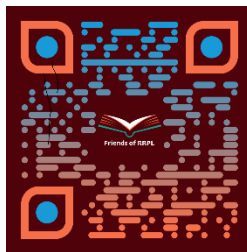




Friends of RRPL Annual Report: July 2024 – June 2025

Friendsrrpl.org



Created by: Susan M Gallagher

Governing Board:

The Friends of the Rocky River Public Library's fiscal year started July 1st. In July of 2024 the new Governing Board included:

President-Susan Gallagher

Vice President – Vid Lutz

Treasurer – Craig Rimlinger

Recording Secretary – Roberta Trutko

Membership Manager – Mary Horvath

Members at Large – Jody Hobson, Diane Beer, Nancy Ryan Seryak

Committees:

Corporate Sponsorships – Sarah Siebert

Event Support – Jenny Dieringer

Marketing/Media Outreach – Nate Louis

Book Sale Liaison – Hermina Kaczmarek

Library Administration:

Director - Jessica Breslin, Peter Matera

Administrative Assistant – Krista Carte

Mission Statement:

The Friends of the Rocky River Public Library, a nonprofit organization founded in 1971, provides financial support and volunteer services to the library. Through membership dues and fundraising activities, the Friends make possible programs and services, furniture and equipment purchases that the library could not otherwise afford. The Friends enhance the library's ability to serve children, teens, families, seniors and the whole community.

Our meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 4:00pm in the Community Room. This meeting includes the opportunity for all Board and Committee Members, as well as library staff in attendance, to speak about what they are working on at that time. The meeting is open to the public.

Director's Report:

Friends Annual Report 2024-2025, Director's Report

Support from Friends of RRPL is crucial to the success of the library. From popular, recurring programs engaging all ages such as **Spice Club, Messy Art, Storytimes, Trivia Night, Art + You, Crafting with the Curator**, and our technology-themed **Computer Breakfast Series**; to singular programs including **Art of Winter Teas, History of Art Deco, Master Gardeners, History of Ohio's Underground Railroad**, and **Seed to Table**—your donations and support help make these happen.

And they help us connect with outside groups like **Cleveland Ballet**, students of which performed at the library and hosted a Q&A session; authors like **Juliet Grames**, who drove in from the northeast coast to talk about her latest novel, *The Lost Boy of Santa Chionia*; and musicians like **Les Delices**, who brought their Sea Shanties & Pirate Ballads show to an after-hours performance in our Grand Reading Room.

Of course it doesn't stop there. Because of you, we're able to provide supplies, which might seem small, but it helps us make sure everyone can participate and we don't run out during **chalk parties, painting parties, tie-dye parties**, and crafting events like **stenciled tote bags, bookmark-making**, and so much more. We were able to put on what turned out to be one of our biggest events of the past year, the **Grown-Up Book Fair**, because Friends of RRPL ensured we had the supplies we needed to make it happen.

Beyond programming, Friends of RRPL fundraising events and membership drives help fund larger projects such as our recent **upgrading of the furniture in our A/V area**, which turned a space that was previously blocked by shelving into a relaxing personal space for patrons with plenty of natural light facing the outdoor Reading Garden.

Before signing off, I personally want to thank the Board members of the Friends of RRPL. As a new Director this year, I have only been to a handful of meetings. But it was clear to me from the first one that this group has engaged and caring leadership that loves what they do. I am so grateful for their efforts, for the time they take to show up to special events like **Summer Reading Kickoff**, to recognize our staff during **National Library Week**, to recognize high school students with their inaugural **Friends of RRPL Scholarship**, and to run this group so efficiently and effectively.

Thank you, **Friends of RRPL**, for continuing to support Rocky River Public Library. There are so many great things happening at the library and we're so glad you're a part of it.

Peter Matera, Director

President's Report:

It was my pleasure to serve as the President of the Governing Board for the second year. This year started off smoothly as the Governing Board stayed the same except for the addition of Vid Lutz as Vice President. We had a couple of additions to our Members-at-Large including Diane Beer and Nancy Ryan Seryak all who took on the challenge of building a Scholarship program for the local area.

We began the year continuing our work on open items from last year. Jody continues to work on the new Little Library box (located in front of the library). She showed us a picture rendering what the box would look like as well as read a draft of the bookmark to be placed in each book, letting folks know that the books do not need to be returned.

Additionally, we began working on the National Friends of the Library Week in October. Craig confirmed our new fundraiser event at Danny Boys while other team members decorated the display case, and Nate promoted the week, membership drive, and gift basket raffle. It was very successful. Membership receipts were over \$1,900 (comprised of 67 new/renewed members which more than doubled the amount for 2023), the book sale generated \$526, and the new Danny Boys fund raiser brought in over \$300. We had many items added to the gift basket including gift certificates from Lake Road Market, Olive Scene, Joe's Deli, as well as fiction and non-fiction books.

