



Fundraising Successes

2024 was another year of successful fundraising for the Friends of the Library.

The total income for the Great American Book Sale was \$96,902. This includes sponsorships of \$6,350. Net profits were \$78,098.

Proceeds before expenses for the small book sales were:

February <i>Book Lover's Sale</i>	\$7,416
May <i>Swing Into Spring Sale</i>	\$5,559
October <i>S-Book-Tacular Sale</i>	\$6,096

Bayfront Bookshelf net sales totaled \$18,971.

Abe Books online sales amounted to \$2,998 after expenses.

A total of \$7,840 was received for memberships donations.

Erie Gives donors generously gave \$17,222.

Other donations contributed \$11,961.

Income from Blasco Workshops was \$1,735.

Thanks to our members, volunteers, donors, sponsors and loyal customers whose hard work and generosity made the fundraising successes of 2024 possible.

The Friends of the Erie County Library remains an all volunteer organization. All funds raised are for the benefit of the library.

Sponsorships Enhance Our Funding Potential

The Friends would like to take this opportunity to again thank our generous 2024 Great American Book Sale sponsors: The Plastek Group, Erie County Community College, Gannon University, The Okel Family Fund at the Erie Community Foundation, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, Humes Chrysler Jeep and National Fuel. These generous community partners helped us defray \$6,350 of our cost for the sale. These costs include rent for our warehouse where books are sorted and stored; a moving company to transport the 75,000 books to the sale; rental of the sale facility; rental of tables, chairs and fans; food, water and ice for our volunteers; advertising, marketing and promotion; plus, bank charges. Our costs for this year are estimated at \$24,000. The more expenses we can offset, the more classes, events and programs we can fund for all ages at all five branches of the Erie County Public Library. We are currently seeking grants and sponsors to help subsidize the costs of our 2025 Great American Book Sale. If you, as members, have any suggestions of potential grants or sponsors, please contact us at info@erielibraryfriends.org

Small Book Sales

Once again in 2024, the Friends conducted three small book sales, in addition to the Great American Book Sale, at the Blasco Library. The February Book Lover's Sale set an all time record of over \$7000 in gross proceeds. Our May and October small book sales added to that revenue stream, providing funding for many projects to support our public library.

The 2025 Small Book Sales, located in the Admiral Room at the Blasco Library, are scheduled for the following dates:

<i>Book Lover's Sale:</i>	<i>Swing Into Spring Sale</i>	<i>S-Book-Tacular Sale</i>
Thursday, Feb. 13: 10 am – 6 pm	Thursday, May 15: 10 am – 6 pm	Thurs. Oct. 16: 10 am – 6 pm
Friday, Feb. 14: 10 am – 4 pm	Friday, May 16: 10 am – 4 pm	Friday, Oct. 17: 10 am – 4 pm
Saturday, Feb. 15: 9 am – 3 pm	Saturday, May 17: 9 am – 3 pm	Saturday, Oct. 18: 9 am – 3 pm

The 2025 Great American Book Sale

The Great American Book Sale will return in 2025 to the Flo Fabrizio Ice Center at the Erie Zoo. Sale dates are:

Sunday, June 15 through Thursday, June 19: 10 am – 8 pm
Friday, June 20: 10 am – 3 pm

Looking for Volunteers: Book Moving Coordinator

The Friends of the Library Board is looking for one to three people who would be interested in coordinating the moving of boxes of books for the Friends of the Library book sales. These are important jobs essential to our book sales that provide free library programming that would not be possible otherwise.

The coordinator(s) would be responsible for planning and carrying out the following moves:

1. Coordinate the moving of packed boxes from the Blasco Library to a storage trailer and from our warehouse to the storage trailer, about once or twice a month.
2. Coordinate the moving of packed boxes between the warehouse and the Blasco Library during our 3 smaller sales in February, May and October.
3. Coordinate the moving of packed boxes between the warehouse and the Flo Fabrizio ice rink during the Great American Book Sale in June.

The person in charge doesn't need the strength to lift boxes but does need to lead a team of individuals who are capable of handling relatively heavy boxes of materials.

The coordinator(s) would work with Bob Gallivan, our current head of logistics, during the upcoming year so that there would be a seamless transition.

If you have questions about the Book Moving Coordinator position, please call Bob at 814-454-6770.

Computer Literate Volunteers

1. Help with keeping website (www.erielibraryfriends.org) up to date
2. Help with Mail Chimp

How to Volunteer

Please contact us at info@erielibraryfriends.org if you are interested in the Book Moving Coordinator position, have computer skills to share or can assist in other ways. The Friends are always in need of volunteers to help at the book sales, to assist at the book drives, move books and staff the Bayfront Bookshelf.

The Idea Lab

In October 2017, the Erie County Library's Idea Lab opened its doors to the public. The next year, the Friends agreed to provide \$60,000 as a match to Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) funds to support the Idea Lab becoming part of the Northwest Pennsylvania Innovation Beehive Network in 2019. This grant ran from 2019-22. The Friends are currently providing \$18,000 for a second grant (2023-25).

