



# Friends News and Notes

Friends of Libraries Section — A Network of Library Advocates in New York State

[www.nyla.org/Friends](http://www.nyla.org/Friends)

Volume 12, #1 – January/February 2026

## It's Not TOO Early!

### Call for Nominations - FLS Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award

Was one of your New Year's resolutions to be more intentional about recognition of your volunteers? Would you like an opportunity to recognize your Friends of the Library or another active library supporter? Presented annually for more than 30 years, the FLS Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award honors the efforts of a volunteer member or group within the library community who have contributed to the growth of libraries or Friends of the Library organizations.

FLS will work with the nominator to hold a reception at their local library where the award recipient can celebrate with their family and community, receiving a plaque commemorating the award. The recipient will also be recognized at the FLS Annual Membership Meeting, via Zoom, on November 18, 2026.

To nominate a group or individual, use the [nomination packet](#) for the FLS Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award posted on the [FLS Awards and Scholarships](#) page. Submissions must include all relevant information outlined

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### Call for Applications - FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship

Are you a member of a Friends of the Library group? Do you serve as the Staff Liaison to your library's Friends group? Do you have a stellar Friends group at your library? Could you or one of the Friends volunteers benefit from a professional development opportunity at the NYLA Annual Conference?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, please consider applying for the FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship (RECS) to attend the 2026 NYLA Annual Conference. The award pays up to a maximum of \$1,000 for an individual to attend the conference. Reimbursements may include registration, tickets for events and meal functions, lodging, and travel expenses.

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## FLS in 2026

- ✓ FLS Connections!, conversations offered via Zoom, will return in 2026. Stay tuned for upcoming topics and registration details.
- ✓ Application and Nomination packets for the FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship and the FLS Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award are available on the [FLS Awards and Scholarships](#) page. It's not too early to think about applying for this \$1000 scholarship to attend the 2026 NYLA Conference or to nominate a deserving individual or organization for exceptional service to the library community. The submission deadline for both awards is June 1. Read more in the box to the left.
- ✓ FLS is planning to hold an in-person Friends group Meet-up in June 2026. The exact date and location will be released as soon as plans are finalized. This is a great opportunity for Friends to get together to talk shop and share ideas. Networking is how we learn from each other.
- ✓ National Friends of Libraries Week is October 18-24, 2026. It's not too soon to think about celebrations, activities, or a membership drive during that week.

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FLS creates a network to connect and inspire Friends groups in all types of libraries to support the New York library community.

FLS, a unit of NYLA, embraces and promotes diversity and inclusion in all their forms.

- ✓ Mark your calendars now for #NYLA2026. The conference is November 4-7 at the Saratoga Springs City Center.
- ✓ The FLS Annual Membership will be held via Zoom on November 18, 2026 at 7:00 pm. Registration details and other pertinent information will be available in October.

## A Message from FLS President Meg Van Patten

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I hope 2026 is off to a great start for all. I look forward to learning about the great work performed by Friends groups around New York State. Has your Friends group developed a successful event? Consider sharing information about the event or project with other Friends groups. You could share it in a couple of different ways. Perhaps you have a picture and description that you could share for a future newsletter. Maybe it would be a great topic to share at the November 2026 NYLA Conference in Saratoga Springs. Join us in person at the annual FLS Meet-up (tentatively in June) to share your successes and learn from others. To submit information for the newsletter send it to newsletter editor Terry Mulee. If you have an idea for a conference session, workshop, or webinar, send it to FLS Coordinator for Professional Development Lisa Wemett and FLS representative on the NYLA Continuing Education Committee Geoff Kirkpatrick. All three may be contacted at [FLS.nyla@yahoo.com](mailto:FLS.nyla@yahoo.com).

In 1993, the Baldwinsville Public Library put forth a bond to construct a new library building. The bond passed 2 to 1. When promoting the bond one supporter stated that "More than anything else a library reflects what the community thinks about itself." The Friends of the Bville Library were a strong part of making that quote come to reality as they worked to encourage support for the library. The Friends continue to do their part to foster engagement and raise

funds in order to provide additional materials and resources as well as support for the annual budget vote. That is just one example of the importance of Friends groups.

This newsletter is filled with information about various Friends groups and the great work they have undertaken at their libraries.



I, along with the rest of the FLS Board and committee chairs, look forward to supporting your efforts on behalf of libraries across NYS. Please contact me anytime with your thoughts or questions.

Stay warm,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meg". The signature is cursive and elegant.

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## Library Giving Day – Timing is Everything!



Lots of great things start in the Pacific Northwest, like Starbucks and Library Giving Day. What? You haven't heard of this one-day fundraising event created by the Seattle (WA) Public Library Foundation?

