The Ethical Dozen for Friends of the Library
ADOPTED 18 SEPTEMBER 2015

“Friends can make the difference between a mediocre and an outstanding library.”
- Jean A. Ashfield, Friends of Library Handbook

Friends of Libraries Ethics and Responsibilities

1. Friends of the Library is a group of individuals who value public library services to the community and who volunteer their time, talents, and efforts to promote and support the vision, mission, and objectives of their library in whatever way will be helpful.

2. Friends organize to help support the work of the library, not to engage in the work and responsibilities of the library board members or the library staff. Friends of the Library cooperate with both, but do not interfere with either. Friends recognize that they do not perform a decision-making role for the library: they are familiar with and support the policies of the library. Friends provide input into the library’s long-range planning process and remain knowledgeable as to the status of the plan.

3. Friends support quality library services in the community through fund raising, volunteerism, and serving as advocates for the library’s program.

4. Friends work to ensure that the public has equal access to information, both as a Constitutional right and as the best way to sustain a democratic way of life.

5. Friends subscribe to and believe in the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read, and the Freedom to View statements. [http://tinyurl.com/LibRightsFreedoms](http://tinyurl.com/LibRightsFreedoms)

6. Friends recognize that authority rests with the whole Friends board assembled in public meetings and shall make no personal statements or promises nor take any private action which may compromise the board. They support the actions taken by a majority of the board and clearly differentiate personal opinions from board decisions.

7. Friends do not interfere with the library operations of the library staff.

8. Friends promote the library program to the public.

9. Friends conduct fundraising which complements the library’s mission. Friends’ activities support library board long-range plans and policies. Friends decide how to spend their funds after conferring with the library director.

10. Friends follow legal, professional, and ethical practices in making decisions. They scrupulously avoid personal conflicts of interest and do not condone them in others. They say nothing in a board meeting that could be construed to violate anyone’s civil rights.

11. Friends serve as advocates for local, state, and national library issues and represent the library program to legislators and funders.

12. Friends are open and welcoming to suggestions, questions and communications from the library staff, board members, and the public.
Friends Responsibilities in Local Library

From A Comparison of Responsibilities: Local Library Board of Trustees, Local Library Director, Regional Library, and Friends of the Library. Tennessee State Library & Archives, 2017.
https://tinyurl.com/ComparisonofResponsibilities17

OVERVIEW
Friends of the Library is a group of individuals who value public library services to the community and are willing to volunteer their time, talents, and efforts to promote and support the library’s goals and objectives in whatever way will be helpful. Library Friends are organized to help support the work of the library, not to engage in the work and responsibilities of the library board members or the library staff. Friends of the Library cooperate with both, but do not interfere with either. Generally the Friends areas of focus are: fundraising, advocacy, and volunteer work.

PLANNING
Keep informed of the library’s plans, progress, and problems; be willing to assist in carrying out objectives and implementing community analysis surveys and questionnaires.
Serve as advocates for local, state, and national library issues; represent the library program to legislators.

POLICY
Adopt constitution and bylaws that include clear statements of the supportive role of the Friends Group.
Arrange to have a representative from the Friends group attend board meetings to promote mutual understanding and aid in cooperation.
Support the policies of the library as adopted by the library board; offer assistance in communicating policies to citizens of the community. Conduct all activities ethically.
Serve as additional “connecting link” in interpreting the library and community to each other; conduct fundraising and book events endorsed by the library director and board.

FINANCE
Conduct fund-raising that complements the library’s mission and provides funding for special library projects to meet needs as expressed by the library director and/or board.
At the request of the library director, use individual and collective influence to assist the library board and director in getting desired financial support from local, state, and national sources.
Contribute funds for books, training, materials, services, equipment, etc. to supplement what cannot be provided by the budget with regard to the expressed needs given to them by the library director and/or board. Make the most of their unique position to influence public opinion on government action on local, state, and national levels on behalf of public library services.

PERSONNEL
Provide reliable volunteer help for projects when requested by library director.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
Guard against infringement of trustee’s or director’s role in connection with the operation of the library.
Assist in ways compatible with the scope of Friends role and as requested by the director or library board.
Be alert to recognize ways the Friends could be helpful and receptive to suggestions from the director and/or board.
Be enthusiastic and resourceful in carrying out whatever projects are undertaken and/or projects proposed by the director or library board.
Make continuous effort to maintain good communication with library board and director.
Offer suggestions for the library’s marketing and public relations program. Promote the library to the public, following the direction of the library’s marketing plan.
Help provide access to groups and individuals being visited.