



For Immediate Release

Contact:

Beth Nawalinski
800-545-2433, ext. 2161
bnawalinski@ala.org

ALTAFF CELEBRATES SIXTH ANNUAL NATIONAL
FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES WEEK, OCT. 16-22, 2011

(Philadelphia, PA) – October 1, 2011 – The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF) is coordinating the sixth annual National Friends of Libraries Week, Oct. 16-22, 2011. The celebration offers a two-fold opportunity to celebrate. Friends groups can use the time to creatively promote their group in the community, to raise awareness, and to promote membership. The celebration also offers an excellent opportunity for the library staff and Board of Trustees to recognize the Friends for their help and support of the library.

“I encourage the whole nation to celebrate Friends of Libraries and the work they do. I’m convinced that the libraries are so much richer for the enthusiasm and expertise that the Friends bring to the Library,” said ALTAFF Executive Director Sally Gardner Reed. “I hope that libraries across the country will use this week to honor their best supporters – the Friends of their Library – and use this opportunity to promote and expand their membership in this valuable organization.”

In a 2006 survey of members, 754 respondents reported raising more than \$11 million dollars to support libraries with an average annual donation of more than \$50,000. Eighty percent of respondents indicated they support their library through advocacy efforts with primary focus on local or municipal government and the general public. The top three goals were to prevent cuts to library budget, increase library budget, and general public awareness. Friends also support their library by coordinating programs, volunteering in the library, promoting the library in the community, and advocating for libraries on the state and national level.

Friends groups, library Trustees, and library staff can access a variety of online resources to help them celebrate National Friends of Libraries Week. Materials available on the ALTAFF website at www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/altaff/events_conferences/folweek include promotional ideas, editable publicity materials, camera ready bookmarks, ideas from past celebrations, and much more.

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Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director
109 S. 13th Street, Suite 3-N, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Toll Free: (800) 545-2433, ext 2161 Fax: (215) 545-3821
Web: www.ala.org/altaff Email: altaff@ala.org

Also available are Public Service Announcements created by ALTAFF national spokesperson Paula Poundstone, in which Poundstone explains her “unbalanced relationship” with her public library until she joined the Friends to help raise money for her local library. “It’s funny that we think of libraries as quiet demure places where we are shushed by dusty, bun-balancing, bespectacled women,” said Poundstone. “The truth is libraries are raucous clubhouses for free speech, controversy and community. Librarians have stood up to the PATRIOT Act, sat down with noisy toddlers and reached out to illiterate adults. Libraries can never be shushed.”

“We’re thrilled that Paula Poundstone is using her celebrity status to help highlight and support Friends of the Library groups,” said Reed. “These volunteer citizen organizations work hard throughout the year to raise money for and public awareness about their libraries. Libraries would be immeasurably poorer without them.”

ALTAFF is pleased to announce a fifth year of financial awards in conjunction with National Friends of Libraries Week. Two Friends groups or libraries will each receive \$250 in honor of outstanding efforts to recognize Friends during the 2011 celebration of National Friends of Libraries Week, Oct. 16-22, 2011.

Application materials are available online at

www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/altaff/grants_awards/friends/friendsweek. Entries must be received by Dec. 1, 2011.

ALTAFF is a division of the American Library Association that supports citizens who govern, promote, advocate, and fundraise for libraries. ALTAFF brings together library Trustees, advocates, Friends, and Foundations into a partnership that creates a powerful force for libraries in the 21st century. For more information, visit www.ala.org/altaff or contact Beth Nawalinski at (800) 545-3433, ext. 2161, or bnawalinski@ala.org.

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