This national day of giving for public libraries occurs during the same month as [National Library Week](#). This year [Library Giving Day](#) is slated for Wednesday, April 1 – no foolin'! It is promoted by United for Libraries, the Public Library Association, and the American Library Association. Overall fundraising revenue has increased dramatically year-over-year from year one, 2019, with giving in 2025 spiking at \$2.3 million! For the libraries reporting their campaign results this year, an average donation was \$141. Now's the time to embrace this event!

[The Library Giving Day Playbook](#) with a detailed campaign timeline is free to download to help with your planning. The website also offers graphics and marketing ideas such as a media kit with sample social media posts, public service announcements, and a press release to encourage online gifts and direct donations which will help your library be

successful with this campaign.

Libraries that adopt this type of fundraising have the potential to create a powerful public/private partnership that has lasting impact and untold benefits. Library Giving Day supports libraries using a special day to create momentum for an annual fundraising campaign. Most organizations, both Friends, foundations, and libraries themselves, conduct multifaceted marketing campaigns using social media, emails, the library's e-newsletter, displays, and postcard reminders to engage the donors.

The Library Giving Day campaign is a concept dedicated to growing philanthropic support for libraries across the nation. It is an excellent opportunity to engage your community and raise much-needed funds for public libraries at a time of the year that does not compete with the community-wide online one-day fundraiser extravaganza "Giving Tuesday" in late November.

Use this campaign to attract new donors and provide an opportunity to highlight the benefits residents derive from their local library in your local media outlets. Participating

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## NYLA 2025 Conference - Actionable Advocacy Opportunities for Friends - Program Recaps



FLS presents its annual recap of Friends-themed programs from the NYLA conference. Guest reporters attended these sessions. Here are their recaps on these "Opportunities for Friends."

### **Pre-Conference – Writing Winning Grant Proposals for Library Programming** by Joyce Laiosa

#### **Fighting Censorship: Friends as Allies**

This program was cancelled due to illness.

#### **A Crafty Way to Support Sustainability** by Meg Sgombick

#### **FLS Showcase: Spotlight on Friends!** by Jim Foster

#### **Collaborative Social Media Marketing for the Friends** by Lisa C. Wemett

#### **Strengthening Community Connections: Friends Groups in Library Advocacy** by Erica Freudenberger

Please note: Program resources may be available in the conference app. They are also available upon request. Please email [FLS.nyla@yahoo.com](mailto:FLS.nyla@yahoo.com) and indicate the program that you are interested in. We will send you the available files.

### **Pre-Conference Writing Winning Grant Proposals for Library Programming**

by Joyce Laiosa

Have you ever thought of applying for a grant? Where do you start? Lisa Wemett and Erica Freudenberger took the participants of this workshop through all the steps for a successful grant application. They explained why your organization should apply for grants: it helps with community improvement, community involvement, and collaboration. They suggested where to look for potential partners and collaborators and went through the nitty gritty of information that is necessary to fill out forms. Lisa and Erica both have experience writing proposals and administering grants. They have been awarded dozens of grants, and have even reviewed grants for funders, including United for Libraries and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

After all the information was shared, they brought in two

people to talk about their grant experiences. Deb Flint, the Library Director of Galway Public Library, applied and was awarded several grants from Humanities New York. Kori Albrecht, Community Outreach and Grant Director from the Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council (LARAC), discussed the [New York State Council of the Arts Community Arts Regrant Program](#). It helped to hear what it was like to write a grant and have it funded. Ms. Albrecht talked about money that is simply waiting to be requested and the many ideas that have been funded.

The first item on your "to do" list is to create an Asset Map identifying the skills, talents, interests, and expertise of people in your community, local institutions, businesses, and the space and places available for everyone to use. (An Asset Map Worksheet was included in the FLS Toolkit for Writing Winning Grant Proposals.) Invite your staff, trustees, and Friends to contribute to it. Beyond individuals, gather information on associations, clubs, local institutions, local businesses and physical spaces and places. You will soon realize that there are possibilities of what you can do and acknowledge the gifts and talents others possess.

Build a relationship with the funder. Introduce yourself in a phone call or email to let them know that you are interested and have some ideas that might work with their organization. The grant funders want you to succeed and they want to be a part of that success. It is fine to ask questions and for advice to help with your request.

Lisa and Erica went over some very important points to keep in mind when asking for funds:

- A timeline: be aware of when documents must be received by the funder
- A cover letter
- An executive summary with an overview of the project
- A problem statement or need description
- A timeline outlining how and when you will implement the project
- A budget
- Qualifications of administrator of the funds received
- A conclusion
- Supporting materials: letters of support from community organizations, statistics or something else specific to the grant
- The institutional profile.

Of all these points, the institutional profile was probably the most important. It is the background material in many grants: # of people in service area, # of people of a certain

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## A Crafty Way to Support Sustainability

by Meg Sgombick

I once again had the opportunity to attend the NYLA Conference held in Saratoga Springs. I always leave the conference inspired and it reminds me why libraries remain such vital institutions in our communities.

