

KDLA September 2012 Trustee Tip of the Month

The Friends of Kentucky Libraries

Friends of Kentucky Libraries (FKL) is a non-profit organization made up of individuals and local Friends chapters who support and celebrate Kentucky's libraries. Their mission is to advocate for public libraries on the local, state, and national level and to provide support for the formation and success of local Friends chapters.

During October, FKL will again facilitate Legislative Meet & Greet events throughout the state. This is an annual event, sponsored by as many local chapters of Friends as wish to participate. The idea is simple and harks back to the famous quote by Congressman Tip O'Neill, "All politics is local." While healthcare and gun control may dominate the front pages of national newspapers, all politicians still want to hear the daily concerns of their constituents, and here is our chance to tell them that our local libraries are important to our communities. Where there are local chapters, FKL asks that those Friends sponsor the event; where there are no formal chapters, FKL asks that the libraries themselves do it.

And what is "it?" It is whatever works for your District: morning, afternoon, evening; a simple mingling with the crowd or a forum with time allotted for each legislator and candidate to speak. Most important of all, it's an opportunity for your library supporters (aka patrons or users) to tell their legislators—current and future—that their library is something they value. There are no scripted talking points; everybody says what they want to say or even nothing at all. Just the presence of people in the room makes a statement, so don't think the shy folks who say nothing are not contributing in an important way—they are.

Friends of Kentucky Libraries support libraries in many different ways. The core mission of Friends groups across the state is to support their home library. This often costs a great deal in terms of time and money, and the Friends of Kentucky Libraries is available to help. In addition to the Friends Connect newsletter, statewide recognition for awards, the Legislative Meet & Greets and Advocacy projects, there are various projects around the state that we support. We offer help to those projects that demonstrate the spirit that has made Kentucky's public libraries great including Sister Libraries grants and the 501(c)(3) Obtainment Grant for Friends Groups. The Chapter Liaison and Mentoring Committee mentors new and existing Friends groups and fosters the development of networking among Friends organizations.

For more information, please see the Friends of Kentucky Libraries website at www.FriendsKyLibraries.org.