

## Safford Friends of the Library 2025 Annual Report

2025 was another busy year for the Friends, sponsoring programs, conducting fundraisers, and actively supporting our library. Following is a summary of the highlights of the year.

### Membership

We ended our year with 118 members current on dues. This rendered a 2025 income of \$1260.00. We continue to sustain long-term memberships while attracting new members to the roster.

### Donations with Membership Renewals

A subtle way of bringing income to the organization is through added donations with renewal of memberships. We are pleased to smile that extra smile when a membership renewal is accompanied by an added donation. 34 members were thoughtful enough to add that extra kindness. This represents 29% of our membership. In 2025 this brought \$3224 to the Friends! Donations ranged from \$5.00 to \$1000. Thank you, all!

### Programs

**Friends' Night Out**, our monthly adult programming, hosted seven presentations in 2025. This year's programs can best be appreciated for their variety, ranging from healthcare to first ladies to outer space. We kicked off the season with author, Geneva Escobedo, sharing *Sayings of My Father*, those handed down "Dichos" that guide us through life. Danny Smith followed this with a very informative presentation of Healthcare at Mt. Graham Medical Center. Bonnie Briscoe and Paulette LeBlanc offered an evening with the First Ladies in recognition of Women's History Month. And, Jarrod Riddle provided a little history with Legends of the Old West in April. In September, Daughters of the American Revolution offered their annual observance of Constitution Week. Then, it was off to outer space and *Martians* with David Baron, followed by Dark Skies Matter with Matthew Goodwin. We feel these programs are appreciated by our community, as we have many returnees each month.

The **Open Book Club** continues to meet. It is so good to see familiar and new faces at our monthly sessions. We enjoy the uniqueness of the group because we don't assign a book. Each member reads independently and reports on their latest "reads" to promote the book, magazine, or brochure and tease others to pick it up. It's a marvelous way to open your eyes to different types of literature. Because membership is fluid, citizens of Graham County are welcome to join at any time.

Through our ongoing relationship with **Gila Valley Arts Council**, we continue to host afternoon performances for our patrons. In 2025, Carion Wind Quintet, a Danish-Latvian ensemble offered innovative chamber music. This was followed by a first-ever baby concert with MusiKaravan, which had toddlers dancing and exploring musical instruments. The Kristyn Harris Band brought lively Texas Swing to the Program Room. Quartetto Gelato entertained a very appreciative audience with gypsy tunes, tangos, and classical masterworks. These wonderful opportunities attract 30-50 community members who enjoy a break in the day to spend time with some master musicians.

For the past four years, the library has hosted an **Early Literacy Concert Series** which brings a children's author/entertainer to our preschool through second grade population in both counties. In 2025, they brought Jazzy Ash to the Valley. The Friends are thrilled to partner with Graham and Greenlee School Superintendents, Gila Valley Arts Council, First Things First and private donors to support this exciting experience for our young audience. The concert series has been dubbed "The Kinder-Stock of the Gila Valley." It is a joy to watch it grow each year.

All Friends-supported programs are valuable to the fabric of our library. We are proud to be a part of the adventure.

### Fundraisers

**The Pink Jar** (which really isn't pink) is ever-present in the library. It also finds its way into Friends-sponsored events. It is a very quiet way of soliciting loose change from community members. During 2025, we received \$99.13 from donations in the jar.

Chocolate rules! We hosted our 9th **See's Candy Drive** this year. It is a scary proposition to invest over \$12,000 in products. It's an annual nail biter! But, this year was SWEET! Inventory arrived on time and was stored at Victoria Silva's House. Thank you, Victoria for the hospitality. And, kudos to Sam Jones who worked with Paulette to manage the signage and refill the inventory throughout the month. The heavy lifting was most appreciated. We sold out by December 20th and realized a profit of \$4123.28. Our retail location, Ginaveve's Marketplace on Main St, Safford, is ideal for this fundraiser. It truly is the go-to place for See's in Graham County. Thanks to ALL who supported the See's Candy Drive through their purchases. And, special thanks to John and Jenny Howard for entering this special partnership. This is a win-win for the Friends AND for Ginaveve's. Also, a special thank you to member, Cheryl Soto, of Safford Valley Cotton Growers. The Gin has long been a great location for selling our candy bars and lollipops. Truckers have a sweet tooth! It should be noted that profit from the See's Candy Drive is earmarked toward the Friends' Endowment Fund.

Our clear, plastic **coin boxes** are placed in various businesses from January through March each year. During 2025, we took in \$350.00 in loose change to add to our treasury. Special thanks to Mt. Graham Market and Jobi's Convenience Store for their willingness to place coin boxes on their counters. We are always on the lookout for handy locations.

**Spring Bling Fling** is now hosted every other year. 2025 was our year. During the month of April, Friends Corner sported a huge inventory of used jewelry, and the back room sold hand crafted necklaces and earrings donated from a generous benefactor. In total, this fundraiser brought \$915.75. Thank you to our salespeople: Tony Himelfarb, Nancy Schauman, Donna Harrison, Sue Rasmussen, Annji Craig-Wooten, Stella Urquidi, and Paulette LeBlanc for contributing to the success of the Fling. If you have jewelry to donate, you can bring it to the circulation desk at any time. We maintain an ongoing collection of baubles, bangles and beads!