One of the workshops I went to was A Crafty Way to Support Sustainability with Wilma Jozwiak and Diane Madrigal, who are members of the Friends of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library, along with Lisa C. Wemett, FLS Coordinator for Professional Development who served as moderator.

First up was Lisa, who shared how Friends, the library's strongest advocacy arm, can provide volunteer engagement and community buy-in as groups assist their libraries working toward achieving certification in the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program. She shared the FLS Toolkit about Friends of the Library and Sustainability.

Wilma and Diane shared their story of the Friends of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library's craft fundraiser that wasn't a sale at all. Their first Crafters Supplies Give & Take was not a sale of finished craft projects, but rather a swap of craft materials. People were encouraged to donate what they no longer needed and purchase, with a free-will donation, the supplies they wanted. Tons of supplies, fabric, ribbon, yarn, crafting tools, rubber stamps, and more came pouring in from generous crafters eager to share their stashes and make room at home for more!



(left) Diane Madrigal, Wilma Jozwiak, and Lisa C. Wemett  
(below) Craft Supplies Give & Take



Pitched as a Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle Event, the Friends have now hosted three free-will donation events raising more than \$14,000 for the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library. The team shared their planning methods, outlined ways to involve and benefit the community, and discuss how debriefing makes for stronger events, year after year. Their handout included examples of their flyers, committee notes and photos, all of which are quite helpful if planning an event of this type. I found this session to be informative and a fundraiser that a smaller library, like mine, would possibly be able to undertake.

Meg Sgombick is an FLS Member at Large and Marketing Coordinator and the Florida Public Library Director.

## FLS Showcase: Spotlight on Friends!

by Jim Foster

The Friends Showcase seminar is becoming a tradition at the conference! What do Friends groups do besides sell used books and support Summer Reading? The Friends of Library Section (FLS) is glad that you've asked, because the answer is: SO many things! And during the NYLA conference there's usually a program that specifically showcases a few of those things.



The Friends of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library raise thousands of dollars a year to support their library, but when they started as an organization almost thirty years ago, it was created to offer support for a close budget vote. All these years later "Get Out the Vote" is still one of their most important campaigns. Ellen Burns (Friends Committee Chair) and Rebecca Verhayden (Assistant Library Director) shared details about how each year the Friends support the library's budget vote with lawn signs, tabling, advertisements, and an organized publicity campaign. And the library has a long string of successful budget votes to show for the Friends efforts.

The Sand Lake Town Library Friends build community support and raise awareness of the library with an Adult Spelling Bee and a Clothing Swap. Lori Farrell (President) and Nancy Bush (Secretary) explained details of how to run a spelling bee for adults and a simple clothing swap. The spelling bee offers team competition, so that it's not quite as nerve-wracking. And patrons love it! The clothing swap is well-organized and a popular way to promote the Friends, the library, and sustainability.

Elaine Dunne, Trustee from the Friends of the Massena Public Library, received a grant to promote healthy lifestyles and purchase a [Charlie Cart](#) when she was the Director. She has retired and now the Friends continue to support similar programming. They have a variety of both active and passive events that promote exercise (various hikes), healthy eating, and spending time outdoors.



Lori Farrell, Elaine Dunne, Rebecca Verhayden, Ellen Burns, and Nancy Bush

Next time you're attending NYLA, be sure to stop in to the Friends Showcase seminar to hear about more ways that Friends support libraries and communities beyond the book sales.

Jim Foster is a Member At Large and the Coordinator for Friends Councils for FLS. He is the Assistant Director at the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library.

## FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship Recipients' 2025 Conference Reflections



One of the things that FLS asks of its conference scholarship recipients is to write a reflection of their time at the event. Through the years, these articles have shed a lot of insight on the conference experience – and this year is no different.

FLS was well represented by the two FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship recipients for 2025, Elaine Dunne (left) and Michele Merwarth (right). What follows are their thoughts on #NYLA2025. In alphabetical order, here are their articles.

### **Elaine Dunne Friends of the Massena Public Library**

I was very fortunate to have been chosen as a recipient of the Randall Enos Conference Scholarship for 2025. This very generous scholarship paid my conference fees and expenses to attend the NYLA Conference from November 5th–8th in Saratoga Springs. I attended sessions that directly related to my work as a Friend of the Library, met some wonderful "Friends" from other libraries throughout the state, and reconnected with library colleagues from my past.

I am a member of the Massena Public Library Friends, where I serve as a board member. I retired as Director of the Massena Public Library in 2023. Our Friends group was formed in the last six months prior to my retirement. The library had several Friends groups in the past, but unfortunately the groups disbanded, mainly due to a lack of active membership. Fortunately, a couple of past members continued to run book sales. Building off the success of the book sales, I recruited some willing library patrons to help launch a new Friends group to continue and expand the book sales and create new fundraising opportunities for the library. Upon my retirement, my role changed from Director/Advisor to Friends of the Library board member. I served with a dedicated group of volunteers as we

negotiated our way through the creation of officers, bylaws, policies, and securing our 501(c)(3) status. Our fundraisers and membership have grown; however, we acknowledged the need to connect with the NYLA Friends of the Library Section in order to learn about best practices and see what other Friends groups have accomplished for their libraries. The NYLA Conference gave me the opportunity to learn valuable information and wonderful programming ideas that I was able to share with my Friends group at our December meeting.

