

The Boca Raton Tribune

Your Closest Neighbor

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Friends of the Library Organization Continues to Enhance the Life of our Community

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As Autumn's winds sweep us toward another Thanksgiving, our natural inclination is to begin reflecting upon everything for which we are most grateful. Of course, family, health, friends, work and the like make the top of this list. But Autumn's winds are often cold. Do you really know what truly enhances your life, what provides quality to it, what infuses your life with value and the privilege of giving to your community in a unique and special way? If you are finding it hard to answer that question promptly in the affirmative, then here is a gift for you! It is an introduction to a place that provides all of these benefits and so much more. The Friends of the Library is an organization that enhances the life of our community in numerous ways. It provides us with a treasure trove of personal enjoyment while also creating a place where you can give of yourself and enhance your life through the spirit of giving.



The Friends of the Library have expanded their reach through their own programming, which now includes an historical re-enactment series.

On November 15, 2018 the Friends hosted a Members Only Historical Re-enactment Event featuring Dolley Madison, as interpreted by Michele Greensmith. The event was held at the Spanish River Library Mezzanine. Pictured with Dolley Madison are a few of The Friends of the Library board members. Check out their website for upcoming events and their extensive list of programs!

The Friends of the Library staunchly supports the Boca Raton Library through funding for its numerous programs, among them—to pique your interest so that you will Google them more quickly than the pumpkin pie is going to disappear at your Thanksgiving feast—the Sunday Speaker Series, the Sunday Music Series, the 1000 Books Program, the Summer Reading Program, and the Friends Book Club Discussion: opportunities and events for everyone that are fun, interesting, educational, and cultural—in a word, continually fulfilling and rewarding.

Additionally, if you're of the more "exclusive type," there are events for "members only." Become a member and add being a Friend—and we're not talking about Quakers here—to your *résumé* in order to enjoy the full privileges of these private gatherings. Moreover, by joining the Friends as a volunteer, you will unite forces with an influential team of board members who really make things happen. Their accomplishments are too numerous to list here. Another reason to visit the Friends' website.

Who is the power behind these successes? Below is a quick peek at some of the Friends of the Library's board members:

Cyndi Bloom has been the Friends Board President for the past five years. Under her capable leadership, the Friends have grown steadily in membership, increased event attendance through enhanced media communications, and launched both successful library advocacy and funding campaigns. There is no doubt that Cyndi has made a long-lasting impact with her incredible team. "The Friends were pleased to donate \$250,000 to the City of Boca Raton for the building of the new Downtown Library in 2013," says Board President Cyndi Bloom. "We did this so that the Friends Community Meeting Room could be expanded to accommodate larger crowds and so the Bookstore would have enough space for the amount of business it conducts. This past year, we committed a donation of \$50,000 to the City for the tenth anniversary of the Spanish Library. For the past 26 years, the Friends of the Boca Raton Library have had a history of supporting the library and the community, and it is my great pleasure to be part of that mission."

Tracy Wasserman is the Friends' secretary and "loves," in her own words, "to introduce people to new things!"—among which are the unique online education courses provided through Universal Class, Inc., courtesy of the Friends' sponsors. Tracy's interest in library volunteering started when she wrote a high-school paper about being a librarian. After a 25-year professional career, she returned to her true love and earned an MLIS degree online from Clarion University of Pennsylvania. "I love how libraries have progressed and kept abreast of the technology boom," she says, looking back to the time when she was taking classes in library science as an undergrad.

And then, last, but certainly not least, there is **Joanne Toulantis**, who is tailor-perfect in her job as the Friends' Vice President and Marketing and Media Chair. Joanne's professional background would bring any company executive running to her doorstep (and moreover, breaking down the door). Her experience as a highly-motivated media executive, marketer and negotiator has been a priceless jewel for the Friends organization.



Earlier in the day, these happy children at Florence Fuller Child Development Center (recipients of the Friends special children's programs) received a special gift – a visit from Dolley Madison!

Speaking of jewels, the Friends of the Library possesses another one in its Bookstore, located in the lobby of the Boca Raton Public Library in Downtown. It would take a book to describe the experience patrons and volunteers alike enjoy in this little-hidden gem. Founded in 1990 on Palmetto Park Rd, near the Tin Muffin, the bookstore later moved to an empty office building in downtown Boca where it stayed until it finally took up residence in the new library. This inviting little spot to the right of the lobby just after one walks through the doors is truly a hidden gem because most people seem to stroll by without even noticing it. Don't be one of these unfortunates! As well as being the library's most prized possession, the bookstore also provides it with its most substantial monetary support. Sandy Creighton, who has been volunteering at the bookstore since its founding in 1990, says she is grateful for the genuine spirit of giving exhibited by each and every volunteer, volunteers who are motivated to make a difference for each person who walks through the door, volunteers who are dedicated, talented, and who always display a positive and patient attitude. What about that do we not need in the world today?

Renee Sass, another volunteer in charge of the Hobbies and Home-Improvement section of the bookstore, agrees that what she finds most rewarding about volunteering here is that "opportunity to help each and every person that comes through the door." "There is often someone who is searching for something in particular," she says, "and to help them discover what they are looking for is always rewarding." "I love working with the other volunteers," she adds, "because we are a family." The knowledge that the bookstore is "bringing in money" for the library gives her enormous satisfaction. "...every penny is spent in support of the library programs," she concludes. Sandy has found the perfect place to give.

Thanksgiving is all about being thankful for what we have been given and for giving thanks. If you feel that your life is lacking in value and meaning, that that edge is missing from your

gratitude list, go give with the Friends today and be warmed. The Friends of the Library is certainly something we can all be thankful for.

The Friends of the Library website is filled with so many gifts and so much to be thankful for...enjoy! <https://www.bocalibraryfriends.org/>

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The Friends are also on Facebook @bocalibraryfriends