attracting active volunteers.

Use of a Square-Up -- a device to pay via credit card on cell phonelike device -- was a new topic of interest.



At present, FOCL uses a number of methods to communicate with our membership including Facebook, our foclib.org website, FOCL Forum, direct mailing and the FOCL Point newsletter. In addition, we hold a Fall Conference, an Annual Meeting and Boot Camp for face-to-face communications.

Should we do more or less or use some other means to communicate?

We will be seeking your opinion on how to proceed. We expect the membership survey to be available in February, probably sent out with our annual awards solicitation letter. You will also be able to offer your opinions online.

Make a New Year's resolution to complete the survey.

Book Sale, continued

(Continued from page 1)

The three suggested Friends groups contact other groups in their own regions to share ideas.

One idea they shared was putting a Free for All coupon in The Hartford Courant, in which you promise a book to anyone who comes in with it. You need to call 860 232-4949 four weeks in advance. The Courant doesn't charge, and your sale gets an ad, all for the price of a book that you wanted to get rid of anyway.

Another Courant contact is writer Korky Vann. If you contact Vann -- kvann@courant.com -- she will often include your sale in her Savvy Shopper column.

Chapron also suggested downloading an app called Square Register to turn a cell phone into a credit card reader. That way people have another way to pay for books.

Farmington doesn't have a lot of space to store books so they have more frequent but smaller sales, such as a garden book sale every March.

The Salem Library has a garden book sale in May, said Carl Nawrocki. One year someone

suggested selling plants, also. They took in \$1,700 instead of the \$400 they usually made at this sale.

"We went from having a book and plant sale to having a plant and book sale," Nawrocki said.

A Wethersfield Friend said that as people enter the library for their sales, Friends give them a map of which room houses which type of book. They also make sure they thank everyone as they leave.

One group said they let Friends into their bag sale an hour early. Ann Dobmaier of Rocky Hill said her group does this for its regular book sales, taking membership applications at that time.

Granby let's people give what they want at the bag sale rather than charging a specific amount, said Del Shilkret.

"We make more money that Sunday than we would if we did it by the bag," he said.

Middletown coordinates sales with Wesleyan University. Ellington sells at the town's farmers' market, where they find children's books sell especially well.

Newington sets up a booth at the town's Waterfall Festival, said Anita Wilson. After trying to sell bags and water, they found books

"We make more money that Sunday than we would if we did it by the bag."

Del Shilkret,
Telling how the Granby Friends let people decide how much to pay

sold the best, especially coffee table and children's books.

The important thing is to keep selling these books. Because that fear that e-books would make print books obsolete just doesn't seem to be true.

"We are inundated with books," Chapron said. "We have to find different ways to constantly sell."

Getting rid of unsold books can sometimes be a problem, Big Hearted Books of Sharon, MA, didn't show up when they said they would, said Peggy Brissette of the Mystic & Noank Library. But some said they liked using this group because they give the books to prisons, nursing homes and schools.

The Ledyard Friends praised Discover Books from Rhode Island because "they take just about everything."

How To Contact the Friends of Connecticut Libraries:

Middletown Library Service Center
786 South Main St.
Middletown, CT 06457
Telephone: 860-757-6665
Fax: 860-704-2228
Email: friendsctlibraries@gmail.com

Community, continued

(Continued from page 1)

If a factory has closed and people are worried about jobs, a library might provide resources on how to find a job, Greer said.

Another community might have school issues that a library could help with. If people see how their needs are met, then you can ask for money, she said.

"Some things are going to work. Some things are going to bomb. All you can do when they bomb is try to find out why and eat a pint of ice cream."

A Pew study found that people in general and legislators particularly don't think libraries meet community needs. Many libraries already have programs to meet these needs but just haven't done a good job about getting the word out. And this isn't just the library director but the board, the staff and Friends.

"Getting everyone from the library on board as an advocate means that you have quadrupled your reach," Greer said.

Friends can prepare for their advocacy role by preparing an elevator speech, much as a job candidate does. But instead of talking about why you would be the right person for a job you talk about what the library wants to do and offer a story to support how it has done it in the past or an incident about how a need has shown itself.

Once you decide what your group wants to say about your library, practice it with your group. But recognize that while some volunteers might be good talking in front of a group, others are better one-on-one.

And when you approach groups and people, look at who your Friends know. Someone whose spouse or friend is a member of the Rotary might approach them. Someone who owns a business might approach the Chamber of Commerce. You can't just ask people who come into the library because then you have missed those who don't use it and don't think anyone else does.

Friends groups and libraries need to set goals, both immediate and long-term. "We cannot be everything to everyone," Greer said.

The key is to choose priorities that are important



Amy Greer explains how to ask for things.

to the legislator and your community.

"We have to stop thinking of the library as just a place," she said. It is resources, databases, a meeting place, help with your communities needs.

When you approach an individual or a group you are not just asking for money, she said. In a community you have both current and retired teachers, publicists, directors of non-profits. These people might be able to share their expertise with the library and your Friends.

"Maybe they can't give money but maybe they can give a computer," she said.

If you have more than one library in your town, Greer said you must form partnerships.

"If you compete, then everyone goes down," she said.

Everything from assessing your community's needs to preparing a speech is about "the ask," Greer said. You have to know what you want and why your library is important. If you ask before they realize what your library does, you get turned down.

Linda Obedzinski of the Glastonbury Friends said she has learned a lesson about asking from something her husband said: "If they said no to you once, the next answer is likely to be yes."



Friends of
Connecticut
Libraries

Middletown Library Service Center
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Middletown, CT 06457

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Newsletter edited
and designed by
Marjorie Ruschau

Don't Your Friends Deserve a Little Recognition For Their Hard Work?

Many of you are proud of the work your Friends group has accomplished.

Does your Friends group deserve statewide recognition? Or does one of your individual members deserve statewide recognition?

We're pretty sure that you know a person or team who deserves a FOCL award.

Early in 2015, FOCL will mail award nomination forms to the presidents of Friends groups and to library directors. Nomination forms are due back to FOCL in mid-April. But do not procrastinate, as forms

must be postmarked before the deadline to be considered.

Winners will be presented with their awards at the FOCL Annual Meeting, June 13, at Middlesex Community College in Middletown.

For more information email FOCL at friendsctlibraries@gmail.com or contact Rob Sweeney, chairman of the awards committee, at Rob-sweeney2014@att.net or 860 749-9324.

Larry Kibner of the Meriden Friends was honored in June 2014.