Below are my favorite takeaways:

I attended the November 5th pre-conference session on "Writing Winning Grant Proposals," led by Lisa Wemett and Erica Freudenberger, board members of the FLS section of NYLA. Lisa and Erica's presentation was invaluable to me and my Friends group as we continue to explore new ways to support our library. I have written many grants as a library director, but it's quite a different process to write grants as a Friend! I am currently working with our Library Director to review grants the Friends are interested in applying for and to create a new institutional profile that will include the Friends' accomplishments. A great takeaway from the session was a downloadable Grant Writing Toolkit that contains a plethora of information on all elements of grant writing and procedures.

I attended the "Celebrating the Fabric Arts" session by Cazenovia Public Library – PLS on November 6th. The Massena Public Library has an active artists association, sewing group, and knitting group. I was interested in exploring the possibility of our Friends group launching a fabric arts show with the participation of these various groups. This session provided information on how to grow interest in knitting and crocheting among children, teens, and adults. The presenter shared pictures and information on a very successful Fabric Arts Show and competition. Our Friends group is planning to meet with our artists association to talk about a fabric arts show at Massena Public Library. On Saturday, November 8th, I participated in a Friends Showcase. Participants from three different Friends groups presented information on successful Friends programs in their libraries. The speakers I presented with were enthusiastic and very helpful; the programs they spoke of were diverse and very creative. I learned about a Books & Breakfast program, an Adult Spelling Bee, and a Library Clothing Swap. The audience of Friends asked lots of questions and we all left the program energized and ready to undertake some new programs in our own libraries.

I would like to express my gratitude to Randall Enos and FLS for establishing and funding this very generous award. Many members of our public library Friends groups are retired and on a fixed income; this award provides an opportunity for

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## FLS Enos Conference Scholarship Reflections, continued from previous page

Friends across the state to benefit from attending the NYLA Conference. I would like to sincerely thank Lisa Wemett and Terry Mulee, from FLS; their kind guidance before and throughout the conference was very helpful. Finally, I'd like to thank the entire FLS board and members, it was a joy getting to know so many of you at the conference. I wholeheartedly encourage all Friends of the library to apply for this wonderful scholarship and benefit from all the NYLA FLS Section has to offer.

### **Michele Merwarth** **Friends of Marcellus Free Library**

I am grateful to have been selected as a recipient of the 2025 FLS Randall Enos scholarship for the NYLA Conference, held from November 5th to 8th in Saratoga Springs. It was my first time attending an entire conference; previously, I had only participated in sessions for a day or an afternoon and even though I presented at the 2024 NYLA conference, I appreciated the chance to experience the full event this year.

On the first day, friendly NYLA staff and volunteers welcomed me at Registration. After picking up the program booklet and confirming my schedule, I attended my first FLS workshop, "Writing Winning Grant Proposals for Library Programming." Terry Mulee, Lisa Wemett, and Meg Van Patten greeted me warmly and the FLS team gifted me a survival bag packed with helpful items and snacks for the busy days ahead. Being introduced as the scholarship recipient felt special, almost like being a celebrity. The workshop was highly informative and I received Lisa Wemett's "Grant Writing Toolkit," which included the invaluable "Institutional Profile Data Worksheet." I encourage all Friends groups to complete this worksheet—it offers deep insight into your library's demographics and is particularly useful for grant writing.

The next morning began with a NYLA networking breakfast, followed by keynote speaker Micaela Blei who discussed how storytelling can present your library's events, programming, and fundraising efforts in the best light. Visiting the Trade Show provided a chance to connect with vendors and NYLA sections and learn about the latest library trends. Afternoon workshops offered even more useful information on current topics.

On Friday, I joined the PLS session "Library of Things: Budget Friendly to Big Time," where multiple presenters shared creative ideas for developing or expanding a "Library of Things" to support community needs. Later, I attended "A Crafty Way to Support Sustainability," learning about successful initiatives that benefit both libraries and their Friends groups financially. The NYLA Award Reception proved another excellent networking opportunity; I enjoyed hearing updates from the outgoing President and Treasurer, and Executive Director Annalee Dragon gave an overview of NYLA's 2025 year, including advocacy, budgeting, new legislation, membership, professional development, and operational goals.

On the conference's final day, the popular "FLS Showcase: Spotlight on Friends!" featured presenters sharing innovative projects from their libraries. My last session, "Collaborative Social Media Marketing for the Friends," offered practical tips for using social media to strengthen ties with our Friends group members and the wider community.

