

March 2021



Friends of the
London Public Library

Community Support For Your Library

Among Friends

Message from the President

On behalf of the Friends Executive, we hope this finds all of you safe and well. We continue to monitor and to act on developments in regard to COVID-19. To this end and due to the dedication of the Board, we continue to meet monthly by Zoom to take care of business and to plan for the future. Thus, we were able to hold a drive-by book sale, with all protocols adhered to, offer the Book for Every Child campaign, continue receiving memberships, pick up book donations, and continue to improve and update our website.

The Annual General Meeting was to be held in January but, due to the pandemic, it was not possible, and we decided to postpone. Thanks to Deb Lowry and Connie Sullivan who researched the legalities surrounding the timing of an AGM during the pandemic and found that it is possible to postpone without a change to the Friends Constitution. It was decided an in-person meeting or Zoom meeting will be held at a future date. We thank the current Executive who have agreed to continue in their respective positions as long as required.

We hope in the near future to be able to open our Friends Book Store, which remains closed, offer our Speaking with Friends program, and hold our Annual Fall Book Sale. When we have updated news on these programs, we will inform you.

While much has changed, our commitment to supporting our London Public Library has not and in February 2021 we were able to donate \$75,000.00 to support the Library's initiatives to eliminate barriers and improve inclusion through access to Library programs and services for vulnerable individuals and communities.

My thanks to the Friends Executive for their work and dedication during the pandemic and thank you, our members, for your continuing support.

Stay well and safe.
Carmen Sprovieri, President

Membership

For the year of 2020, we had a total of 169 members in the categories of Senior, Individual, Family and Student. The Friends Executive decided to extend 2020 memberships to the end of 2021, therefore, membership renewals were not sent out in December as is our usual practice. Despite this, we continue to offer members of the public the opportunity to become members through the website. It has been heartening that we have continued to receive some new memberships and donation support these past few months.

Ann Walker, Membership Coordinator

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Book Sale Update

While we had to cancel the 2020 Fall Book Sale because of the pandemic's impact, the Friends did conduct a mini-sale in late November. A member of our executive became aware of a group of daycare and early childcare workers interested in obtaining easy-read books for their respective programs, materials that they had often found at the book sale. In response, the Friends Executive organized a small drive-up sale in the parking lot of the Byron Branch Library, a location that allows easy access to our storage warehouse. Materials were selected and bagged by the sorting team and members of the Friends Board. Information about the sale was sent out to prospective agencies in advance and buyers were able to come by to pick up a bag of books for \$10 without leaving their car. The sale generated revenues of \$330 and more importantly, perhaps, showed that future sales of this type will require a clear focus on materials, extensive organization and marketing, and be limited in size. At this time no further mini-sales have been planned as it is hoped that the Library Store will be re-opening soon. We also anticipate a Fall Book Sale at Centennial Hall in October 2021.

Don Menard, Book Sale Coordinator

Friends of the Library Book Store

The Friends of the Library Book Store has remained closed since March 2020, initially in accordance with Provincial restrictions and Library Administration policy that closed all branches during the first lockdown. However, as restrictions were relaxed it became evident that Book Store volunteers were not comfortable with returning to the store until vaccinations are administered as most are retired and of an age that is at risk of the more severe outcomes of becoming infected. Tentative plans were developed in early December to open the Book Store for limited hours, however, were deferred in anticipation of a spike in COVID cases following the Christmas / New Years' season, a decision which proved to be prudent.

It is difficult to predict when the Book Store will reopen and the store managers continue to monitor developments. Given the current significant downward trend in new cases and the anticipated roll-out of vaccines, we will try to initiate a limited opening during late March or early April. It is expected that opening on a full-time schedule will require recruiting new volunteers. Watch for announcements regarding Book Store reopening plans and recruitment opportunities for new volunteer positions which will be posted on the Friends website (www.friendslondonlibrary.ca).

*Scott Curoe & Mary Blasl, Co-Managers,
Friends Book Store*

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A Book for Every Child 2020

“This is an amazing program and we are so grateful that we were able to give books to some of our students. Thank you so much!”

It is heartfelt thank you notes like this, received from teachers and agency workers, that express the importance of London Public Library’s A Book for Every Child program.

This was the 29th year for this annual program and, once again, it was a great success, although COVID-19 made for a very different year. Requests for books were down as some schools and agencies did not participate, and donations of books to Library branches and through the bookstores were down overall. However, all of the requests made for books were filled, and a total of 4,794 books were distributed to children through 29 schools and 13 agencies that work with families.

The role of Friends of the Library in this program was facilitating the participation of local bookstores from November 2 to December 12. Four stores offered a 20% discount on books purchased for the A Book for Every Child:

Chapters – South London

Coles – Masonville Place

Indigo – North London

Oxford Book Shop

Friends volunteers delivered promotional materials to the bookstores, then picked up books purchased and donated in the stores, delivering them to their local Library. Our thanks to: Hilary Bates-Neary, Karen & Doug Payne, Gail Turpin and Linda & Bob Wakefield.

The total number of books donated at the bookstores was 215, lower than in recent years, although with one exception: Oxford Book Shop had more books donated than in each of the previous four years!

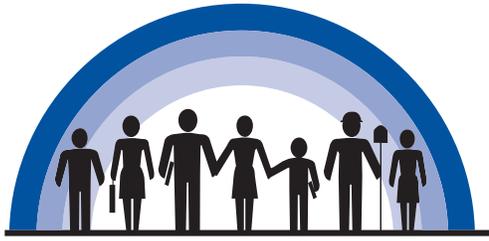
When promoting the program, the Library’s focus was on financial donations as they allow library staff to purchase materials that meet specific the requests and needs of children from schools and agencies. Financial donations to the campaign were up; the total amount raised this year was \$26,483.75. Friends of the Library donated \$1,000.00 to the program.

Remember – donations can be made online or at any Library location all year round and donations can be made in memory of someone or as a gift to celebrate a special occasion.

Diane Knoppert, Book for Every Child Coordinator

Supporting value-added Library programs

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Introducing the New Friends 2021 Website



This photo is a preview of the new look coming to the Friends of the London Public Library website in early March. Visit www.friendslondonlibrary.ca after our launch to see our new online presence.

The Friends of the London Public Library website is currently undergoing redevelopment in order to ensure the website can be supported well into the future. The new development environment will be capable of implementing the latest functions available to modern websites. Launch of the new website is scheduled for the beginning of March 2021.

Although our current website is robust and capable, it is a complex environment and there is a lack of suitable support available for the system. We are now adopting the widely used WordPress software to develop the new website and manage it through the WordPress Content Management System (CMS). This will enable the Friends to find volunteers from the many WordPress developers that are able to offer their time to support the Friends website. We will issue a bulletin regarding the changes to the website at the time of launch.

Clive Fletcher, Website Coordinator

www.friendslondonlibrary.ca