

## **2011 Annual Report to the Friends of Jacaranda Public Library, Inc.**

Submitted by Greg Carlson, Library Manager  
Wed., December 14, 2011, amended for Wed., January 11, 2012

President Evenson, Board Members, and Friends:

I wish to lead with deep appreciation for both the support the Friends have lavished on the library and the board's considered approach to adopting new processes such as contracting with a CPA and five-year wish list outlook. Financial stability and formal reporting structures are important both to the organization's vitality and the execution of its mission. Thank you, Judy, and board directors, for your contributions.

### *Staffing*

The Sarasota County Library System's new business model and staffing plan arrived in November, and six associated system-wide positions were advertised in December. The two-year process that led to the changes involved active participation from county executives and human resources, extensive research, creative brainstorming, and exemplary work completed by a host of teams and committees. The plan aligns the library system with county government broadbands—or job classifications—while also preparing it for service excellence and innovation over the next several years. It will be early 2012 before we know how and when Jacaranda Library employees may shift into new roles or locations.

Customer Service Representative Peg Mendon has transferred to the Spanish Point library and will run the operation with volunteer assistance. I encourage everyone to visit her and enjoy the charm of our mid-county service point.

We hired Andrea Gehringer in April as young adult librarian after half-time customer service rep Karen Pestana retired. Andrea has redefined the teen space with color, displays, furnishings (the Friends have been a great help here), and more to attract a traditionally underserved population at JPL. Young adult programming is looking up as well under her direction, with input from her teen advisory board. Xbox gaming is alive and well thanks to continuing FOL support.

During the year we also participated in system-wide temporary employee assistance. I am grateful to library administration for closing the service gap caused by staff resignations and retirements over the last several years.

### *Programs*

The Friends were a key partner in presenting *Voice of Liberty, Voice of Conscience* to the Venice community. The exhibit and related programs drew excellent attendance, including the kick-off event for which the Friends provided catered food and beverages. The American Library Association Programs Office selected only 18 applicants from around the nation to host this coveted exhibit.

We had our first *PicsNPOems* program in October; we will do this again in April. People attending the Thursday night open mike poetry program will bring in pictures and read poems inspired by those images. The public is then given a month to vote on the poems they like most. For the April event we anticipate awarding first through third place ribbons. Poets love eating as much as rhyming. Food courtesy of the FOL was much appreciated.

Youth Services was busy throughout the year, with the traditional spike during summer reading. I will report participation statistics for the latter at the January 2012 meeting (see attached FLYP summary). Sheila is now serving on the system youth services programming committee.

### *Equipment*

Tamar asked me to express her appreciation for the Friends continued support of A/V equipment in public meeting rooms, especially projector replacement and repair. Library-sponsored programs and computer instruction classes benefitted from the expenditures. The FOL continuing agreement with Vitil Technologies provides support services on all lab hardware.

### *Volunteers*

We enjoyed another excellent year for volunteer productivity, loyalty, and recognition. The annual luncheon was splendid and festive, resulting in many expressions of appreciation. While the board decided to end the monthly library manager breakfast the directors remain committed to supporting volunteer recruitment and retention. Susie and Angie developed and delivered group training/refreshers sessions during 2012. They were so successful that another library manager asked them to do the same at her location.

Susie Bogutski involved Friends bookshop volunteers in our emergency preparations by establishing a phone tree system in case of hurricane or other disaster. We can share opening, closing, or building repurposing information with volunteers soon after we are notified.

Greg and Selby Library librarian Karen Geis compiled a system volunteer manual, including safety information, job descriptions, volunteer database reporting instructions, and the like that awaits management team review. Once approved and adopted the manual will be the standard for all library system volunteer activities. Volunteers will receive their own version of the manual.

### *Collections*

One of the most noticeable changes to collections occurred in Information Services. Mary Louis Fischer and volunteer Bill Kegel have conducted sustained reference weeding and shifting. The collection contracted enough to allow one shelving range to be removed. We anticipate a second will go in spring 2012. The Friends and library staff anticipate filling the reclaimed floor space with study carrels and perhaps space for tutoring. Mary Louise also weeded and moved reader development materials.

The white elephant sale raised over \$800. Library staff members want to purchase multiple display stands to promote circulation and provide greater participation by staff in collection marketing. The handsome wood displays they chose will be both aesthetically pleasing and practical.

The Friends once again contributed to the library system overall materials budget. Though the books do not remain at Jacaranda due to floating, Friends copies enhance Jacaranda customer choice, convenience, and satisfaction with collection.

A grant from the Venice Lions Club also funded circulating material purchases in large print and electronic formats.

### *Fundraising*

Besides the white elephant partnership the FOL sustained its DQ fundraiser days. Sheila Kaufer deserves credit for maintaining the relationship with the store proprietor and enthusiastic advertising. The bookshop holiday calendar sale is in its second year and should result in a nice return. Mary Louise Fischer prepared a successful Venice Lions Club grant on behalf of the Friends, and she has likewise submitted an application with the Plantation Community Foundation in late 2011.

Board members attended a Friends Alliance workshop presented by Cavanaugh & Associates on responsibilities of tax exempt organizations. The speakers offered excellent advice concerning fundraising activities, such as cautions regarding raffles. The board heard from the Nonprofit Resource Center's Judi Bell on membership recruitment and related organizational issues.

### *Library Performance*

I have attached a spreadsheet that summarizes selective Jacaranda Library performance indicators for October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011.

### *Selected 2010 Accomplishments*

- Revitalized and rebranded teen space and young adult programming;
- Reclaimed floor space thanks to Mary Louise's reference collection weeding;
- Emma Lazarus *Voice of Liberty*, *Voice of Conscience* exhibit and programs (Tamar and Greg) drew appreciative audiences;

- White elephant sale Friends/staff collaboration raised over \$800;
- Nonprofit Resource Center speaker provided valuable counsel to Friends board concerning membership recruitment, public awareness, etc.;
- Successful launch of Lego Club for 5 to 11 year-olds in youth services;
- Heart Gallery panels attracted significant media attention;
- Sheila sustained the Dairy Queen partnership, providing a fundraising opportunity with private sector.
- In December, Jacaranda received new lamps, ballasts, and wiring throughout the building as a response to chronic low-light conditions.
- The Friends covered cost of cleaning all library upholstery, the first such effort since the 2004 renovation.
- Angie and Susie convened training sessions for volunteers. The slide presentation, handouts, etc. were so effective that they were invited to reprise training at other libraries.
- Tuesday and Thursday e-help volunteers met one-on-one with hundreds of customers during the year.
- Bill Kegel installed FOL-purchased metal backstops on Youth Services shelves.
- FOL-purchased digital frames made their debut; promoting library programs and services on desktops around library.
- Jacaranda PL cut its energy consumption by 17%, saving on utility bills and reducing its ecological footprint.
- The Friends submitted an insurance certificate to county government's Risk Management office, qualifying the FOL to conduct business with county.

### *Conclusion*

Frances T. Bourne Jacaranda Public Library may best be characterized as a verb. Every day, customers depend on us for accessing print materials, attending stimulating programming, seeking information and referral, using meeting space, assisting with a sometimes bewildering universe of gadgets and computers, helping with an employment search, helping to find purpose in retirement, and so much more.

It takes sustained effort and energy to meet these challenges. Employees and volunteers turn to the Friends for support, and the Friends organization responds. We are grateful for your unselfish donation of time and talents, which are often invisible to the public that benefits. It is my wish that the demonstrable good you perform translates into the membership groundswell we all desire. Certainly, the community must know that for a library in need, the Friends organization is a friend, indeed.