If you want to learn more about NYLA and FLS, gain useful tips for your Friends group, network with library professionals, collect some library swag, attend enjoyable meals and meetings, and meet the dedicated FLS team, consider applying for the [FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship](#) for 2026. The application is simple, and I'm truly glad I took part.

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## **Enos Scholarship**, continued from [page 1](#)

"Some people are drawn to bars, some to church groups, I was drawn to the library!" This quote is by Randy Enos, who spent a very successful professional career supporting libraries and library Friends groups. The FLS Executive Board honored him by naming him President Emeritus and paid tribute to his commitment to professional development for volunteers and staff by establishing the FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship in 2018. The scholarship is underwritten through an endowment funded by designated contributions to NYLA/FLS.

Whether a community volunteer or a library staff member, applicants must be a member of the Friends of Libraries Section as a part of their NYLA membership and involved in a local Friends group at any type of library in New York State. Applications must be received by June 1. Learn more

and find the [application packet](#) on the [FLS RECS](#) page. See [page 11](#) to donate to the fund.

The 2025 RECS recipients have written reflections on their experiences at the last NYLA conference. They include their takeaways. These are first-hand accounts of the benefits that can be gained as a conference attendee and a scholarship recipient. See the article starting on [page 5](#).

The application form and supporting documentation should be submitted to [FLS.nyla@yahoo.com](mailto:FLS.nyla@yahoo.com). Use the same address for any questions. The Scholarship Committee will review all eligible applications and notify applicants of the results in the summer. Thanks for your interest and support. Remember, it's not too soon to think about applying!

## Collaborative Social Media Marketing for the Friends

by Lisa C. Wemett

"If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together."

When session presenters Lisa Totaro and Amanda Menneto put up a slide with the text of an African proverb, it so perfectly encapsulated their message that they could have turned off the media projector right then and there. But the audience would have been short-changed; there is so much more to social media and how the library and the Friends of the Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library (FCPHL) work together!



Lisa (right) volunteers as the Communications Chair for FCPHL and Amanda (left) is Web and Digital Coordinator for the library. When Lisa started with the Friends two years ago, the number of emails to the Friends

membership seemed incessant: "Get Out the Vote" to support the library's annual budget; "Two Towns One Book" community read events; book sales; fundraisers – could there be a way to schedule these communications and scale back? Rather than having various subcommittees of the Friends develop content, could there be more consistent messaging and intentionality?

Connecting, the "other C" in this communications work, was tantamount. Both the library and the Friends are committed to supporting the library community, which has now been achieved with regular check-ins between the communications staff members and the volunteers. What started out with more formal meetings and email requests has evolved into collegial familiarity and texting of ideas for posts and scheduling—who will take the lead? Aligning priorities, exchanging ideas, and open dialogue have built trust and encourages finding solutions that work for all. Both the library and Friends social media efforts are relevant and impactful because planning is based on feedback and trends.

This collaborative framework revolves around going where the people are, giving followers a choice of platforms (Facebook, Instagram) and getting messages out to as many people as possible. Although the library has six times as many followers as the Friends, every message includes hotlinks to connect the two organizations, creating an easy

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## Strengthening Community Connections

by Erica Freudenberger

Friends of Libraries are incredible advocates, supporters, and volunteers at libraries of all sizes. And according to LaMeane Isaac, Friends can play a critical role in building bridges between the library and the community.

After a rousing introduction by Meg Van Patten, Ms. Isaac kicked off a robust interactive discussion during a high-energy final session of the NYLA Conference with her colleagues



Sharon Palmer, Alicia Pritchard, LaMeane Isaac, and Nicole Davis

from the Brooklyn Public Library, which has Friends at thirty-one of its locations. The all-star panel includes Ms. Isaac, Nicole Davis, Sharon Palmer, and Alicia Pritchard. The four women shared knowledge gathered over decades of community collaborations during the NYLA conference session, Strengthening Community Connections.

The session began with a question: What is one role or responsibility your Friends group should have? The audience shared multiple responses. Some of these were reflected in the SAFE acronym: support, advocate, fundraising, and engagement. Attendee Andrew Sekou Jackson, who was recognized earlier for his leadership of the New York Black Librarians Caucus, reminded everyone that Friends don't have to wait for Advocacy Day to get involved. He recommended Friends visit local legislative offices year-round – that regular visits help ensure public libraries have a seat at the table and maintain communication with representatives.

The panel emphasized the value of partnerships, which enables the Friends to accomplish more than they could on their own. These alliances strengthen community ties, yielding diverse benefits. A successful partnership identifies and prioritizes collaborators interested in mutually beneficial outcomes.

At the Brower Park Library in Crown Heights, Ms. Pritchard benefits from the Friends of the Library, which has a committee structure, holds virtual monthly meetings (with a break in July & August), promotes the library through social media and a newsletter, and leverages its members' skills.

