



## **2023 Annual Report**

### **Books for Teachers and OWL totes programs**

We continue to invest in our cornerstone Books for Teachers and Owl Totes programs. One of our most successful ongoing community programs is our First Library Card Owl Totes. Readers ages 6 years and under who are picking up their first library cards receive these cloth bags to lug home their first stash of library books. Over the past year, we have connected 3,500 totes with new library card holders – and we’ve done so for more than 25,000 little readers since 2015.

For nearly 15 years we have participated in the Renée B Fisher Books for Teachers grant. For the past several years we have conducted monthly events throughout the year to connect teachers with free books for their classrooms. The sign-ups for these events fill quickly, and teachers report how excited their students are when the new books get added to their classroom libraries. So far in 2023 we have provided books to 71 teachers at 30 schools who have been able to take over 6,600 books back to their classrooms. Since 2009, we’ve connected over 1,200 teachers with more than 94,000 books! Thanks to the generosity of our Friends members and donors, we were also able to provide \$10,000 in gift cards for books to 40 high-need Seattle school libraries in 2022.

### **Book donations**

Our book donation program continues to stay busy. In 2022 we processed upwards of a *thousand* donated book a week! We received 52,709 donated books last year, of which we sold 18,313, and recirculated another 16,205 back into the community, including through donations to Ballard Food Bank, Books to Prisoners, Books for Teachers, little free libraries, the Rainbow Wall at the Capitol Hill library branch, and the International Rescue Committee.

So far this year, the Friends have accepted over 30,000 donated books. In turn, we have connected more than 12,000 back to community members including through the Seattle/King County Health Clinic, Books to Prisoners, Ballard Food Bank, the Seattle VA Medical Center, and little free libraries. We’ve sold an additional 13,446 through the FriendShop and our regular monthly used book sales events. If you have books to donate, get in touch!

### **Direct support for the Library**

This year, the Friends supported direct outreach to voters and local and regional government through involvement in this past winter’s capitol visit, through the provision of letters of support for funding, and support of the Public Library Action Network. We have deepened our

teamwork with the Seattle Public Library Foundation and look forward to fruitful future projects.

This year we once again made a small grant to support the Library's popular Summer Book Bingo program. We love this program, and we look forward to being ongoing sponsors for this annual event.

In 2022, we transitioned our provision of service items such as headphones and memory sticks, which we used to provide to local branches to sell at cost. Now, instead, we provide annual funding to support the Library in purchasing and dispersing service items as needed.

We have also continued alignment with the Library through monthly meetings with Tom Fay, the executive director and chief librarian, quarterly three presidents meetings, joint advocacy committee work, and regular communications meetings.

### **Community events**

This year the Friends participated in a number of community events, including Juneteenth at the Northwest African American Museum, PrideFest, and the Lantern Festival with Freeway Park. It was wonderful to give away dozens of boxes of books and to see our Friends and community members stop by!

### **Board and governance updates**

This year our board adopted a partnership agreement with the Library and the Library Foundation to better define our roles and responsibilities, and will lay the groundwork for our productive relationship for years to come. We are also finalizing a new operating agreement between the Friends and the Library which describes the Friends' commitments to the Library, the Library's commitments to the Friends, brings together all the existing agreements we have on different topics, and creates a document we can all look to when there's confusion and need for clarity.

In the coming year we will be undertaking strategic planning work to put us in alignment with the Library's plan, and also as a step forward for our organization's strategic capabilities and mission-driven work.

### **Membership**

We received feedback that it is hard to remember when to renew your Friends membership especially since people can join anytime throughout the year. We've taken this to heart and this year we rolled out a new membership subscription plan which will automatically renew if members choose that option. We are encouraging everyone to join or renew online as it is not possible to enter the subscription plan at the point of sale at the retail locations. We are, however, available to assist at our locations if someone is not familiar with QR codes and online ordering. Also, this is a non-automated reminder that this is the time of year to renew your membership for the coming year, if you haven't already!

This past year, we proposed a new policy to offer Friends membership to Library volunteers. The Library was supportive of this and, going forward, Library volunteers of all ages who provide any amount of volunteer hours are eligible for free Friends membership if they are interested!

Just a reminder that your Friends membership benefits include a discount on all gifts at the Seattle Central Library FriendShop, two free books at every Second Saturday event in Georgetown, the feel-good feeling of supporting the Friends' advocacy efforts for The Seattle Public Library and literacy, and of course, an invitation to the Annual Meeting that you are attending today!

### **Business updates**

Thanks to a huge effort from Lisa, Nancy, Sue, and our many FriendShop volunteers, the FriendShop, twice monthly Orcas used book sales, and standalone Lander Street Vintage Market spaces have all continued to thrive. We have also continued our excellent partnerships with Collins Books and Freeway Park Book Carts. We had pop-up book sales events in several library branches this year including Greenwood, Beacon Hill, and Broadview, and in December we will once again have a booth at the Gates Foundation Discovery Center Holiday Marketplace.

We are excited to continue to expand our offerings and reach and will announce future pop ups and other events through our newsletter and social media.

We currently have nearly three dozen volunteers who help run the FriendShop, sort and process our book donations, and help make the Georgetown book sales happen. This year we have received more than 2,500 hours of volunteer time; thank you to every volunteer who teams up with us. Our staff, contract workers, board members, and volunteers are truly exceptional, and allow us to engage with the activities needed to bring our mission to bear. I'd like to publicly express my gratitude for their dedication and performance.

We congratulate and welcome Angel Sauls, our incoming Friends' Board President. She will be a wise, thoughtful, and cheerful shepherd of our Board's work in the coming year.