



## Roles and Relationships

Many Friends groups form because of initiative taken by a Library Board Trustee, manager or staff member. However, there is an important distinction between the role of the Library Board, Friends, and library management and staff.

Open communication on a regular basis by all parties is critical. Representation at Friends meetings by the Library Director/CEO or a liaison person and a Library Board Trustee demonstrates to the Friends group that they are important and worth the time and support of the library.

The role of the Friends of the Library is not to set library policy. A member should not have more power and authority than his or her peers on either board. A conflict of interest could arise if a member of the Library Board setting policy is also a member of the Friends' Board, in a position to influence decisions about funding. As such, it is best if there is a clear sense of the different roles of key players, as well as minimal overlap in terms of decision making and authority.

### Things to consider:

- ❖ How will the Friends be incorporated into the library's planning process?
- ❖ What support will the library give the Friends in terms of publicity, space, and staff support?
- ❖ Will the Friends engage in advocacy campaigns on behalf of the library and, if so, who will be involved in determining the design and message of the campaigns?
- ❖ What role and authority will the Friends have for developing and implementing programs?