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way for the public to move between the two entities. Attracting followers to both groups builds a large audience across platforms, fostering community for a common cause: the library. Content invites the public to share, post, like, and sometimes play along, leading to more engagement. One example is simply posting a photo of two books labeled "This or That." Followers are encouraged to vote, posting their choice of the two titles as a fun way to encourage interaction.



Both the Friends and the library need to decide which story they are telling, working to amplify messages without conflicting with the others. A solid example is the library reminding patrons of the date and location to vote for the annual budget, while the Friends can advocate for passage by saying "Vote Yes!" And of course, remember, it's "social" media. People want to hear about something new or be reminded of a library service; they want to see photos; they should be inspired to "share" what they see, to keep their family members and neighbors informed and engaged.

Nearly all content on the Friends feeds, whether book sales or National Friends of Libraries Week events, lend themselves to be shared. Ultimately these posts create more visibility for the Friends, encouraging volunteerism and donor support. Find out what channels patrons prefer or are using regularly and then pick two to concentrate your efforts. The speakers also encouraged library staff to connect with other libraries via social media, to see what their colleagues are doing or offering, to share ideas on how to promote programs and services, and ultimately, to support one another by engaging with the library's posts.

Buzz words were "engage" (building relationships with patrons), "educate" on library's services and events, and "entertain," staying positive and having fun online. See where your social media marketing will take your Friends and the library when you use these important tools and work together!

Check out the library and the Friends on Facebook: [Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library](#) [Friends of the Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library](#) Their Instagram accounts are @cphlibrary and @cphfriends.

See the next page for a "case study" on using Social Media.

This dedicated Friends group has co-hosted community events, including a Juneteenth celebration, an Easter Egg Hunt, and a holiday tree lighting at Brower Park. They also hold an annual Book Ball fundraiser. In return, the library holds an annual Friends Group Appreciation Brunch to recognize their work.

Ms. Palmer reminded attendees that "teamwork makes the dream work." She emphasized the importance of libraries supporting their Friends groups. Ms. Palmer explained that when libraries and Friends collaborate, the Friends can enhance the library's impact, unite the community, expand resources, and deepen relationships and connections, all of which benefit both the library and those it serves.

At the Macon branch in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the Friends have expanded the library's reach by activating allies, organizing community champions, and being passionate advocates. The Friends attend local community board meetings, both to raise the library's profile and to learn about community issues and plug into community aspirations. They also have a lot of fun, hosting an Annual Masquerade & Halloween Party, which Ms. Davis says brings together 1,500 families, a popular annual Mother's Day event, and a wide range of other programs. For libraries and Friends to be successful, says Ms. Davis, it's best to set clear, precise goals.

The Macon branch benefits from the expertise of its Friends, including an Emmy Award-winning producer! They use a committee and subcommittee structure, along with regular monthly meetings, to organize numerous community events. These include a Community Meet & Greet, an Independent Author Fair, and an Annual Baby Shower. Recently, the Friends supported the creation of a Black American Library Card in collaboration with the African American Heritage Center in Bed-Stuy.

To recruit members, the Friends host an annual information session. That consistency, said Ms. Palmer, engages the community and offers people a way to participate. For those just starting out, she reminded attendees it's fine to begin small—it doesn't need to be grand at first. The library should equip Friends with resources to build confidence and support, starting with concrete, manageable actions that deliver early wins and inspire everyone.

When looking for new members, Ms. Palmer recommends working with faith-based organizations and schools that encourage people to volunteer and participate in community life. Friend groups, like the library, should reflect and include community members from all cultures and languages so they can see themselves and feel invited to participate.

For more information, [contact](#) the Brooklyn Public Library and ask for a copy of its Handbook for Friends Groups.

## What Does Collaboration Look Like? A Case in Point

Here's a concrete example of how the staff members of the Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library and the Friends cooperate on their social media messages. Last fall, both organizations focused on National Friends of Libraries Week (NFOLW) in October, a very logical collaboration to highlight this vibrant support group.

There were Facebook posts every day, some joint and some separately. Below is the summary version. Scroll back in their Facebook accounts to see the full messages and photos.

[Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library](#)  
[Friends of the Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library](#)

Starting off on Monday of NFOLW, October 20, the posting on the Friends account was labeled the "Friends of the Clifton Park– Halfmoon Public Library is with the Clifton Park–Halfmoon Public Library." The library posted the same message on their Facebook page, featuring the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NFOLW, setting the stage for the week to explain the work of the Friends and highlighting their ongoing support.

Tuesday, the Friends posted some recent concrete examples of their underwriting of projects and services at the library: the Museum Pass program, author visits, updates to the Children's Library, and the new Sensory Room.

A joint message was posted by the Friends and the library on Wednesday, highlighting how the Friends and library help to build a bridge between the library and members of the community with their "Two Towns One Book" series, the Battle of the Books, college scholarships, and travel opportunities. The library "commented" on the Friends post and then reposted the message on Thursday on the library's account.

