



FRIENDS OF THE BOCA RATON PUBLIC LIBRARY

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

October, 2021

This year the Friends continued to be a strong advocate for the library, providing funding for a variety of new special projects in addition to traditional library funding for programs and events. All library funding requests for the year were approved (note: library funding requests this year were less than funding requests in past years, due to decreased library programming in light of the Covid pandemic).

The Friends also launched a business sponsorship program in 2021 and have by year's end brought on board two corporate sponsors.

Library support: The Friends were able to donate over \$17,000 to the library by October 2021, with additional funding committed but not yet spent as of October 2021, to bring a total committed to library funding in 2021 close to \$25,000. These programs and projects include:

Funded library programs

- The annual summer reading program (sponsored by the Friends every year since 1999);
- Book clubs for all ages;
- STEM backpacks and Literacy backpacks;
- Citizen Science Activity Kits
- Tumblebooks database subscription;
- Brian HQ database subscription (yet to be approved and funded);
- Chess classes.

Funded special library projects

- New Storywalk at Serenoa Glade Preserve in George Snow Park (opened in February);
- Boca Helping Hands book giveaways with donated books from the Friends bookstore (four book giveaways from July through October with more planned before the end of the year)
- Community bookshelves at Dixie Manger and Boys & Girls of Boca Raton (not yet completed);
- Four Little Free Libraries in public areas of Boca Raton (funding approved in 2020 but not yet spent as of October 2021 while awaiting approval to begin construction);
- Book totes for outreach;
- Butterfly Garden at Storywalk Pondhawk (currently under construction).

Bookstore: Forced to close down in April 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, the Friends bookstore re-opened in April of 2021. The online bookstore, operational since mid-July 2020 and originally offering individual bookstore items for sale, now offers grab bags of books online to complement the offering of individual items in the re-opened bookstore.

In May of 2021, the Friend online bookstore was recognized by the Florida Library Association in winning the FLA 2021 Special Projects award for the successful launching of the online bookstore.

As of October, the Friends bookstore operation has grossed over \$37,000 in net sales this year.

Social media: In addition to regular press releases, other library funding news, and bookstore sale updates posted on its Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages, the Friends recorded its 2020-2021 monthly speaker series events for posting on its YouTube station, along with bookstore marketing videos recorded in 2021.

Also updated is the Friends website blog, with regular contributions from Board member and communications director, Ilena Alvarez.

Memberships: This year the Friends launched a new member benefit campaign for its approximately 140 members, and a business membership initiative.

Friends members are now offered 20% off on all bookstore purchases up to \$100 per visit during the duration of membership, as well as additional member special sales and bookstore free offerings throughout the year.

The Friends have created a business membership program under the direction of Membership Chair and new Board member, Alexis Johnson, offering cylinder plaques and business logo recognition in the Friends bookstore and on Friends marketing channels, as well as 20% off purchases in the bookstore up to \$100 for employees of the membership business.

Nomination for 2021 Woman Volunteer of the Year: We are excited to announce that Cyndi Bloom, past Friends Board President and current Friends Board Treasurer, has been nominated by the Women's Executive Club of South Palm Beach County for the Junior League of Boca Raton's 34th Annual Woman Volunteer of the Year Award. The winner will be announced at the award luncheon in November.

We are deeply grateful to our members and donors, and to our outstanding volunteers, for their ongoing support and service on behalf of the Boca Raton Public Library and our Boca Raton community.

Tracy Wasserman
Board President, Friends of the Boca Raton Public Library, Inc.