



**Julie Yaun**

## A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of the Friends,

As another successful year draws to a close, we want to thank so many people: our members, our volunteers, our book-sale shoppers and book

donors, as well as the entire Library staff for their generosity and dedication in helping us achieve our mission of supporting the activities and programs of the Ridgefield Library.

You need only mention the library's name to a new acquaintance or old friend to unleash an outpouring of accolades: "I've learned so much at their technology workshops!"... "The kids read about a million books every summer, thanks to their Summer Reading Program!"... "They have the most amazing musical performances there!"... "I just got a BAG of books for five bucks!" It's not hard to support such an enriching, entertaining, educational place.

But it takes a village to do so, and that's where our volunteers come in. The typical Friends Book Sale (of which there are two each year) takes over 1,000 volunteer hours to coordinate. Those 30,000+ books in 70 categories don't just spring into place on tables and shelves like a scene out of Disney's *Fantasia*. We wish!

So please – make it your New Year pledge to join the Friends of the Ridgefield Library. Your monetary support is crucial to our efforts, but your time, your ideas, and your fresh energy are just as essential for our progress.

We look forward to having you join our efforts! Together, we'll create an even more vital, forward-thinking, FUN Ridgefield Library. After all, "That's what Friends are for!"

~ Julie Yaun, Friends President

## Bravo for Book Sale Success!

by **Cris Nichols**, Book Sale Coordinator

Twice a year, thousands of readers come from near and far to browse the 30,000+ books, DVDs, CDs, albums, games, and gifts offered at our twice-yearly Friends' sales. Some come in search of a specific antique treasure, while others load up with enough of their favorite genre(s) to tide them over until the next sale.

Roughly a third of the items at each sale are children's board books, preschool and school-age books, and non-fiction editions. This year's fall children's sale was the best-ever: in just four days, we found homes for 9,800 books, raising \$8,524! (We raised an additional \$13,084 at the adult sale the following weekend – a near-record.)

One of the reasons the children's sales are so successful is because almost all the donated books arrive in excellent condition. They haven't been collecting dust on a shelf as they await the chance at a second (or third! or tenth!) life. It's such a delight to see children at the sale, picking out their own books – and just as much of a delight to see their wallet-carrying benefactor realize they're paying only a small fraction of the books' original price.

How fortunate are we for our "angels" – the donors who arrive practically every day the library is open with bags and boxes filled with beautiful books? We're fortunate, too, for the volunteers who give so tirelessly to the task of sorting, storing, and displaying them. Will you join us in that effort? Many hands make light work – and I vow your hands will be busy *and* happy as a book room volunteer! ~ Cris Nichols



# Friends' Album Snips 'n' Snaps

Embracing the philosophy that, to become powerful readers, kids need to make their own reading choices, **Wooster School** teacher Antoinette Fornshell arranged to bring 33 eighth-grade students to select books for their middle-school classrooms. Each student shopped with a budget of \$10-15, and the group headed back to school with books of every genre, interest, and reading level. With the addition of student-curated classroom libraries at Wooster, reports Ms. Fornshell, "...excitement for reading has skyrocketed!"



Two years ago, **David Zhou**, a junior at Hopkins School in New Haven, embarked on a project to raise funds to send books to African schools through the African Library Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving literacy and self-empowerment. Friends of the Ridgefield Library provided approximately half the books to meet David's goal of shipping 1,000 books to schools in Malawi. To date, David has built the first library at Ngoya Primary School, providing more than 200 hundred children with the opportunity to borrow books freely. He is currently finishing collecting books and funds for a second library and hopes to build two more libraries in 2020. For more info, visit [africanlibraryproject.org](http://africanlibraryproject.org).

Each month during the **Connecticut Mobile Food Bank Pantry's** Ridgefield visit, the Friends distribute 200-250 books, free of charge. "Young kids' books and cookbooks are the most popular options," says Book Distribution Coordinator **John Somma**. "For many patrons, English is a second language, so they want cookbooks with lots of pictures and easy-to-prepare meals." Adds John, "When we tell kids they can take as many books as they like, they're just amazed." No wonder a 20-year study showed that the presence of books in the home has a greater influence on a child's level of education than does the parents' income, nationality, or level of education.