The Friends thanked all their volunteers on Thursday, calling out 100 volunteers who help run the Used Book Sales and then incorporating a membership engagement message on how to become involved with the Friends.

The last post was by the Friends on Saturday, summarizing how the organization celebrated the week, including cake at the Friends board meeting (with a photo of the cake, of course!) and tabling at the library to visit with patrons and encourage joining the group. The post also included a link about how to sign up for the Friends digital newsletter.

The library interspersed NFOLW with several posts that week which highlighted other events and stories specifically about the library. Certainly this collaborative work struck a balance that was supportive but also let the Friends be in the spotlight for their special week.

[National Friends of Library Week](#) is scheduled for October 18 – 24 this fall. It's never too soon to start planning your own social media campaign for 2026. A [round-up of 2025 NFOLW activities](#) from around the country will get you excited about this event. Congratulations to NYS Friends groups for Beekman Library, Chappaqua, and Pearl River for being featured in this United for Libraries article!

**Reporter's Note:** In their presentation on Social Media, Amanda and Lisa referenced the following resource.

Angela Hursh, author of [SuperLibraryMarketing.com](#), was promoted as someone to follow. Angela is the Manager of Library Market Content and Services at NovelList, a subscription service many libraries offer patrons and staff members that connects readers, books, and libraries. Angela has a YouTube channel, "The Library Marketing Show," where she shares practical tips and ideas for library promotion with weekly 5-minute video posts. (You can subscribe to Super Library Marketing to get an email every time Angela posts an article or video.) You may want to watch episode #288, "Boost Your Biggest Supporters: Branding and Marketing Advice for Your Friends of the Library Group." Check out her article, "2026 Guide to Facebook for Libraries" for some new tips to increase your reach and visibility. One idea: make sure you reply to comments within 24 hours to keep engagement flowing.

**Editor's Note:** Here's a little bit about two of our reporters that I didn't have room to include at the conclusion of their articles.

**Social Media and Case in Point reporter:**

Lisa C. Wemett is a Member At Large, the Professional Development Coordinator, and the Casey Award Coordinator for FLS. She is a retired librarian.

**Community Connections reporter:**

Erica Freudenberger is a Member At Large for FLS and a Library Development Specialist at the New York State Library Office of Cultural Education.

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### **FLS Casey Award**, continued from [page 1](#)

on the nomination form. Selection criteria include contributions of the nominee (group or individual) to library service, including positions held, years of service, and accomplishments such as successful fundraisers and volunteer engagement. Community outreach, marketing initiatives, advocacy, and leadership should all be highlighted.

All nominations and relevant supporting materials must be submitted electronically and received by 5 p.m. on Monday, June 1, 2026, at [FLS.NYLA@yahoo.com](mailto:FLS.NYLA@yahoo.com). Questions concerning the award process can be addressed to Lisa C. Wemett, FLS Coordinator for the Casey Award, at this email address. Thank you for your interest!

age, # of people with library cards, volunteers, staff, collection – size, materials budget, funding, facilities and equipment. (This worksheet was part of the Toolkit.) All information takes time to locate, but many of the answers can be found in the New York State Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries, Census Reports and a school district’s webpage. The institutional profile may take time to fill out, but it will come in very handy over and over again. (Helpful tip: update it regularly!)

Remember to use stories to augment the why you want/need this grant. Your stories will help make your request more relatable if you can mention specific people that will be helped or issues facing your library. Erica and Lisa wrapped up the workshop with ways to let the funder know how you will share their story in your publicity or what formal recognition you will have.

Don’t forget to read and reread your application. Common mistakes include not answering every question, sloppiness, too much copying and pasting, and missing the deadline.

This was a 3-hour workshop that had fabulous information for anyone looking to apply for a grant. The workshop broke the information into small sections that was thorough and doable. Deb Flint and Kori Albrecht were very helpful in explaining how the grant process went for Deb, and what Kori and LARAC look for in grant applications. Kori stressed that they have money and want to distribute it to those that request it. She gave hope that grant funders are partners in library programs and want to participate with this community. Deb related that the process for her grant was not difficult and it gave impetus to an ongoing book discussion program that still exists.



Deb Flint, Kori Albrecht,  
Lisa C. Wemett



The toolkit is invaluable. Lisa (right) and Erica (left) were able to compile the resources for their workshop and help all who need the information make a successful grant request.

Joyce Laiosa is a volunteer trainer with FLS and a Reader for the FLS Daniel W. Casey Library Advocacy Award. She is a retired librarian.

libraries of all sizes can leverage this initiative to help diversify their funding streams, build awareness while acquiring new donors, and elevate their advocacy efforts. When you join the movement and get involved in Library Giving Day, you will be part of a growing list of public libraries committed to making **#LibraryGivingDay** a nationwide success.