The newly created Scholarship Team of, Vid, Nancy and Diane, was incredibly successful in building all the parameters of an annual college/trade school scholarship for people that were about to graduate from Rocky River schools or living in Rocky River but attending a private school. This was developed, marketed and successfully implemented in 2025 with our initial two recipients, Vanessa Roth and Caitlin Rose, announced in March. The thank you notes written by our winners are below this paragraph. Fifteen applications were received and eventually reduced to two \$500 scholarships. The Team was impressed with the essays. Way to go Vid, Nancy and Diane!

Dear Friends of RRPL and Scholarship Committee. Hope all is well! My name is Caitlin Rose and I am a graduating senior at Rocky River High School. I am writing as I received one of the scholarships that the RRPL offered this year. I cannot thank all of the committee and board enough as this money is a huge help for paying for school. I will be attending The Ohio State University as a direct enrollment nursing student while additionally being in the STEM scholars' program. The library has had a huge influence on me throughout my life. Although I will not be at the RRPL this fall, I will be inhabiting a new library down in Columbus with everyone and the RRPL in mind. Thank you, guys so much and best regards, to the entire library community! Sincerely, Caitlin Rose

Dear Friends of RRPL. Thank you for the scholarship award. I learned a lot from the library through the summer reading programs and service clubs for youth. I appreciate the work you guys do for the community and the safe space the library creates. I still go to the library often with my younger siblings. The time you put into this program is evident and worth it. Thank you, Vanessa Roth

We wrote **thank you** notes for the book sorters and gave swag with some tasty snacks. They have been incredible to the success of the on-going book sale at the entrance to the library.

We had been working on options of how to get more kids to color/sketch/paint a picture that would be added to the Little Friends Picture frame that is in the Book Sale area. We used a randomizer but had trouble getting people to respond. We continue to try different options.

At the end of 2024 the library began a strategic plan. They received over 500 survey responses. Several members of the Friends board attended the event and helped to determine the direction of the RRPL.

In April the Friends sponsored the National Library Week Author event. Our very own Vid Lutz was the chef for the event. His menu mirrored recipes included in Juliet Grames' book. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the menu. Juliet sent a lovely note written below.

Dear Friends, Thank you for the unforgettable evening at your library. You made the Santa Chionia event worth way more than a 9-hour drive. I am so grateful for this new memory you've made for me. Hope our paths cross again soon. Your Fan, Juliet Grames

We went through the change of Library Director's this fiscal year. 2025 started the year with Jessica Breslin and subsequently, upon her departure, Peter Matera, a much loved, long-term library employee, became the new director.

Lastly, we donated \$11,000 to the library for new furniture in the A/V area (2 lounge chairs with pop-up tables, and a table), at an estimated cost of \$9,080 and nearly \$2,000 to help supply candy for upcoming parades.

I want to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to work with this wonderful team of people. They are truly the best you can find and care so much about what happens here at the Rocky River Public Library and the Community as well. Best wishes to Nancy as President, for the upcoming fiscal year.

Regards,

Susan M Gallagher, President

Vice President's Report:

I was honored to be asked and to serve as Vice President for the Friends of Rocky River Public Library for the 2025 year. In my first year in this role, I supported the board on internal and external initiatives; below are activities showcasing ones that I was directly involved with:

- Member of the FRRPL Scholarship Selection Committee for 2025. Our work was well received as noted by the FRRPL President. Additional details are provided by Diane Beer and Nancy Ryan Seryak, accompanying members of the selection committee.
- Meeting scribe when asked.
- Provided culinary support for the FRRPL visiting author event.
- Initiated dialogue with St. Colemans Church regarding creating a book donation program- no longer pursuing.

Best Regards,

Vid Lutz, Vice President

Recording Secretary Report:

I was honored to serve as Secretary for the Friends of RRPL for the 2024-25 year. During this time, I attended all but one (October) of the monthly meetings and took copious minutes, which were then approved by those in attendance. Thank you to Vid Lutz (VP), who took over that duty in October. When both the President and Vice President were absent in April, I stepped in and conducted the Friends monthly meeting. In addition, I assisted in various events and activities that Friends sponsored or hosted, such as:

- Serving as the Nominating Committee Chairperson for 2025-26.
- Actively participating at numerous Friends sponsored programs held at the library throughout the year and acting as an information source to those present.
- Assisting Event Support Chairperson, Jenny Dieringer, in purchasing treats, writing thank you notes to the library's departments, and baking cookies for National Library Workers' Day.
- Attending and promoting our membership drive at Danny Boy's restaurant during National Friends of the Library Week.

It is with immense pleasure that I look forward to returning as Secretary of Friends for the upcoming year.

Roberta L. Trutko, Recording Secretary

Treasurer Report:

The Friends of Rocky River Public Library had another successful year raising funds to support library programming and community involvement. With one month left to go in FY 2024-25, the Friends have raised more than \$14,636 and are tracking to have generated more than \$15,000 by the end of the fiscal year. The bulk of the funds continue to be generated by book sale proceeds, generous corporate sponsorships and memberships at the Honored Donor level (\$100.)

Many thanks to all who have donated to the Friends in the past 12 months! We could not be successful without you.

