

# fact sheet #20

## for Friends and Foundations

### **FRIENDS BOARD DIVERSITY**

A wonderful way to keep your group active, relevant, and reflective of the community is to work hard to ensure that your board is diverse. A diverse board will appeal to a much broader membership and will bring a wide variety of ideas and perspectives. In addition, if your Friends group is visible in the community, you will be showing the community that not only your group but the library as well is truly for everyone! Following are some tips to help you recruit a diverse board.

1. When selecting your board members, think about your community and set a goal of reflecting its diversity in your board. Ensure that both genders and all races prominent in the community are represented. It is possible and even likely that “new Americans” will be eager to participate in a group such as yours so that they can meet people and begin to “fit in” to their new community.
2. Consider a member or members from the educational community: teachers (active and retired), school board members, administrators (superintendents, principals, etc.) and Parent Teacher Association members.
3. Consider asking prominent religious leaders in your community to join. They can get your message to many people.
4. Remember that people from different age groups will help strengthen your board and provide enlightening perspectives on each problem.
5. Consider your upcoming programs, projects and fund-raisers: do you have the best people on the board to help make these successful? What types of “non-traditional” board members might help you create more exciting programs that appeal to a wide variety people in the community?
6. When you have identified the various groups in your community that should be represented in your group, single out known individuals and ask them one-to-one to join you. Hold a special meeting for these new potential board members that is filled with fun, food, and an opportunity to make them feel needed and at home with your group. Encourage them to take a purposeful role if they are not ready for the board such as assistance with a special project. Nurture these newcomers and groom them to become future board members.

7. Keep the board fresh and energetic by limiting the number of terms members can serve. Have a mandatory year off between terms and put this in the by-laws of the organization. Good members can be retained by asking them to serve on task forces or by asking them to serve again after a year has lapsed.

*updated 1/15*

---

**United for Libraries**

Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director  
859 W. Lancaster Ave., Unit 2-1  
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161  
fax (484) 383-3407  
[www.ala.org/united](http://www.ala.org/united)