

fact sheet #30

for Friends and Foundations

ORIENTING NEW ACTIVE MEMBERS IN YOUR FRIENDS GROUP

Even the most eager and active volunteer for your group can go “rogue!” It doesn’t happen often, but when it does, it can be incredibly painful. (See Fact Sheet 31: When a Friends Steps Out of Bounds.) Can you fire a volunteer? The answer is yes (and sometimes it’s the most responsible course of action), but with some planning up front, you may never have to.

Following are a couple of sample job descriptions and “rules of the road” that you should share with any new officer or committee chair. If they understand their jobs up front, and have signed off on the job description, you’ll have something concrete to use if and when a volunteer steps “out of bounds.”

Hospitality Chair & Committee

- Facilitates the co-ordination of four membership meetings per year with committee members.
 - Reserves meeting room.
 - Finds speaker.
 - Arrange for refreshments.
 - Promotes program.

President

- Presides over official meetings of the Friends Board.
 - Works with executive committee to set the agenda.
 - Facilitates good discussion – ensuring that everyone gets an equal say in discussions.
 - Votes only to break a tie.
- Public spokesperson for the Friends.
- Appoints committee chairs.

Rules of the Road for All Active Friends Members:

- Be accountable – follow the job description for your committee or office.
- Be “Friendly!” Enjoy your colleagues and the opportunity to make a difference for the library.
- Ask for help when you need it, or let the executive board know immediately if you are unable to fulfill your duties.
- Respect the status of the Friends of the Library’s good name in the community and do everything to ensure that you only contribute to that excellent reputation.

continued

As you can see, the job descriptions don't need to be long and complex – they should just be clear about expectations. Using these along with a “Rules of the Road” document, you'll likely save a lot of headaches in the future. In addition, if possible, assign a mentor to any new chair or officer to help them enter your group's culture and understand their roles and responsibilities quickly and easily.

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