



Friends of the
London Public Library

Community Support For Your Library

November 2025

Among Friends

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Friends' Executive, I hope this finds you well as we prepare for the winter season.

We've had a busy few months with the Annual Fall Book Sale, the reopening of Sherwood Branch Library, preparing for A Book for Every Child, Speaking with Friends, and organizing our Annual General Meeting.

This work would not be possible without the support of our members, the time and talents of our volunteers, and the commitment of the Friends' Executive.

My sincere thanks.

Annual Fall Book Sale: This year's sale was one of the best ever, with gross revenues totalling approximately \$64,000 compared to 2024's approximately \$53,000.

Sherwood Branch Library Renovations: We participated in the Sherwood Branch Library renovations by donating \$100,000 to support the Branch's new children's area.

A Book for Every Child: This is now the 34th year of the program, and last year nearly 7,000 children received a book of their own distributed through over 40 London area social agencies and schools with low literacy rates.

Speaking with Friends: We're excited to welcome guest author Linden MacIntyre from CBC's *The National* and *The Fifth Estate*. Join us for a reading from his most recent book – *An Accidental Villain: A Soldier's Tale of War, Deceit and Exile*, on Saturday, December 5 at 2:00 p.m. in the Central Library.

Annual General Meeting: Mark your Calendar for the Annual General Meeting on January 14, 2026. Stay afterward for Jazz for the People at 7pm.

Book Store News: Book Store Manager Scott Curoe is retiring after 15 years of dedicated service. During his tenure, he consistently went above and beyond. We can't thank him enough, and we hope you enjoy reading his journey in his own words later in this newsletter.

Looking for great holiday finds? Don't forget to visit the Friends of the Library Bookstore for a large collection of Christmas-themed books for all ages and at great prices.

Thank you again for your continuing support.

Carmen Sprovieri, President

Website: <https://friendslondonlibrary.ca/>

Voicemail: 519-661-2448

Email: connect@friendslondonlibrary.ca

Supporting value-added Library programs



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FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY OCTOBER BOOK SALE 2025

The Giant Fall Book Sale took place from October 16-19, 2025, in the lower level of Centennial Hall. Organized and supported by volunteers and members of the Friends of the London Public Library, the sale was a tremendous success, with gross receipts reaching approximately \$64,000 before expenses, compared to \$53,000 in 2024. From the opening preview night through the weekend, and concluding with Sunday's \$5 bag sale, customers enthusiastically cleared the tables before the 4:00 p.m. closing.

Sale coordinators extend their thanks to several key contributors. Special appreciation goes to our corporate sponsors, Canada Moving and Alta Materials Handling, for their transportation support, and to London Public Library staff for their assistance with logistics and advertising. We are also grateful for the excellent weather, the strong volume and variety of donated materials throughout the year, and focused promotional efforts that contributed to this year's success.

Proceeds from the sale will be used to enhance London Public Library programs and initiatives, including ongoing literacy development. Friends and volunteers were especially inspired by the opportunity to contribute \$100,000 to the Children's area in the recently renovated Sherwood Branch Library.

A huge "THANK YOU" to all of you for your support!



Supporting value-added Library programs



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FRIENDS PRESENT \$100,000 TO LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY TOWARD THE RENOVATION OF SHERWOOD BRANCH LIBRARY

Thanks to the support of our Friends members, the hard work of our volunteers, and the dedication of the Friends Board, we were able to donate \$100,000 to support Sherwood Branch Library's new children's area. The Grand Opening Celebration took place on Saturday, October 4, 2025.

As Friends, we believe deeply in the value of public libraries. Since our beginning in the early 1990s, we have supported vital value-added programs and services. Public libraries are an essential community asset. They are the backbone of democracy, open to all and serving everyone. For this reason, we remain committed to ensuring that all Londoners have access to library resources and services.

This donation has helped create a welcoming and engaging children's area where young learners can explore, read, and play. The space includes a Workshop, low bookshelves that help children easily find great books, comfortable seating for families, and a variety of toys, tools, and materials that support reading, learning, creativity, and play.

Thank you again for your continued support. Your membership makes projects like this possible.





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A Book for Every Child – That Is the Goal

This year marks the 34th year of London Public Library's A Book for Every Child program. Each year, donations of new books and financial contributions help ensure that thousands of books are distributed by schools and community agencies to children who might otherwise not have a book of their own.

The 2025 campaign began on **November 3** and will run until **December 13**. Five London bookstores are supporting this important initiative by providing a **20% discount** on books purchased for the program. Books purchased for the program are left at the store and picked up by Friends of the London Public Library volunteers. Last year, 341 books were donated through participating bookstores.