Each November, the FORL board gift-wraps hundreds of like-new donated books to help various library and town organizations celebrate their holiday events and thank their dedicated volunteers. In addition, we supply the **Keeler Tavern Museum** with about 700 books for their very popular holiday luncheons (Keeler Tavern Museum volunteers add a sticker to the outside of each gift, recognizing FORL for supplying the books). It's just our way of saying "thank you" to those who make our town a little more wonderful, warm, and unique.

The Friends donated about 500 books for trick-or-treaters who stopped by during the **2019 Halloween Walk**. "We were deluged with kids and had a blast!" says library director Brenda McKinley, who adds that the books were snapped up in less than two hours. Parents were happy that each child got a book instead of candy, and the kids were delighted to choose their own book – a treat indeed!



Founded in 2017 by former RHS students Grant Yaun and Ian Calle, **Books for the Troops** is still going strong, thanks to book donations from the Friends and the hard work of Arianna Calle, who took over when the two boys graduated in June. Arianna has already sent over 500 books and 118 sets of playing cards to active-duty troops serving in Cuba, Afghanistan, Singapore, Niger, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates. Letters written by RHS students thanking the troops for their service are included in each package. You can help cover the group's shipping costs by dropping a donation in the **Books for the Troops** jar at any Friends book sale.

## A (New) Friend in Your Corner



A familiar face at the Ridgefield Library, where she served as an adult services librarian for seven years before retiring in July, **Carole Clark** was recently named the newest member of the FORL Board.

Carole earned a BS degree in psychology from Northwestern University and a Master's degree in Library & Information Science from the University of Illinois. Her career as a librarian spanned positions at the Mayo Clinic Library, the Planetree Consumer Health Library, and the Sacred Heart University Library. Carole also served as a Library Media Specialist at Yorktown High School before joining Ridgefield Library.

Carole resides in Ridgefield with her husband, Ralph, who served as the FORL treasurer for three years. They have two sons in their thirties, one living in Portland, OR, and the other in Baltimore.

"I've always been so impressed with the dedication and hard work of the volunteers, who do so much for the library," Carole reflects. "When I retired, I was able to become more involved, and I am so pleased to be a member of the Friends Board."

We're pleased to have you, Carole!

**The Friends of the Ridgefield Library (FORL) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to supporting the activities and mission of the Ridgefield Library.**

We work with the library's **directors and staff** to identify projects where funds are needed. Our **focus** is things that help expand the library's reach and access to the broader **community**.

FORL assists the library in meeting its **goal** of being the **essential partner** and the place where people go to **discover, question, learn, and connect**.

## Holiday Cheer: The Friends Celebrate Another Great Year!



# Become an FORL Member Today!

## Benefits of Membership

- Advance notice of book sales
- Friends newsletter
- Invitation to the Friends' Holiday Party in December and Annual Dinner/Meeting in June
- Pride in knowing you are preserving and improving library service in our community

## Membership Dues

Membership dues are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law and are eligible for many corporate matching fund programs.

**Please note: Membership dues paid to the Friends are distinct from contributions to the Library's Annual Appeal.** Friends dues provide the seed money for book sales and other FORL activities, the proceeds of which are used to support specific library services and programs. Appeal donations made directly to the Library support the Library's annual operating budget.

## Attend an FORL Board Meeting

Come see what we're about! The Friends Board meets on the first Monday of most months at 1:00 p.m. at the Library. Board meetings are open to all members of the Friends.

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## JOIN US!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*I'd like to join the Friends of the Ridgefield Library at the following level:*

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Friend (\$15)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Friend (\$35) | <input type="checkbox"/> Best Friend (\$100+)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Friend (\$20) | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend (\$50)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Matching gift form enclosed |

Term of membership is one (1) year from the receipt of dues. Membership/contributions are tax-deductible.

Please make checks payable to: Friends of the Ridgefield Library

*Interested in volunteering? Let us know your interest(s)!*

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book Sales         | <input type="checkbox"/> Book Sorting & Storage  | <input type="checkbox"/> Folk/music Concerts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events     | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographing Events    | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer-at-Large | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising & Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Support   |

Please enclose this form and your membership dues in an envelope and drop at the Library's front desk or mail to: **Friends of the Ridgefield Library**, 472 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877 Attn: FORL Membership

Contact us at: [friends@ridgefieldlibrary.org](mailto:friends@ridgefieldlibrary.org)

Like us on : **Friends of the Ridgefield Library**