



Library Advocacy

Following are ways you can support your library.

As a member of library staff, as a Friend, as a library user, every day is an opportunity to confirm and communicate how important your library is to the entire community.

Talk, talk, talk!

Look around you. There are people everywhere who could use their library, and who don't know about the resources waiting for them. Talk to people and tell them why you love and value the library. Help them see what they could learn. It doesn't take much more than friendly conversation with a friend.

Keep informed

Stay up to date with information about your library, with Council information, Library information, newsletters, local newspapers, Council/Library web site, talk with your library staff. Get to know your Friends committee members.

Get to know your elected representatives

You've elected your Councillors; get to know them. Learn from their web sites about what the issues are in your community. Let them know what you think about your library. Let them know you want them to support library-friendly policies. Make an appointment to see them, and invite them to library events. Let them see how you are using the services provided by the library. Remind them that you vote.

Work on your library's print or online newsletter

Many libraries have a newsletter for patrons. Volunteer to write an advocacy column for the newsletter, highlighting ways that patrons and advocates can help the library.

Make and distribute handouts

Important information about the library, its services, and needs can be distributed in writing, for people to read later or pass on to others. If you have desktop publishing skills, or know someone who does, work to build materials that can be passed to others. May be it can be a "wish list" of things the library needs or "ideas for action" on issues facing the library.

Plan a library event

Any event during the year is an opportunity to showcase your library. Create an event or promotion that will get your Friends and other volunteers involved.

Staff can be advocates

Many who work in libraries forget that they have a built-in army: the library staff. Staff behind the desk at your library can be the best advocates you have. No one knows the library better than the staff. Friends should get to know the staff at your library.

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Lobby

Learn what has been successful with other Friends groups. Visit and talk with other groups. Follow the issues on the FOLA web site www.fola.org.au.

Offer Internet tours

For those without a computer at home, the library is the number one point of Internet access. Your library can be the window to the Internet for many people in your community. Offer to show patrons how to use it. Friends groups can offer support to new library members.

Get press

Speaking publicly and writing about the specific value of your library. Are you good at public speaking? Write a letter to your local newspaper, but make sure you have the facts correct and have developed a key message. Ask the library or Friends group for some statistics to support your message.

Be your library's ambassador

Go out into your community and do public appearances to advocate for your library. Visit your local service clubs and neighbourhood organisations and schools. Offer to speak about the things your library offers and why your Friends are important. Build a network into the community.

Build your network

You are a powerful agent for change on your own, but involving more people makes your message even stronger. Developing a network of library advocates in your community is a great way to add voices of support. Keep an email list.

Add your idea

You have an idea – send it to FOLA so we can display it to others via www.fola.org.au

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