

March 2026 Newsletter

Greeting from our Co Presidents

As we turn the page to a brand-new year, we're excited to share that our Friends organization is starting off strong and full of momentum. Thanks to the tireless work of our board, collaborating with incredible partners in our community, we've taken a major step forward by officially filing for our 501(c)(3) nonprofit status under our new organization, Friends of South Park Township Library Foundation, carefully laying the groundwork for long-term success. This milestone reflects not only dedicated work behind the scenes, but also a shared commitment to building a stronger future for our library.

The Fundraising Committee has already started the year with exciting efforts, including our popular Blind Date with a Book and the Pymatuning Cottage Getaway raffle. Looking ahead, our Spring Book Sale promises to be another highlight of the year. The Community Outreach Committee is distributing books throughout the community and creating "Little Libraries" to place in our neighborhoods. The Communications and Technology Committee is focusing on our social media presence by developing a new website and posting regular Facebook updates. These initiatives rely on many helping hands, and we will be reaching out for volunteers to assist. Whether you can give a little time or a lot, your support makes a meaningful difference.

This is a year of growth, possibility, and positive change. As we expand and strengthen our new foundation, we are committed to keeping you informed and involved. We believe our organization is strongest when ideas flow in every direction, and we want to hear your thoughts, suggestions, and creative vision. Our Friends meetings provide the perfect forum to share ideas, spark new initiatives, and help shape the direction of our organization together, while creating an open and welcoming space for every member to be heard.

If you have been thinking about getting more involved, this is the perfect time. Bring a friend to a meeting, invite a neighbor to volunteer, join a committee and share our events with others who love the library as much as you do. The more our community grows, the more we can accomplish. Thank you for being part of this wonderful community of Friends. We look forward to all we will achieve together in the months ahead as we continue to support and celebrate the library we love.

Maureen and Colleen



2026 Friends Meetings:

March 25, 2026
June 24, 2026
September 23, 2026
December 17, 2026

Come join the fun from 6:00pm – 8 p.m. at the South Park Township Community Room

Treasurer's Report

We are on solid financial footing with a current bank **balance of \$13,049**. Our first fundraiser of the year, Blind Date/Playdate with a Book, brought in more revenue than was expected, giving us a positive start to 2026 fundraising.

We anticipate higher expenses this year as we continue to strengthen our operations. These costs include legal filing fees, insurance, and technology software. These important investments support our growth and will maintain strong standing as a charitable foundation.

Even with these added costs, we remain confident in our ability to meet our key goal: providing a \$16,000 or greater donation to the South Park Township Library in September, supporting programs, materials, and services that benefit the entire community. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our members and neighbors, whose generosity makes this work possible.

Celebrating Amanda DeKnight's Next Chapter

It is with full hearts that we share the news that Amanda DeKnight will be leaving our library. She has served as Director of the South Park Township Library for more than a decade, guiding it with dedication and vision. She has accepted an extraordinary opportunity as Executive Director at Northland Public Library, one of the largest suburban libraries in Pennsylvania.

Amanda has been a remarkable leader and a wonderful soul with an abundance of heart. Over the years, she has accomplished tremendous things for our library, and her vision, warmth, and tireless dedication have left an imprint that will be felt for years to come. Beyond her many professional achievements, she has become a true friend to so many of us, inspiring everyone fortunate enough to work alongside her with her kindness, enthusiasm, and unwavering belief in the power of libraries.

We wish Amanda every success and thank her for all she has given to our library and community.

Blind Date/Playdate with a Book Update

The Fundraising Committee sincerely thanks everyone who helped make the **“Blind Date and Play Date with a Book”** event a tremendous success. From the volunteers who carefully chose, wrapped, and beautifully decorated each book, to those who helped spread the word and encouraged participation, your energy and commitment were invaluable. We are equally grateful to everyone who purchased a mystery book and joined in the fun while supporting our library.

Thanks to your time, creativity, and generosity, we're thrilled to share that the event raised \$1,011.00! We hope you'll join us again next year as we continue this cherished Valentine's Day tradition, bringing even more surprise reads and community fun.

Impact Story: Cans for Meals on Wheels

The Friends were truly overwhelmed by the generosity shown during our **First Annual Christmas Tree Contest and food drive**. Thanks to your enthusiasm, generosity, and commitment, the event became far more than a festive gathering, it showcased the true spirit and heart of our organization. From the moment visitors were welcomed by the beautifully decorated 10-foot tree in the library vestibule creatively designed and installed by our dedicated Community Outreach Committee the tone was set for a season of giving. Their efforts created a warm, inviting atmosphere that inspired an outpouring of support, with box after box of nonperishable food items donated by our caring community.

Special thanks to Linda and Joe Pelan, who generously transported the many donations, which helped to supplement the South Park Meals on Wheels program and provide much-needed support to neighbors in our community. This event highlighted the power of collaboration and compassion and has laid the groundwork for a wonderful new tradition.