The NWPA Innovation Beehive Network offers assistance in all areas of business development through its six area institutions. The Erie County Public Library's role within the Beehive is to support early entrepreneurs with idea development, turning ideas into prototypes, and learning the basic language and workflow of business start-up and ownership. As part of Beehive participation, the library also provides small business-supportive programming.

The Idea Lab functions as both a publicly accessible maker space and a workshop for idea creation and refinement. As an adult maker space, it offers access to equipment and classes. The Idea Lab enables patrons to learn new skills, whether to support employment or as a personal interest.

Equipment in the Idea Lab includes the 3D printer, the Glowforge (laser cutting and engraving), and the Cricut as well as design computers, sewing machines, a sticker maker, a laminator, the soldering station, bike repair tools, the large format printer and a button maker. There are classes and guides for learning new skills and using the equipment in the Idea Lab. Many classes are available online. Training is required to use some Idea Lab equipment.

Participants can also attend classes such as the Spoon Carving Course and over the course of 5 sessions learn the spoon making process from a local woodworker Ken Bownes or bring their spinning wheel to the monthly Spin a Good Yarn group.

The Media Lab has equipment for audio projects, photography and video recording.

The Idea Lab's Maker Kits are items and projects that can be checked out and taken home. Currently there are currently over 30 types of kits for children and adults from arts and crafts to music to technology.

In 2024, the Idea Lab collaborated with the Erie County Redevelopment Authority (ECRDA) on the second Small Business Symposium. The symposium provides vital information on how to start a small business including finances, accounting, intellectual property, and how to get a small business loan.

The Idea Lab's annual Erie Makes event is a weeklong celebration of maker skills and local artists with fun, all-ages programming.

To learn more about the Idea Lab, go to <https://erielibrary.org/resources/idealab>

In addition to the Friends of the Library, the Idea Lab is supported by the Erie Regional Library Foundation, Erie Insurance, and the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

Bayfront BookShelf

Happy New Year from the Blasco Library Bayfront Bookshelf!

We are open every day that the Blasco Library is open from 11-3 except Sunday when our hours are 1-3. We currently have 22 volunteers who help with the store. Our trained cashiers are waiting to assist you when you visit. We are all Friends of the Library members.

The money we raise by selling donated books, media, and puzzles goes to fund a wide variety of Erie County Public Library programs and events at all Library locations including the Bookmobile. We have a list of those posted on our front window for all to see.

The Bookshelf continues to feature a wide variety of used books for adults, teens and children of all ages. We also feature a selection of excellent condition hardback and paperback fiction and nonfiction current Bestsellers.

We have a local history section year round but it expands during the summer tourist months to cover sailing, and wider Great Lakes history.

We have a varied selection of music CDs and DVDs and some audio books at competitive low prices. Sometimes we also have vintage LP albums and 45 records. We sell a lot of lightly used jigsaw puzzles at very low prices. We have a special volunteer that inspects all puzzle donations and picks the best for sale in the store. We do not sell puzzles in the store that we know are missing pieces. Those with 1-3 pieces missing may be selected for the Friends of the Library sales at the Blasco Library and/or the Great American Book Sale in June.

We feature an ever changing selection of collectible books. If you want to know what we are offering before your visit, please call us during store hours at 814-451-6942 or you can also find listings and sales info on our Facebook page, Bayfront Bookshelf. We also continue to sell the rarest and most valuable items at abebooks.com under our name Bayfront Bookshelf. You have the option to pick up items you have purchased on ABE at the Bookshelf if you are local.

We have a variety of items on sale every month and these are listed on our posters and on Facebook. Please stop in and check us out!

Thanks for your years of support for our organization, all our sales and for shopping at our store. We hope to see you soon!

How to Donate Books, Media and Puzzles

The Bayfront Bookshelf serves as a year round drop off point for SMALL donations of used books, media and puzzles when we are open. Please do not leave items in the foyer when we are closed. That is a FIRE HAZARD! When the store is closed, you can take small donations to the Blasco library front desk.

ALL Erie County Public Library branches accept small donations (5 items) when they are open. For large donations, please call the Bayfront Bookshelf during store hours at 814-451-6942 or write to info@erielibraryfriends.org. If you provide contact information, our man Bob will call back and make a special appointment for you to drop off your donation.

We plan to have two Drive thru Book Donation drives in 2025. They will be in April and September but the dates are not set yet.

Please tape any puzzles shut and put a small sticker to mark them as complete. If 1-3 pieces are missing, please use a marker to write that on the cover. If boxes are missing more than 3 pieces or badly damaged, please do not donate them to us. We do not have a volunteer to count the puzzles to see if they are complete. All puzzles are sold in "as is condition" with no refunds.

MEMBERSHIP

At this writing the Friends have 516 members. There have been 121 membership renewals and 3 new memberships since the start of the membership drive in October.

Membership brochures are available at all library branches and on our website, www.erielibraryfriends.org