

Brief Introduction to the Friends of the Willmar Public Library

The Friends of the Willmar Public Library work to enhance library services & programs and promote literacy & community resources in our community through funding, advocacy, and volunteerism.

What Do Friends of the Library Do?

Friends of Libraries – from Wikipedia (11/2/2020)

Friends of the Library (Friends) are non-profit, charitable groups formed to support libraries in their communities. Support from the Friends groups may be financial, political and cultural. Groups are separate from the libraries they support and made up of volunteers. Generally, groups are structured, handle finances and work closely with library management. In the United States, Friends groups also work closely with the American Library Association (ALA).

Friends of Libraries are adaptable groups that fit the needs of the communities and libraries they support. They are made up of volunteers who organize themselves independently to support their local library. Generally, Friends groups want to have good library service in their communities. Friends of Libraries groups may do many different things. Many work towards public support of libraries, including government advocacy and spreading information about library services. Groups help provide resources and financial support. Friends groups may exist as a form of advocacy or as community “ambassadors” for the library.

Friends of the Willmar Public Library details

- **Friends of the Kandiyohi County/Willmar Public Library, Inc.**
is doing business as: Friends of the Willmar Public Library
- incorporated as a Nonprofit Corporation (Domestic), by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State (File Number: 1K-135; Filing Date: 1/21/1994)
- determined to be exempt from federal income tax under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a charitable nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) effective on 1/31/1996.
(Employer Identification Number: 41-1762640)
- member of the Minnesota Association of Library Friends (MALF).

The history of support for local libraries is a long one in the Willmar / Kandiyohi County area

In Willmar, the first support came with an offer of \$10,000 from Andrew Carnegie for construction of a new library. The City of Willmar stepped up to the plate adding a \$1,000 levy. The Willmar Public Library, a Carnegie Library, was built on the corner of 4th and 5th Street in **1904**. In **1958**, it merged with the Kandiyohi County Library to better serve patrons. A new facility was erected for the County and City in **1966**. To further facilitate service, the Kandiyohi

County/Willmar Public Library joined the libraries in neighboring counties to form the Crow Regional Library in **1972**, and later the Pioneerland Library System in **1983** (32 member libraries in a nine-county consolidated regional library system).

The Friends of the Kandiyohi County/Willmar Public Library, Inc. was established in 1994 specifically to garner community support for an ambitious expansion of the Willmar Public Library. A groundswell of support from library patrons was raised and support from the community was ultimately successful in **1996** when citizens voted for an excise sales tax and library addition. The library's facility was added on to and renovated in **1999**.

The purposes of the Friends of the Willmar Public Library have always been:

- 1. To enhance the Library Collection
- 2. To sponsor Library Events
- 3. To promote Library Resources
- 4. To support Library programming for children, teens and adults
- 5. To conduct fundraising events to benefit Willmar Public Library

Over the years Friends support examples include assisting library staff with the annual book sale, running an annual raffle fundraiser, assisting in the library's summer reading programs, conducting the Give to the Max fundraiser, helping to bring in authors for library events and producing a Friends of the Library Newsletter.

A major development / fundraising accomplishment in **2019** was the launch of **Wisdom & Wine**, a Friends Author Event in conjunction with a Silent Auction, our annual Raffle, and more. Tickets sold out quickly and the event was a success. The 2020 – 2021 COVID 19 pandemic put the brakes on conducting fundraiser events. The current plan is to proceed with the Wisdom & Wine Author Event planned for June 2020 - on June 9, 2022.

Another major development in recent years was the **2006** establishment of the **Friends of the Willmar Public Library Fund**. Friends had received a donation in honor of the first librarian in Willmar, Amy Hanscom, which became the seed money for a partnership with the Willmar Area Community Foundation to hold charitable resources, providing for an annual grant to the Willmar Public Library for use consistent with Friends' goals. In **2018**, the fund was converted to a permanent resource owned by the Willmar Area Community Foundation and advised by the Friends of the Willmar Public Library board, continuing the annual grants to the Willmar Public Library based on Friends' goals. The Friends of the Willmar Public Library Fund is a Field of Interest Fund.

Sources: Suzanne & Mary's Friends Welcome @ 2019 Wisdom & Wine, Memorandum of Understanding between Friends of the Willmar Public Library & the Willmar Area Community Foundation 8/3/2018, Welcome to the Willmar Public Library brochure