Member Spotlight

Since joining the group in 2024, **Chrissie Donahoe** has become a joyful and dependable presence in nearly every corner of our work. A true lover of the South Park Township Library, Chrissie has stayed deeply involved even after moving to Bethel Park, which speaks to her genuine commitment to this community.

She has been a wonderful contributor to the Holiday Market, sharing her talents in both crafting and cooking. She has also helped secure donations for the 50th Anniversary Celebration, and always supports Community Day and our Book Sales, where she brings positivity and a willingness to help wherever she is needed.

Chrissie is now taking on an exciting new challenge: building a new website for the Friends of the Library Foundation. She has already set up the GoDaddy account and begun the planning process, including preparing to take photos at the library to help shape the site's look and feel. With her creativity and dedication, we know the final result will be something special.

We are grateful for Chrissie's enthusiasm, her generosity, and her unwavering support of the library she loves.

Calling All Book Sale Lovers

Our Spring Book Sale is almost here, and it takes a team effort to bring an event of this size to life. We're looking for volunteers to help make it a success. No experience necessary!

Book donations will be accepted from April 6th through April 21st. During that time, volunteers are needed to sort, box, and load donations into the trailer. Wednesday, April 22nd is setup day and will involve heavier lifting as we unpack and organize books for the sale at the Community Center.

The sale runs April 23rd through April 25th. We'll need cashiers, book organizers, and volunteers to tidy and restock tables as books are purchased throughout the event.

If you've never volunteered at the Book Sale and would like to get involved, please email friendsofplibrary15129@gmail.com to be added to our volunteer list. If you've helped in the past, you'll automatically receive an invitation to sign up. Since each shift has limited spots, volunteers will be asked to choose their preferred times on the sign-up sheet.

Whether you can spare a few hours or several days, your time and energy truly make a difference. Join us and be part of one of our biggest fundraisers of the year!

Join the Friends of the Library's Historical Preservation Committee

Do you like history and preserving stories? If so, join us! We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help organize, index, and digitize the Friends history collection. Your time will make a lasting impact and connect you with like-minded people.

Learn more at our Friends Membership Meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 6-8 pm at the Community Center. We'd love to see you there!

What is a 501(c)(3) and why is it beneficial?

A 501(c)(3) is a nonprofit organization that the IRS officially recognizes as a **tax-exempt charitable entity**. To qualify, an organization must operate solely for charitable or educational purposes, avoid benefiting private individuals, and follow strict rules on reporting, governance, and political activity. In Pennsylvania, nonprofits must also register with the Department of State to solicit charitable contributions, adding transparency and public accountability.

This designation is beneficial because it allows donations to be tax-deductible, which encourages individual giving. It also opens the door to significantly more grant opportunities, since most foundations, corporations, and government funders require 501(c)(3) status before awarding grants. For groups like ours, this means greater access to funding for programs, materials, technology, and community initiatives that strengthen the library's impact.

Behind the Scenes

Ever wonder what happens before one of our fundraising events? Every successful event starts with an idea, and then our Friends jump in. With a wide range of talents and skills, members pitch in to plan, prep, organize, create, and assemble. There is always something for everyone to do, and the teamwork makes the process just as enjoyable as the event itself.

Work is already underway for our Spring Booksale fundraiser. At our March Friends meeting, Debbie Wallace will lead a hands-on session to create cards and bookmarks. Just like our “Blind Date with a Book” project, some prep work is being done ahead of time so everyone can jump right in and be part of the fun.

If you have ever thought about getting more involved, this is your invitation. Come join us, share your talents, and be part of the energy that brings our fundraising events to life while supporting our library.

Announcement: Pymatuning Raffle Fundraiser

The Fundraising Committee is excited to share that our **Pymatuning Raffle Fundraiser** is officially underway! Running from March 1 through April 30, the prize is a 7-day 6-night stay at a cozy bungalow **in the Pymatuning Area**. The winning ticket will be drawn on April 30 at the South Park Township Library. Tickets can be purchased at the library’s circulation desk: 1 for \$1, 7 for \$5, or 15 for \$10.

Please help us spread the word by liking and sharing posts from the Friends of the Library Facebook page and the Library’s Facebook and Instagram pages.

Looking to Get Involved? Let’s Find Your Fit!

Want to help but not sure how? The Friends of the Library have a place for you—whatever your interests or talents.

- **Love to entertain?** Join our Hospitality group that helps make events welcoming and fun.
- **Book lover?** Help sort donations or lend a hand at our Book Sales.
- **Tech savvy?** We’re working on exciting digital updates and could use your skills.
- **Crafty or a great cook?** Your creativity is always welcome at events like the Holiday Market.

After a long, cold, snowy winter, it’s the perfect time to reconnect, have fun, and support your community. Whether you have a little time or a lot, we’ll help you find a role that fits.

Ready to jump in? Let’s talk! Email Marie Beach, Membership Chair at marie.beach@comcast.net.