London Public Library
**A Book
for
Every
Child**
Nov. 3 – Dec. 13



DONATE TODAY!
www.lpl.ca/bfec
519-661-5100 x. 5460

Thanks to the participating stores:

- Dellelce Family Book Store
- Oxford Book Shop
- Coles Masonville Place
- Indigo North London
- Indigo South London

Financial donations are also greatly appreciated, as they allow library staff to purchase materials that meet specific requests from schools and agencies. Donations can be made online at **www.lpl.ca/bfec**, by calling **519-661-5100 ext. 5460**, or in person at any library location.

Although the focused campaign and bookstore discount take place each November and December, donations are welcome throughout the year. Contributions may also be made in memory of someone or as a gift to celebrate a special occasion.

Thank you for helping bring the joy of reading to children in our community!

Supporting value-added Library programs



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LINDEN MACINTYRE WILL BE SPEAKING WITH FRIENDS

You may recognize Linden MacIntyre from CBC's *The National* or *The Fifth Estate*. Perhaps you have read his novel *The Bishop's Man*, which won the Scotiabank Giller Prize for fiction in 2009, or his memoir *The Wake*, about the 1929 tsunami that devastated Newfoundland and affected his own family.

MacIntyre's most recent book, *An Accidental Villain: A Soldier's Tale of War, Deceit and Exile*, blends biography, history, and an exploration of how brutal decisions can shape character, events, and the lives of others. The book tells the story of Hugh Tudor, a British major-general in the First World War who was chosen by Winston Churchill to lead the Black and Tans, the police force tasked with maintaining order during Ireland's civil conflict. Knighted for his efforts and possibly under threat due to his harsh leadership, Tudor later moved to Newfoundland, where he lived until his death in 1965.

Linden MacIntyre will be the guest of the Friends of the Library on **Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 2:00pm** on the third floor of the Central Library. He will read from and discuss *An Accidental Villain*, followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience. Copies of his book will be available for purchase from Oxford Books, and the Friends will host a reception after the talk.

This is a free event, and all donations to the Friends support Library literacy programs. Bring your friends and join us for what promises to be a fascinating afternoon!



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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the London Public Library will take place on **Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 6pm** in the Stevenson & Hunt Meeting Room, at Central Library, 251 Dundas Street.

Following the meeting, enjoy Jazz for the People at 7pm in the Wolf Performance Hall—a program supported in part by The Friends of the Library.

We will announce the Friend(s) of the year at this meeting. **See how to enter below.**

FRIEND OF THE YEAR - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Do you know someone who deserves to be recognized as Friend of the Year? If so, please submit the name and address of your nominee(s), along with a short letter explaining why you believe that person or group should be honoured.

Nominations must be supported by three individuals. Please include the names, signatures, and addresses of all three nominators.

Send your submission(s) no later than **December 15, 2025**, to:

President, Friends of the London Public Library

251 Dundas St, London, ON N6A 6H9





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FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOK STORE REPORT

The Friends of the Library Bookstore has a large quantity of Christmas-themed children's books, novels, puzzles and more.

The bookstore is open:

- **Tuesday - Friday:**
10am – 5pm
- **Saturday and Monday:**
10am – 4pm

Please note: The store will be closed December 24 and reopen on January 2, 2025.

The bookstore volunteers wish all of their customers peace and happiness over the holiday season!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REPORT

As 2025 comes to a close, it's time to look ahead and renew your membership with the Friends of the London Public Library. In this newsletter, you will have read about the many projects and programs your membership and donations help to make our support of library programs possible.

Soon, you will be receiving your mailed membership renewal letter for 2026; however, you can also renew your membership online at any time that is convenient for you. Just go to our website at www.friendslondonlibrary.ca and click on the membership tab.

Stay Connected!

For you to get the most out of your membership and to receive the latest updates, it is important that we have your most current contact information. If you have changed any of your contact information, please let us know at: membership@friendslondonlibrary.ca

Membership Benefits

As a valued member, you'll enjoy:

- **Advanced notification** of programs and events planned or sponsored by the Friends.
- **10% discount** at Oxford Book Shop with your current membership card.
- **20% discount** at the Library Store every Friday with your current membership card.
- An **invitation to Preview Night** before our annual giant book sale in October.
- **3 to 4 exclusive invitations** annually to the Columbia Sportswear Employee Store for you and up to four guests. (A current membership card is required for entry.)
- Our newsletter, Among Friends, keeps you informed about events, volunteer opportunities, and news.
- Invitations to attend programs and events organized by the Friends.
- The satisfaction of supporting Library services and contributing to the community.

Thank you for supporting the work of the Friends of the London Public Library!

