

Friends of Kansas Libraries (FoKL) Will Recognize Award Winners at Tri-Conference

by Nancy Malone, Continuing Education Coordinator, South Central System

Individual Friend Awards

Again this year it was difficult to choose only one Outstanding Individual Friend Award. Every year we receive nominations for wonderful Friends who deserve to be honored. This year we chose two individuals who really make their Friends successful.

Laurel Becker is not only a member of the Friends of the Augusta Public Library, but also serves on the board of trustees. "May I help you carry your books to the car?" is a question many Augusta community members hear at the annual book sale. Laurel has been the chairperson of the annual book sale since 1994. She assists with the summer reading program and served as the 2006 advertising coordinator for the Friends of the Library Annual Authors Brunch. Last but not least, she is the Library Kitchen Patrol and cleans the kitchen in the library's community room, which is a contribution we can all appreciate. Laurel's enthusiasm is contagious and has increased the membership of the Friends of the Augusta Public Library. What a Friend!

Janette Friesen is that special "Friend" that every library needs and she continues to prove that every year with her volunteering efforts for the Meade Friends of the Library. Janette has served as the webmaster for Meade Library for years. She also helps set up the annual book sale, prepares goodies for the TALK book discussions and serves as the treasurer for the Friends organization. She handles the money and publicity and designs all the materials for two of the Friends' annual projects: the Lawn and Garden Tour and the Christmas Tour.

As a member of the Lone Tree Roots and Shoots Genealogy Society, she gives programs at the library and helps others with their genealogy searches. If every library had a friend like Janette, we would all have fewer worries. Congratulations Janette!

Outstanding Friends Group Awards

Friends of the Leonard H. Axe Library is the Friends group for the library at Pittsburg State University. They are very active not only in raising money, but in programming and publications. They have applied for and received grants to create a film collection. In 2006, they had their first annual Children's Book Festival. They solicited signed copies of books from children's authors all over the world and auctioned them at the annual Young Authors Conference. They are planning a second edition of *A Closer Look*, a history of their campus that they use as a fund raiser. The Friends of Axe Library have sponsored the annual Gene DeGruson Memorial Lecture since 1998. This series usually highlights local or Kansas history. The Friends of Axe Library certainly helps the University of Pittsburg serve both students and the city of Pittsburg.

Friends of the Johnson County Library not only support all the libraries in the Johnson County Library System but they strive to make life better for other libraries as well. On a local level, they have two used book stores, sell books online, have a sizzlin' summer book sale, and have adopted the park around the Merriam Visitors Bureau and Historic Plaza.

Strong advocacy efforts by their members helped communicate the importance of funding the \$22.3 million budget to the county commissioners. They provided \$100,000 in direct support to the library in 2006. On a broader scope, the Friends donated \$1,000 to the Williamsburg Community Library in northeast Kansas, and provided \$100.00 book sale vouchers to 10 small libraries not within the Johnson County Library System. They also held a special book sale to benefit the New Orleans Public Library and, as a result, were able to present a \$1,500 check to help with the rebuilding campaign. The Friends of the Johnson County Library are setting a fine example of ways we can support not only our own library, but libraries across the state and even the nation.

With a name like Can-Kan DreamBuilders, you know the Friends of Caney City Library are a fun and enthusiastic group. They have only been an organized group for one year but they have already been very busy. Their main objective is to raise money for a new library and awareness of the urgent need for one. Last year they had several raffles, an ice cream social, a book sale, a snack tray sale and created and sold a cookbook. They also sold BBQ dinners at the Mayfest. As a result of their efforts, they were able to present the library with \$10,000 that was matched dollar-for-dollar for a total of \$20,000. All this work was accomplished with a membership of only 46. Caney is certainly lucky to have such a dedicated group helping to make their dream of a new library building a reality.