



FRIENDS OF THE BOCA RATON PUBLIC LIBRARY
ANNUAL REPORT
2018: A Success Story

CELEBRATING SPANISH RIVER'S 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY: A SPECIAL GIFT

The Friends of the Boca Raton Public Library (BRPL) started the 2018 new year by sponsoring and celebrating the 10th Year Anniversary of the Spanish River Library. It was indeed a memorable occasion that included the Mayor and representatives of City Council, other community leaders, Library Board members, Friends members, Library staff and guests. In honor of this occasion, The Friends presented a special gift of \$50,000 to the City of Boca Raton to be used for Spanish River Library improvements with naming rights for the Friends. Additionally, we donated a Giving Tree in the lobby of the Spanish River Library that is a public recognition tree providing additional funds for BRPL.

THE LIBRARY REACHES A MILESTONE: ONE MILLION USES IN ONE YEAR

September 28, 2018 marked a new record for the Boca Raton Public Library. In a city of 27,000 active library card holders, the Friends helped celebrate the milestone of one million uses of the library in one year. The milestone included circulation of library books and materials and online digital resources. The Friends gave funds for many of these materials and online resources (see details below). We are indeed proud to help make this milestone a very special time for the community. BRPL is truly a gem in our midst and a very useful resource for all residents. We are grateful to Boca's Mayor, City Council and city officials for generously supporting BRPL as a major educational resource for the community.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM: HELPING CHILDREN AND YOUTH STAY ON COURSE

Another milestone was reached with the library's 2018 Summer Reading Program that helps school children and youth stay on track with their reading skills throughout the summer. This year's theme was "Libraries Rock," and The Friends funded \$12,000 for the program's kick-off party, prizes, t-shirts, book bags and events. Over 1800 people attended the kick-off party, and a record number of over 4500 readers signed up for the seven-week program. They read over 37,000 books in that time, about one book per week per person. Nearly 9500 people of all ages attended 291 summer programs. Thanks go to the Junior League of Boca Raton and the Law Firm of Boyd, Richards, Parker & Colonelli, P.L. for donating to the Friends for this ever-popular and worthy library program.

OUR CORE MISSION: FUNDING LIBRARY PROGRAMS, MATERIALS, TECHNOLOGY, ONLINE RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

Again, in 2018, The Friends agreed to fund over \$50,000 to the library for programs, special events, books, online services for the digital library and new technology for all ages. Over the past 6 years, our yearly funding agreements have reached a grand total of about \$250,000 for specific needs of the library.

Our funds are primarily generated through Bookstore sales, donations and grants. This year we gave funds for:

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Purchase of books for *Jump Start* Children’s Read for the Record (*Maybe Something Beautiful*)
- Children’s author event - Bob Shea (nationally recognized children’s author)
- One Thousand Books Before Kindergarten - a reading program for families
- Tumble Books Library - ebooks for children
- Annual Library Tea for Families
- S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Backpacks with Learning Materials and Tools (8-12 years old) - very popular
- Tutor.com - online tutoring aids for children and youth (K-12) - online tutoring, homework help and test preparation (new and very popular)
- Teen Advisory Board
- Book groups for youth

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ADULTS

Funding for adult services focused on expansion of the Discover Studio and online services such as:

- Gale Legal Forms (for individuals and small businesses)
- Kanopy Streaming (video from BBC, PBS, Criterion, Great Courses, World Cinema)
- Gale Small Business Builder
- Equipment for Digital Story Telling and Video Recording
- Financial Literacy Speakers

2018 FUNDING FOR FRIENDS CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Friends organization also provides educational and cultural events for its members and for the community as follows:

- The Sunday Music and Speaker Series,
 - Art Exhibits at the Friends Art Gallery (Spanish River Library),
 - Book Clubs at both libraries,
 - 2018 membership meeting and brunch,
 - Historic Re-enactment members reception and event, featuring Dolley Madison (also includes visits to local schools)
 - 2018 Volunteer Recognition Lunch (for 60 volunteers and some library staff),
 - Living Voices, an historic re-enactment of the experiences of American Suffragettes
- Again this year, BRPL is celebrating with us during National Friends of the Library Week (Oct 21-27). This is a national program promoted annually by United For Libraries to highlight the successes of local library Friends organizations and to celebrate their contributions to libraries across the country. During this week, we will be honored throughout the library and its social media as well as with a banner outside the buildings.

- Outreach and Advocacy are important in forming important relationships with the community. In 2018 we reached out by:
 - Funding educational programs at the library for Florence Fuller Child Development Centers for pre-school and elementary children,
 - Participating in events and programs of the Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce, as a non-profit member,
 - Advocating for the library at Boca Raton City Council Meetings,
 - Funding a program advertisement for the the YMCA Annual Breakfast,
 - Participating in educational programs sponsored by the Junior League of Boca Raton.

VOLUNTEERISM: THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH WE BUILD THE FRIENDS ORGANIZATION

We are proud of our volunteers who have worked hard to provide outstanding service in the Friends Bookstore and to provide crowd-pleasing cultural programs for the community. We have a long-standing commitment to the library and this year was no exception.

- The **Bookstore** continues to bring in excellent sales with over 30 volunteers working 5 days a week (Tuesday -Saturday, 10am-5:30pm). Manager Joy Fishkind has reported robust sales in the store and through Amazon.com. The store's newsletter called **Coastal Reads** has become an effective communication channel for current and new customers.

WHAT'S NEW IN MARKETING FOR THE FRIENDS

This year we have created a marketing strategy to focus on a more robust and wide-spread reach to the Boca Community (and beyond). Our new Board Member and Marketing Manager, Joanne Toulantis and our Board Secretary and Media Manager, Tracy Wasserman have provided direction in broadening our social media presence. We are committed to this effort so that we reach a broader group of people of all age demographics, groups (families, teachers, etc.) and interests. We plan to expand this social media presence in 2019 as we seek to increase membership and community visibility on our mission.

MEMBERSHIP AND FUND RAISING

Our membership is important to us, and in 2019 we hope to reach higher levels of giving to the Friends by increasing our member and donor levels. This strategy is necessary to sustain our commitment to the Boca Raton Library and to the community. We will be working on a couple of new efforts:

- A new fee structure for 2020 membership
- Special fund-raising events for members and guests
- Requesting members to reach out to encourage others to become Friends
- Increase in grant writing efforts.

We have had another wonderful year with our members, volunteers and donors. The library staff continues to provide impressive resources for the community, even through a time of change in management. We applaud all they do.

Cyndi Bloom, Board President
For the Friends Board of Directors

October 2018