

Dear Friends,

The Friends of The Seattle Public Library's mission is to elevate the Library and inspire the love of reading in our communities. We love this mission, and we love the work that we do. And it keeps us busy!

Our 2023 accomplishments include:

- **Advocacy and 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 Foundation and look forward to fruitful future projects.
- **Community book donations:** The Friends have accepted over 30,000 donated books this year. In turn, we have connected more than 12,000 books 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. If you have books to donate, get in touch!
- **Books for Teachers:** 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.
- **Owl Totes:** 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.
- **FriendShop:** 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 including Greenwood, Beacon Hill, and Broadview, and in December we will once again have a booth at the Gates Foundation Discovery Center Holiday Marketplace.
- **Community events:** This year 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 see our Friends and community members stop by!

Our November 2023 Annual Meeting webinar marked both the start of the new year for the Friends of The Seattle Public Library, as well as the beginning steps of bringing 2023 to a close. We hosted the wonderful Seattle author Bonnie J. Rough as our guest speaker.

I am pleased to introduce Angel Sauls, our incoming Friends' Board President. I am excited to continue to support the Friends as I pass the baton to Angel, and am confident that she will be a wise, thoughtful, and cheerful shepherd of our Board's work in the coming year.

Finally, I want to make sure to mention our staff, contract workers, board members, and volunteers, who 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 support of our mission.

Warmly,

Amy VanderZanden,
The Friends of The Seattle Public Library
Board President, Oct 2021 – Oct 2023