

A BOOK SALE

HOW-TO

GUIDE

MORE MONEY, LESS STRESS

PAT DITZLER & JOANN DUMAS

[www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org)

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## **More Money, Less Stress**

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**American Library Association**  
Chicago 2012

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**WEB** See [alaeditions.org/webextras](http://alaeditions.org/webextras) for blank, reproducible versions of the sample documents shown in this book.

# Introduction

Even as libraries successfully evolve in our technology-based world and continue to serve an ever-increasing number of people, the funding for these vital institutions is being assaulted. State funding cuts and federal program cutbacks have resulted in budget deficits, forcing libraries to cut book budgets, curtail hours of operation, and lay off staff—a woeful situation.

Yet, individually, people are passionate about their local library and believe in its mission. You'll find that, if asked, members of your own community will be happy to donate books from their personal collections and can be a huge source of free books. *A Book Sale How-To Guide* is designed to help you take advantage of your patrons' willingness to provide in-kind support. It offers a tested and successful formula for making money for local libraries in a practical and fun way—a library book sale.

## THE BENEFITS OF A BOOK SALE

Book sales can help alleviate funding deficits while fostering a healthy library volunteer community. By holding a successful library book sale, you can make a difference in your own community by

- offering affordable books to everyone, but particularly local citizens;
- raising enormous amounts of money for the library in a fun, satisfying way;
- promoting a rare sense of community that is unbelievable in scope;

- developing lifelong friendships—an amazing camaraderie grows around sale activities;
- developing skills of volunteers that can translate into lucrative jobs or a more fulfilling lifestyle for them;
- providing enormous savings for the library because of the opportunity to put some of the donated books directly into the permanent collection;
- becoming the largest recycling effort in your community;
- generating commercial traffic at local restaurants, hotels, stores, tourist attractions, and the like from book sale customers;
- creating a positive reflection on your community as a caring place to live and work.

And while our assumption in preparing this guide is that proceeds will benefit your local library, the material included can also be adapted for other nonprofit or for-profit organizations.

## THE BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING THIS GUIDE

This book was born out of a need to share the knowledge gained over many years at the Lancaster (PA) Public Library book sale, now in its fifty-seventh year. In 2010 the Lancaster book sales raised \$170,000, bringing their cumulative total book sale profits to over \$2.5 million.

The Lancaster Library Friends used their extensive book sale knowledge to help the Potsdam (NY) Friends of the Library group start a small book sale modeled after Lancaster's huge sale. Success with the sale in Potsdam proved the value of sharing this information with others. With Lancaster's help, the first year's proceeds in Potsdam (\$6,100) far exceeded their expectations. It took Lancaster seventeen years to make over \$6,000 from one sale!

Potsdam's first foray into ongoing book sales began in a small way through telephone conversations with Pat Ditzler in Lancaster. She encouraged her sister, JoAnn Dumas, to approach the Potsdam Friends group with the idea of holding a book sale. This would mean finding a sorting site and also soliciting book donations from the public. Luckily, the Friends' president was very excited and willing to work toward that end.

Using Lancaster's documented book sale information, Potsdam held their first sale in a church basement, with all the Friends (six people!) working very hard. The Potsdam Library director was thrilled with their fundraising success.

When JoAnn moved to Arizona in 2002, the brand new Oro Valley Public Library was just about to open. She immediately joined the Friends group, which had already held two small book sales under a tent in conjunction with a local arts council. The book sale committee reorganized, and they too began using Lancaster's book sale model. Using Lancaster's techniques, they recruited new volunteers, increased book donations, learned how to research and price books, and held their first major book sale in October 2002. Oro Valley Friends now have two large, very organized, professional, and well-attended sales each year, and have also expanded their horizons into other selling opportunities. These efforts raised over \$80,000 in 2010.

Throughout this guide, you will find specific "Details from Our Sales" for each of these libraries, which show how the information provided has worked in practice and, often, how it has been modified to meet the needs of the individual sales.

