Report of the Friends of the Sacramento Public Library to the Sacramento Public Library Authority Board, October 28, 2010

The Friends of the Sacramento Public Library (FSPL) and its 28 Branch Affiliates support the Library in many ways and have had a busy and productive year. The Friends are justifiably proud of their libraries and support them enthusiastically. With the reconstitution of the Friends of Del Paso Library, every branch now has an active Friends group.

Support

- In 2009 (based on a calendar fiscal year), combined system and branch support for Sacramento Public Library totaled $368,374 providing programs, books and materials that otherwise would not be available to patrons of the library system.

- At year's end, the Branch and System Friends held in checking accounts, CDs or investment accounts approximately $750,000. $157,000 is held by the System Friends, who in addition to providing support for the Library:

    - Rent and operate a warehouse and sales venue, The Book Den;
    - Contract with the Foundation for office database management;
    - Produce a joint Friends and Foundation newsletter, and
    - Provide insurance coverage for all affiliates.

- Several of our larger and more affluent branches are beginning to partner with smaller branches in more disadvantaged neighborhoods in an attempt to spread the benefits of the Friends more widely and uniformly. We are all stronger when we work together.

Membership

As of September 30, 2010, the Friends have 2,588 members. This compares to 1,663 members at the end of July 2009, an increase of 56%. Membership had declined prior to the database operations having been contracted out to the Sacramento Public Library Foundation (SPLF).

Book Sales

Off-site book sales are held at venues such as the Antiquarian Book Fair and Fairytale Town. The Friends are continually looking for new venues and the volunteers to staff them. The warehouse holds over 50,000 volumes and when open for quarterly sales, no book is over $2.00. The Book Den store is open three days a week and features better and collectible books.

Partners Working Group

In September 2008 members of Branch and System Friends as well as the Sacramento Public Library Foundation and Library administration met to air differences and improve communications among the organizations. As a

result, the Partners Working Group was created and tasked with improving communications, defining roles and enhancing the culture of respect within our organizations. The Foundation paid for a facilitator for this and the multiple subsequent meetings, and the Friends would like to publicly thank them for their willingness to help.

As the Partners Working Group began to look at issues and problems, it became clear to all that role clarification and boundaries needed to be put in place to protect each organization and the library, and to ensure that the Friends 501(c)3 status was protected. To create uniformity and financial transparency across the system and give guidance to the Branch Friends, a Branch Financial Policy document was created. At its September 2010 meeting, the Policies were approved by the System Friends Board. At its October 2010 meeting, after listening to concerns expressed by some branch affiliate groups, the Board agreed to delay their implementation for two months for further refinement, and to build consensus so that the Friends of Sacramento Public Library can continue to support library programs and initiatives.

Planning

As we approach 2011, the Friends Board continues to look at ways to improve sales at the Book Den and Warehouse. The Board plans to hold a retreat in early 2011 to discuss this and other matters.

Joanne Murphy, President
Friends of the Sacramento Public Library

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