

Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library Annual Report 2024 - 2025



We are about to open a new chapter for our library and for the Friends of the Library. For nearly two years, the library has been operating out of temporary space on New Hampshire Avenue during construction of the new library. By about the time the schools re-open for the fall term, the library will be back on Philadelphia Ave, in a new, updated building. I'm sure the children in the three schools within an easy walk will be thrilled to have their library back. So will surrounding residents.

But a challenge in the coming year will be to retain at least some of those new patrons, from the neighborhoods around the temporary space in the Crossroads neighborhood, who discovered the library and became patrons in the past two years. Library staff made a concerted effort to draw in those residents, many of whom are Spanish-speakers.

One way in which the Friends supported this effort was by subsidizing the fee for non-resident library cards. The library's temporary location in the Takoma Langley Crossroads neighborhood is at the border of Takoma Park. Many residents of the neighborhood live in PG County, outside the boundary of Takoma Park. FTPML subsidizes the \$60 fee these individuals would otherwise pay, to help the library encourage residents of this neighborhood to access the library's Spanish language resources.

Here are some of the other library activities the Friends have supported in the past year:

Jumpstart with the Arts: A program of performing arts with Carpe Diem Arts, with music, dance, theater, puppetry, and circus arts, held at the library and a popular kids program.

Monthly Chess Instruction: Once a month on Sundays, children and families receive lessons in chess from an instructor. The program attracts about 20 participants.

Canta Juego: Spanish Circle Time: Now in its 14th year, this high-energy program of singing and dancing for young children and their caregivers is lead by Señora Garza. The popular program is in Spanish and takes place once a week.

Book Club for English Language Learners: This is a book discussion club for Piney Branch Elementary School (PBES) students and their parents with a wide range of English reading ability. In the coming year it will meet once per semester. The Friends of the Library pays to purchase a book for each family to keep and read together in the weeks leading up to the meeting. The Friends also provide refreshments for the meeting.

Winter Solstice Celebration at the Library: This past winter, the library revived a pre-pandemic tradition featuring performances by the Rock Creek Morris Women, and the Just in Time step dance troupe.

In addition to library programs that we support, the Friends sponsors its own programs:

The FTPML Big Book Club meets to discuss great works of literature, focusing on one work over the course of a fall or spring. Discussion of a work is kicked off with a presentation from a scholar or expert on the author or the work.

The Friends Book Group meets every other month to explore literature through historical and contemporary fiction, mysteries and science fiction, and graphic novels.

At our free once-a-month **Fixit Clinics**, held at the library, skilled volunteers help their neighbors repair small electronics and appliances, clothing, bicycles, and furniture. The popular clinics, now in their second year, have been a great addition to our programming.

In addition to these programs, the Friends are responsible for the construction and maintenance of approximately 20 **Little Free Libraries** scattered around Takoma Park. In addition, posters with poems posted around the city are maintained by the Friends in our **Spring for Poetry** initiative.



The Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization. What support we can provide to the library depends on our volunteers and on donations.

Since the move to the temporary space, our membership has been declining, while donations collected from memberships has been up and down. Receipts from our book sales have also been down, in part because not as many people come to the library's temporary location compared to our outdoor venue on the grounds of the Philadelphia Avenue site and in part because donations of books for the sale are down. In 2024, we took in a total of \$9,000 between memberships, donations, and book sales. On the other hand, for the third year in a row, we held a fundraiser concert at the VFW — this year featuring the band *The Magmatics* — which raised another \$1,400 for our support of library programs. That total included money we raised in a raffle that coincided with the concert. This year we experimented with an on-line component of the raffle that has potential to raise us more money with some tweaking.



Compared to our total income of \$12,000 in 2024, we have pledged support of \$13,000 for library programs this year. Anticipating renewed interest in the library once it opens in the new space, we at the Friends hope to greatly expand our membership, and engage more volunteers. Be on the lookout for events where we will be promoting membership in the Friends! We are also thinking of implementing new membership benefits — such as, for example, early access to our book sales.

We hope that more members of our community join us in supporting the programming, new and old, that library staff will implement once work related to the move is in the rear-view mirror.

This year, the Friends of the Library says farewell to departing board member Christopher Wajda, whose graphic arts skills we relied on heavily. We are being joined by two new members, Benjamin Frey and Elizabeth Forbes Wallace, who will bring new ideas and energy to our small group.

Maurice Belanger, President