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### **It Takes a Village!**

Many hands make light work. Yes, it’s true; some tasks related to a successful conference are quite labor intensive. But the more people that pitch in, the lighter the load for all!

Thank you EVERYONE from FLS and beyond who helped make the 2025 conference a huge success. The presenters who offered great programs on topics that will help Friends help their libraries and communities were awesome, as evidenced by all of the articles in this newsletter. There were multiple FLS volunteers who worked in the background to set up programs, encourage and guide presenters, and obtain workshop evaluations for future planning. Thanks to everyone who introduced presenters, helped with technology, handouts, and all the odds and ends that came up along the way.

Thanks to the crew who took care of the FLS booth at the trade show. Your smiling faces greeted library Friends, trustees, and staff who wanted to know more about our Section. The booth is always a busy place and a great source of information.

Thanks to our FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship recipients who seemed to be everywhere something important was happening. You represented FLS well. It was a pleasure to have you at the conference.

This is hopefully a comprehensive list of all who assisted FLS in one way or another for #NYLA2025:

Meg Van Patten, Erica Freudenberger, Lisa C. Wemett, Deb Flint, Kori Albrecht, Diane Madrigal, Wilma Jozwiak, Ellen Burns, Rebecca Verhayden, Lori Farrell, Nancy Bush, Elaine Dunne, Lisa Totaro, Amanda Menneto, Sharon Palmer, Alicia Pritchard, LaMeane Isaac, Nicole Davis, Michele Merwarth, Jen Allen, Geoff Kirkpatrick, Joyce Laiosa, Meg Sgombick, Jim Foster, Jerrie Grantham, Matt Corey, Terry Mulee, and Chris Lund  
Apologies to anyone who helped before, during, or after the conference who was not mentioned here.



Elaine Dunne  
Meg Van Patten  
Lisa C. Wemett  
Jerrie Grantham  
Michele Merwarth  
Joyce Laiosa

## **FLS Executive Board and Auxiliary Volunteers**

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FLS Casey Award Coordinator: Lisa C. Wemett  
FLS Enos Scholarship Coordinator: Terry Mulee  
Coordinator for Professional Development:  
Lisa C. Wemett  
Coordinator of FLS Trade Show Booth: Jen Allen  
Coordinator on Friends Councils: Jim Foster  
Marketing Coordinator: Meg Sgombick  
Nominating Committee Chair: Chris Lund  
NFOLW Coordinator: Paulette Quinn  
Regional Workshop Trainers:  
Joyce Laiosa  
Lisa C. Wemett

Contact us anytime at [FLS.nyla@yahoo.com](mailto:FLS.nyla@yahoo.com)  
Visit the Friends of Libraries Section at  
[www.nyla.org/Friends](http://www.nyla.org/Friends)

FLS is not publishing email addresses in an attempt to eliminate phishing scams. Please use the NYLA Membership Directory to find contact information or use the FLS email. Please indicate your email recipient. We apologize for any inconvenience.

## **Membership in the Friends of Libraries Section**

FLS is grateful for the many Friends groups that have joined NYLA as a Friends Group Organizational member and for those Friends who have then selected FLS as an included Section within NYLA. We are also grateful for all the NYLA members who have included FLS in your selected NYLA units. Your membership in FLS helps to fuel the work that we do and the outreach that we can provide. When your membership renewal is due this spring, please include FLS as a Section with your registration. You must do this manually. It is not automatic, even if you are a part of a Friends group or register as a Friend. If you have any questions about membership, please contact Lauren Hoyt, NYLA Director of Association Operations at [membership@nyla.org](mailto:membership@nyla.org).

### **Donate to the FLS Enos Conference Scholarship Fund**

Please consider a donation to the FLS Randall Enos Conference Scholarship Fund to ensure this worthy scholarship well into the future.

To make a donation, log in to your existing NYLA account (or create one) at <http://www.nyla.org>. Once you have logged in, select "Make a Donation" from the Quick Links. Scroll down that page until you find the FLS Randall Enos Scholarship Fund and enter your donation amount. Then scroll to the bottom and select "next" to complete your donation. To use your credit card, select "Pay Now" and continue with your payment details. To send a check, select "Invoice Me" and complete the page. Once you receive the invoice via email, print it out and mail it to NYLA along with your check.

Thanks for your continued support of FLS and the Friends who help libraries across New York State.

This newsletter is a publication of the  
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Newsletter Editor: Terry Mulee  
Proofreader and Contributor: Lisa C. Wemett  
Special thanks to our intrepid FLS guest reporters and FLS RECS recipients. Your insights are an incredibly valuable tool for our FLS members and our readers.

The current issue of Friends News and Notes is available on the FLS [Our Newsletter](#) page. Archived issues back to August of 2023 may be accessed by FLS members.

NYLA leads, educates, and advocates for the advancement of the New York library community.