### SALES HISTORIES FOR BOOK SALES REFERENCED IN THIS GUIDE

#### Lancaster (PA) Public Library

1954 (first year) sale . . . . .	\$153
2008 sale . . . . .	\$180,000
2008 books sold . . . . .	250,000
Total income of all sales to date. . . . .	\$2,250,000

#### Potsdam (NY) Public Library

1999 (first year) sale . . . . .	\$6,100
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#### Oro Valley (AZ) Public Library

2002 (first year) sale . . . . .	\$10,000
2008 sale . . . . .	\$66,000
2009 sale . . . . .	\$80,352



## ORGANIZATIONS THAT TYPICALLY SPONSOR BOOK SALES

### Friends of the Library

Organizations in support of libraries have a long history. The Library Company of Philadelphia was started by Benjamin Franklin in 1731 to “render the benefit of reading more common” and is still in operation today. The first Friends of the Library was started in Paris in 1913, and the first American branch was organized in Berkeley, California, in 1930. Friends of Libraries U.S.A. is now part of the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, which is in turn a division of the American Library Association.

Local library Friends organizations vary in structure, purpose, and activities based on their own communities and local needs. These organizations help their libraries by raising funds for special books, periodicals, and other unbudgeted items and amenities that help keep the library current and make it a welcoming place in the community. The Friends provide volunteer help to the library in many ways, including assistance with programs and public relations, both of which keep the library prominent in the community. Friends groups are advocates of the library. While few would argue against the necessity of the library, Friends are proactive in arguing for it, committed to making the community aware of the library and its importance to the

### WHO'S IN CHARGE?

The book sales that form the basis for this guide are under the auspices of the Friends of the Library groups. The Lancaster sale is run by a special book sale committee, which reports to the larger Friends group. Because the Potsdam Friends is a very small organization (but growing steadily!) the entire group handles the book sale as well as all other Friends activities. Oro Valley has a director of book sale operations, which is a permanent Friends board of directors position.

vitality of the community. Particularly in these times of underfunding, the dollars the Friends raise have become an important part of the library's financial picture.

### AAUW

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) sponsors many book sales around the country and, in fact, started the Lancaster book sale. When the group decided to focus its resources on national AAUW issues, the Friends took over the Lancaster book sale. The transition was an easy one, as the same people who worked on the book sale under AAUW continued their volunteer efforts by joining the Friends. The difference is that now the library is guaranteed 100 percent of the book sale proceeds.

### Women's Clubs, University Organizations, and Other Clubs

Many successful book sales are run by a myriad of non-profit organizations. The sponsoring group is immaterial, as long as everyone agrees on who gets the profits. While getting reasonably priced books into the hands of the public is laudable any way you can accomplish it, there are undeniably added benefits for the book-reading public when the proceeds go to your public library.

However you decide to organize your group, take special care to ensure that those who know and run the book sale have ample authority to make simple decisions concerning the sale. Don't jeopardize the success of your sale by getting bogged down with dozens of approval levels and having to get total consensus from a governing board or huge group of Friends. Keep it simple!

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

*A Book Sale How-To Guide* covers every aspect of book sales, from book storage to sorting and pricing books, volunteer recruitment, sale-day issues, money matters . . . and so much more. If you've never held a book sale before, everything you need to develop a book sale is here, from start to finish. If you've held book sales and want to increase your fund-raising dollars,

this book can help you build a sustained money-making operation.

A book sale has various phases that in many ways mirror those involved in producing a stage play. The chapters of this book are organized to help the reader identify the various aspects of the “production.”

As with the production of a show, much work happens before anyone enters the theater on opening night. The important point, though, is never to lose sight of what this venture is all about. Thus chapter 1 is titled “The Main Attraction” and details how your group can gather the many books you’ll need for sales. Chapter 2, “Setting the Scene,” provides guidance on where to price, sort, and store your donations. Chapter 3, “Directing the Show,” gives organizing principles for book sale committees. Cultivating a volunteer base of support is the lifeblood of a good sale, thus chapter 4, “Casting Call,” discusses general recruitment. Chapter 5, “Production,” addresses the major (and majorly fun) undertaking of sorting books and other media. Guidance on how to set prices to get the best value for both you and your book sale patrons is covered in chapter 6, “Ticket Price.” Chapter 7, “Venue and Promotion,” guides you through presale activities, including how to make your publicity shine. And then chapter 8, “Showtime,” covers conducting the actual book sale from setup to cleanup. Here you’ll find direction on how to make all aspects of your sale day function smoothly, and how

to manage sticky situations—rare but not unheard of. Handling funds is serious business and is addressed in chapter 9, “Box Office Receipts.” Chapter 10 is, of course, “Encore! Encore!,” which explores Internet sales and other opportunities for revenue during the year that can augment a main book sale event. The many forms and figures provided are yours to adapt to your local operation to help you develop your own unique take on this fabulous fund-raiser.