Regards,

Craig Rimlinger, Treasurer

Membership Manager Report:

Roles and responsibilities over the past year included:

- Routine handling of donations made to Friends, ensuring that membership and other donations are regularly and expeditiously transferred from the Library to the Treasurer.
- Accounting for donations made and tracking donor information – names, addresses, contact information – for gifts given by cash, check on-line, and ACH bank transfer. Developed a spreadsheet-based system to provide useful information on donations by month and by membership level.

- Acknowledge gifts with letters of appreciation as appropriate, and emails from Friends of RRPL to online donors.
- Collaboration with RRPL Administrative Manager to ensure tracking and recognition of major gift donors and memorial gift donors.
- Coordination with the Marketing/Media Outreach as Friends upgraded from outsourced payment system (Square) to online system using the Friends online web presence.
- Work with Marketing/Media Outreach and other Friends partners to launch a raffle event in October to increase awareness and raise funds during National Friends of the Library Week.
- Participated in the Friends annual fundraising event at Danny Boy's Pizza.
- Represented Friends at the annual end of school year Kids Membership drive at Mitchell's Ice Cream. Also, represented Friends at the Summer Reading kick-off event and the RRPL Fall Fest.
- Offered miscellaneous help as needed: lent a hand with the creation of the RRPL display case focused on Friends events; substituted for the Recording Secretary; participated in Friends letter-writing campaigns to acknowledge and thank RRPL staff and Friends of the RRPL book sorters.

I feel privileged to be able to work with the Friends of the RRPL in donating our collective gifts on time and talent to enhance the value of our Library for our families, friends and neighbors.

Mary Horvath, Membership Manager

Corporate Sponsorship Committee:

The Friends of Rocky River Public Library are thrilled to report a successful 2025 Corporate Sponsorship Campaign, raising \$2,300 and bringing lifetime giving from this initiative to over \$10,000 since its beginning in 2021. This year's generous sponsors included The Nest Schools; Northern Title Agency; Stickney & Stickney LLP; Farah, Roberts & Ganor, Ltd.; The Bonne Bell Family Foundation; G Force Communication; the FitzGerald Team of Howard Hanna; Ballrick and Petts Orthodontics; and River Dental Arts. Hooray Friends of the RRPL!

Regards,

Sarah Siebert, Corporate Sponsorships Chair

Events Chair:

Fall Fest – Friends had a table at Fall Fest in October offering memberships and a chance to win the Raffle Basket during National Friends of Library Week. It was a lovely afternoon and a lot fun to see the kids in their Halloween costumes. Much THANKS to Mary Horvath, Roberta Trutko and Krista Carte.

National Library Week Staff Appreciation Day April 8, 2025 - Friends Board Members, Jenny Dieringer and Roberta Trutko provided goodies to Library Staff. Thank you notes hand-written by Friends Board members were distributed to each of the eight Library Departments. The staff was grateful for all our efforts and support from the Friends of the Rocky River Public Library. Planning and discussion began in February with a deadline to drop off Thank You notes by April 4, 2025.



Summer Reading Kick-Off, May 31, 2025 - Friends had a table at the Summer Reading Kick-Off in May to “Color Our World” by offering memberships, opportunities to create artwork and meeting some new “Friends. Much THANKS to Diane Beer, Mary Horvath, Roberta Trutko and Craig Rimlinger.

Regards,

Jenny Dieringer, Events Chair

Scholarship Committee Report:

This year marked the initial establishment of a scholarship committee, and it consisted of the Friends of the RRPL Vice President and two members-at-large. Since this was the inaugural year, the committee needed to research scholarship award criteria used by friends of the library groups from around the country. The committee used that information to create an online application form that required that an acceptance letter to a university, a copy of the applicant’s high school transcript, and an essay titled “What the Library Means to Me” be uploaded to the completed form. The applicant needed to be a Rocky River resident or have a connection to RRPL to be eligible to receive the scholarship. The application period was January 1, 2025-March 31, 2025.

Guidance departments at Rocky River High School, Magnificat High School, Lutheran West High School, St. Edward High School, and St. Ignatius High School were contacted to promote the scholarship. Reporter Brian Love at the “WestLife” newspaper was also contacted, and he wrote an article about the scholarship.

The Friends received fifteen applications from students at five different high schools. The committee agreed about who the top four applicants were. The applicants all had exemplary academic records and rigorous course loads. The essay was the deciding factor in whom the committee recommended receive the scholarships. Caitlin Rose from Rocky River High School and Vanessa Roth from Magnificat High School each received one \$500 scholarship. All applicants received a mailed letter informing them whether they had been awarded a scholarship.

The committee will recommend some minor changes be made to the application for next year.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Beer, Vid Lutz, and Nancy Ryan Seryak

Member at Large Report:

Attached are the images of the projects that I worked on for the Friends of the Library 2024/2025. In addition to the graphic pieces, I worked with The Olive Scene to acquire donations for the Friends Fall Membership Raffle drive (and display case).

The Little Library book box is still in progress. Below are pictures of work completed.

I have enjoyed working on the various items and will continue to develop things as the opportunity presents themselves.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody Hobson, Member at Large

(next two pages include pictures from Jody)