In 2025, we continued partnering with numerous local businesses to feature our **notecards**. This is a wonderful way to raise visibility for the Friends and to showcase the talent of our local amateur photographers. A pat on the back to our retail locations: 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Florist, Ginaveve's Market Place, and the Graham County Chamber of Commerce. And, a special thank you to Nancy Schauman who meticulously prepares the cards for sale. Sales brought \$295.00 to our treasury.

Our 8th **Jerry's Dine Out** rendered \$568.37. We are grateful to everyone who took time in their day to stop by for beverages and meals. Take-out orders were also brisk! Jerry's Foundation sponsors these Dine-Out opportunities as a way for non-profits to secure 25% of sales from a full day of business. This is another win-

win situation. The Friends are very grateful for their support and for their fine and friendly service. We are looking forward to our return to Jerry's in the fall.

What do you need to conduct a successful **Holiday Bake Sale** which brings in a profit of \$1000.00? Fifteen incredible bakers, a WIDE assortment of goodies and many customers!!! Our holiday bake sale is a one-day enjoyable operation. This year we featured everything from fudge to breads to cookies to Irv's Rub. There was something for everyone. Thanks to all volunteers who provided our delicious inventory, our salespeople and to our generous shoppers. Even Santa and Mrs. Claus stopped by to shop! Special kudos to Retha Russell who helped to plate the large assortment of treats. Great teamwork!

Our used **Book/Media Sales** corner is a constant, evolving location for some great deals. We continue to appreciate the work of volunteer, Kris Sheryl. She keeps things current! Our sales in 2025 brought in \$1289.00. Thanks to those who shopped and those who donated. The library staff gladly accepts donated books at the circulation desk. Check out your inventory for potential discards!

Our **Special Donations** this year came from Friends. We were pleasantly surprised with significant donations from members who choose to remain anonymous. One such check arrived in December for \$1995!! SAGLIF is also appreciative of the quiet gifts from its own board members throughout the year. Each year we develop an annual report of board members' donations. In 2025, it totaled \$4290 and 890 volunteer hours. The value of a volunteer hour in 2025 is \$34.79, as reported by Independent Sector. This translates to a value of nearly \$31,000.

For a number of years, **Freeport McMoran** has sponsored an Employee Payroll Deduction Program in which FMI matches donations from their employees to non-profits on an approved list. Our library AND the Friends are BOTH on the list. In 2025, the Friends received \$13,327.01. What a generous addition to our treasury! Thanks to all employees who have opted to choose our non-profit.

During 2025, we continued to manage our **Reserve Fund**. This is a wonderful partnership with Arizona Community Foundation. This investment fund is earmarked for library emergencies. It is basically described as our "Savings Account" and can be accessed, as needed. On a quarterly basis, when the balance reaches at least \$25,000.00, any amount over that is moved to the Endowment Fund. This account is currently standing at \$32,899.91.

The Friends of the Safford Library **Endowment Fund** continues to grow. Some See's Candy Drive profit goes into it. Personal donations specifically supporting the endowment are deposited there. It is currently reporting a balance of \$124,692.01. This Community Foundation fund is designed to secure the future of our library. Thank you ALL who continue to support the journey!

## **Newsletter**

We continue to receive compliments on our newsletter. People often remark that they enjoy the content and photos. It actually gets read! They appreciate the hard-copy format of the newsletter. Kudos to AnnJi Craig-Wooten for her dedication to our newsletter! She is vigilant on every step of the process. Thanks, AnnJi.

## **Technology/Social Media**

The Friends maintain a website at [saffordlibraryfriends.org](http://saffordlibraryfriends.org). We are so pleased to have the talents of Chip Cheney as our webmaster. The website is the perfect location for All-Things-Friends. Chip has created an online link for memberships/donations for those citizens who prefer technology over a checkbook. It is now available in the Membership/Donations tab. And, of course, the library is vigilant about advertising our events and fundraisers through their social media.

### **The Friends' Corner**

The Friends Corner is a multipurpose space. Its front room sports turquoise walls and a vinyl floor. It was the perfect location for hosting the Spring Bling Fling, an exoplanet exhibit, and Santa Claus during the Christmas extravaganza. Our back room can serve as a small meeting space and a storage room for Friends activities. We enjoy maintaining this permanent location for a variety of events.

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This report started with the statement, “2025 was another busy year for the Friends.” That is an understatement. We managed to offer a wide variety of fundraisers and programs. The grand total of profit from our fundraisers alone (See’s Candy Drive, Jerry’s Dine-Out, holiday bake sale, Bling Fling, etc.) was \$8460.53. We have our board, our 115+ Friends, and our community members to thank for this. Thanks to everyone who attended our events and programs, volunteered and/or spent money at our fundraisers, and served as overall cheerleaders for our work. Last, but not least, a big shout-out to our incredible library staff who supported us throughout the year. The Friends are so fortunate to say we couldn’t ask for better partners. Best on the planet!

Respectfully submitted,  
Paulette C LeBlanc, SAGLIF President  
1/28/26