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### **WHAT CAN YOU ACCOMPLISH?**

The Friends of the Lancaster Public Library were the largest contributors to the library’s 1995 capital campaign and continue to be a huge revenue resource in the library’s annual budget. The Potsdam Friends are dedicating funds to a library expansion. Friends of the Oro Valley Public Library book sales have purchased computers, outdoor furniture and a patio roof, programming, new books for the library collection, and most recently a Smart Board and a public address system.

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# 1

## The Main Attraction

### Getting Book Donations



Do not keep or sell videos, cassettes, or CDs that have been recorded by a donor. It is impossible to review the content and quality of these items. They need to be discarded.

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A constant supply of generous donations is the key to successful book sales. Without book donations, you have no sale! Our experience has been that people want to donate their books. You just need to give them the opportunity. Once you start receiving book donations, word of mouth spreads the news quickly through the community.

Kick off your efforts by issuing a press release that solicits books as well as donations of compact discs, videos, audiobooks, and records (fig. 1.1). These electronic items sell very well and bring new customers to your sales. Radio and TV stations and newspapers are usually happy to give time and space for library activities. Especially in smaller communities, your weekly newspaper may be willing to donate space for a standing box ad stating that the Friends group is looking for books for resale to benefit the library. Include information about when and where to donate books and a contact number for questions or for pickup requests.

Enlist help from other organizations and businesses! Print the content from your newspaper ad, perhaps with a small map, on bookmarks and ask local businesses to keep them by their registers. Place brochures and posters in waiting rooms and in shop windows, as well as in prominent community areas.

**FROM:** Jane Doe, Publicity Chair  
**SUBJECT:** Lancaster Public Library Book Sale Accepting Book Donations  
**DATE:** March 15, 2000

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Donations will be accepted for the Lancaster Public Library Book Sale on Saturday, April 3, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Book ReSort located at 650 Janet Avenue, Lancaster. Donations are also accepted Monday and Wednesday mornings from 10 a.m. until noon.

Volunteers will be available on the first Saturday of each month to help unload donated books. There is ample free parking, easy access to the facility, and plenty of staff ready to help.

People bringing large quantities of books should bring them in cardboard boxes. All donations must be in good condition. Children's books are urgently needed. Records, videos, sheet music, cassette tapes, and CDs are also accepted. Textbooks should be no older than 10 years. Reader's Digest condensed books and magazines cannot be accepted.

Donations are accepted at the Book ReSort on the first Saturday of each month, and the Friends of the Library prefer that donations be made at the Book ReSort. However, anyone unable to drop off books at this time should bring them to the rear of the Lancaster Public Library, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

For more information and directions, please call the Book ReSort at (717) 493-9327.

**Figure 1.1** 

Sample book drive press release. Press releases should be printed on official Friends or Library letterhead.

Offer your donors a signed donation receipt (fig. 1.2) that they can use as proof of a charitable contribution. Do not give dollar estimates for these donations, but rather provide price suggestions that the donors themselves can assign. We suggest the following:

- hardbacks—\$2
- paperbacks—50 cents
- videos—\$1
- audiobooks and DVDs \$2
- LPs—50 cents to \$1
- newer items of any kind—add \$1

Whatever values you choose, keep them low. Some items you will be able to sell for more than your estimate, some for less, and some not at all. The values provided above are very rough but, on average, very fair estimates.

Play on your community's sense of environmentalism. Lancaster's marketing strategy emphasizes that their book sale is the largest recycling effort in the county.

In fact they have resold some of the same volumes again year after year, as shown by sales receipts found in donated books. Community members are redonating the volumes they have purchased at prior book sales! This phenomenon is also happening in the Potsdam and Oro Valley libraries.

Appeal to your donors' love of the library. Those with a passion for the library will come through with some unbelievable book donations. Opening a recent box of Lancaster donations, volunteers pulled out amazing books—colonial architecture of the East Coast, *The Socinian Creed* by John Edwards (circa 1697), and an autographed book by Richard Nixon. Lancaster made a lot of money on this one donation, which the donor could have sold to a used bookstore, but instead chose to donate to his local library. Oro Valley recently received the complete personal library of a Friend who was moving out of state. The eighty boxes of beautiful books he donated have already brought in hundreds of dollars to the library's benefit.