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WE WILL MISS YOU, SCOTT CUROE!

A Farewell from Scott Curoe: 15 Years at the Friends' Bookstore

Scott Curoe retired earlier this year from the Friends' Bookstore. He has contributed this article reflecting on his 15 years as Co-Manager of the store. Read his story below.



After fifteen years helping to manage the Friends' Bookstore, I was asked to share my experiences. I owe much to my wife, Debby, whose idea it was for us to volunteer with the Friends of the Library. Since we do most things as a pair, I'll start by giving credit to her. When we first

retired, Deb said, "We don't have to do anything, do we?" I replied, "No, we're retired, we've earned this." Six months later, she said, "We should do something."

So, we went to the library and spoke to Ellen Hobin about volunteering. Shortly thereafter, we began working the Wednesday morning shift at the Friends' Bookstore. One morning a week seemed manageable, and it was a good fit for us because we both love reading. Wherever we travelled, we made it a point to visit local used bookstores.

Six months later, Deb became President of the Friends, and I began what became a new career, helping to manage the bookstore. It's curious that life sometimes brings you back to where you started.

When I was in grade eight, I had a part-time job at a bookstore, one hour after school each day, and Saturday mornings. I'd sweep the floors, unpack new inventory, and restock supplies as needed. Eight hours a week put \$12 in my pocket. For a grade school kid, back then, \$12 was more than just pocket change.

Suddenly, I was looking at more than just a three-hour-a-week commitment. The bookstore operated with the help of 45 volunteers. Having retired from a career in Human Resource Management, I focused on **People and Process**.

People

There are many reasons why people choose to volunteer, including:

- **Social engagement:** an opportunity to make new friendships
- **Social responsibility:** an opportunity to support a good cause
- **Personal growth, purpose, and fulfillment:**
 - For students, an opportunity to develop new skills
 - For retirees, an opportunity to use existing knowledge or help others learn.

It is important that the bookstore environment supports these motivations.

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This has been the case in our experience. My wife and I have worked our Wednesday morning shift with Lois for fifteen years now. Lois is a friend. We take pride in knowing that the efforts of volunteers have helped the bookstore raise upwards toward a million dollars during the time we have worked there, and in knowing that the Friends have supported many library initiatives that benefit the entire community.

We genuinely enjoy working there. When I talk to people who apply to volunteer, I ask them why they want to volunteer, and I like to tell them how the therapy dogs come to the Library on Wednesday mornings and always come into the bookstore first to wag their tails, say hello, and get some love scratches. I tell them how Bernice often drops by and brings us baked goods, or about Charles, who loved birds but lived in an apartment building, so he would bring in sunflower seeds for my feeder and chat about what birds were in season.

Every shift provides its unique customer experiences like these and an opportunity for volunteers to engage. When I interview new volunteers, the focus is on their interests and how they might best fit in and fulfill why they want to volunteer.

Process

Of course, people need to know what to do, and how and when to do it. The bookstore has systems and processes in place, but I've always relied on experienced volunteers to train new volunteers. I know the volunteers who like to do this and who are good at it. It's another example of making the job personally fulfilling.

I've always believed the best work environments are those that respect people and their ability, and that demonstrate trust in their judgement. In many

respects, I have tried to set things up so the bookstore runs without direct supervision by relying on people to self-manage. After all, I never wanted managing the store to be a full-time job for me. I've tried to encourage volunteers to exercise initiative and discretion, even though that risks things going wrong. As an example, the bookstore takes pride in our more-than-reasonable pricing policy, but I once had a volunteer who began pricing prime-quality books as "free." I never did find out who, as it wasn't really important. It served as a reminder that I needed to be better at communicating.

People and process are codependent. It has been rewarding to see how our volunteers have stepped up and taken on the roles and responsibilities the bookstore requires. James handles movies and music; Bill and Dinna know kids' books. When she's not travelling, Barb likes to price. Brenda, Angeline, and Brian are natural organizers. Liz does any and everything as long as it keeps her busy. Jennifer owns the sorting room; Ulyana likes to scan books into inventory. Claire is the system expert; Shiloh helps with setting up online sales. Leslie, Anne, and Alison are great trainers. Everyone fits in, finds fulfillment, and together it all works. I should give last mention to Cathy, who is the master of all and loves to remind me of what I need to do almost as much as my wife Debby does, always in a caring, loving, and helpful manner, of course.

After 15 years, it is time to step aside. So, I pass it on to Claire and Brian. I know they will make changes, some that I might not agree with, and some that I have not thought of. It's a natural cycle. I hope to continue working the Wednesday morning shift with Debby, Lois, and Ulyana, greeting the therapy dogs as they come in.