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Friends Book Fair

The annual [Friends of the Oak Park Public Library Book Fair](#) (July 10-12) was another tremendous success, with this year's sale generating \$60,841 — the largest gross in the event's 54-year history, and a 42% increase over 2025 sales. This achievement is a reflection of the generosity of our community and, especially, the commitment of our Friends volunteers and library staff.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributed time, energy, and talent to make the sale successful. Friends volunteers (led by Russ Glidden and Kat Bell) and library staff worked hard throughout the planning and execution of the event, managing complex logistics and moving a huge number of items. We requested a layout change after much of the initial planning had been completed — moving children's materials from the first floor to the third floor. While it ultimately proved a successful choice, the shift required coordinated efforts from both Friends volunteers and library staff at an already busy time in the preparations.

Following the sale, Director of Communications Alexandra Skinner, Director of Facilities Matt Bartodziej, and I met with Kat and Russ to discuss the book fair, celebrate the event's success, and discuss needed adjustments for next year. We plan to meet periodically throughout the year so that everyone involved has opportunities to share information, ask questions, and stay informed as plans develop.

We've begun discussions about expanding the book fair's footprint (possibly including additional floor space on the second floor) and related changes for next year. After every fair, the Friends also conduct their own survey of volunteers who supported the event, and, this year, we introduced a new survey for library staff. I think we will learn a lot through staff and volunteer feedback, which will help us identify opportunities to strengthen our support for the people who make the book fair possible.

The success of this year's sale is worth celebrating, and so is the collaborative spirit that made it possible. I am grateful to our Friends and our staff for their hard work, adaptability, and dedication. Together, they continue to make the book fair an important and highly successful tradition for the library and our community.

Respectfully submitted,
Elsworth Carman, Executive Director



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