**SNOWBIRD DONORS**

If you are in a mild and sunny climate, don't overlook soliciting donations from the snowbirds—people who have a permanent home elsewhere but spend the winter months in your area. Many will be happy to donate their recently purchased books to the Friends rather than store them in their small winter homes or ship them back to their permanent residences. These current, like-new books are a welcome addition for any book sale.

Identify community members who may be downsizing or moving to retirement homes and, sadly, will have no room for their lifetime collection of beloved books. They will be happy to know that their cherished books will benefit the library and the community. Similarly, identify those who must forgo creating personal collections, such as college students or seasonal residents.

Go where the goods are. Visit garage sales and ask that any “good books” left over after the garage sale be donated to the library. If you can offer to have someone pick up the books, you increase your chances of getting them. Before you ask for the leftover books, be sure that the books you ask for are salable. Some garage sale items may not be of acceptable quality. See the example garage sale donation request (fig. 1.3), which is designed to allow you to tear off a slip to give to the garage sale person with your contact information.

**SCHOOL BOOK DRIVES**

As sales increase, you will likely find that there are never enough children's and teen books to meet customer expectations. One way to address this is to get to know and work closely with the school librarians. Schools are often looking for good community projects and are willing partners in endeavors where students can learn about community service. A school book drive can serve this purpose and also help meet demand for good used children's and teen books at your sale.

To Whom It May Concern:

The Lancaster Public Library acknowledges receipt of \_\_\_\_\_ books donated to the library by \_\_\_\_\_.

If the books cannot be used in the collection, they will be turned over to the Friends of the Library for use in upcoming book sales to benefit the Lancaster Public Library.

Received by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lancaster Public Library representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Figure 1.2** WEB

Sample donation receipt. Donation receipts should be printed on official Friends or Library letterhead.

Please consider donating your leftover books to the Friends of the Potsdam Public Library book sales. All our proceeds benefit the Potsdam Public Library. Please call the number below, and we will gladly pick up the books at the end of your sale.

**Call (315) 264-9999 for book donation and pickup**

**Figure 1.3** WEB

Sample garage sale donation request.

School book drives are projects that individual schools run, with some basic information and tools provided to the school by the book sale committee. The schools send letters home to the parents, line up a few PTA/PTO volunteers to help with the drive, and offer incentives to the students (often resulting in some very lively competitions between classrooms).

## Encouraging Schools to Participate

Send a letter to each school librarian in your library service area asking the school to sponsor a book donation drive (fig. 1.4). Encourage the school librarian to pull some books from the donations to keep for the school library before sending the rest of the books to your sale. We also suggest that for every five to ten

books a student donates, the librarian allow the student to choose a book from all books collected. This way, the schools get good books for their library; the students have a personal incentive to collect donations, and they get different books to take home and read; and the book sale gets an excellent assortment of juvenile books to offer to the community at the next sale.

Dear Librarian,

The Friends of the Lancaster Public Library will again be sponsoring the annual spring book sale for the benefit of Lancaster Public Library. This year the sale will be held at the Overlook Roller Rink May 3–5, 1999.

The public donates books year-round for this sale. These books are then sold to provide inexpensive reading materials for the community, as well as to help the financial needs of the public library system. Last year our various book sales raised over \$120,000 for the library!

The Friends of the Library would again like to expand the idea of public service by offering schools the opportunity to sponsor book donation drives. You, as the librarian, could select from the books collected at your school to enhance your own library collection. In addition, your students could, after making a donation of five to ten books, choose a book from those collected. Since our greatest need is always children's books, please encourage your students to donate these.

Many schools that have been involved in the past have used PTO or other volunteers to help with the book drive. Books should be collected to arrive in our warehouse by April 1 so we can sort them and take them to our May sale.

Your interest and help in this project will be greatly appreciated! A kit of materials will be sent to help you with publicity and the mechanics of carrying out your book drive. We can arrange with our library staff to pick up your packed cartons at the conclusion of the campaign. We can also provide you with boxes for the drive.

Thank you for taking the time to help provide quality reading materials for the children of Lancaster Public Library. If you would be willing to see that your school is involved in this great recycling of books, kindly return the enclosed card by Dec. 1, 2000.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Barbara Jones  
Friends of the Library  
School Book Drive Coordinator

### Figure 1.4

Sample school book drive letter to school librarian. Letters regarding your sale should be printed on official Friends of Library letterhead.

### School Book Drive Procedure

Along with the letter to each school librarian, enclose a postcard for schools to return (fig. 1.5). Note on the postcard that if the school agrees to hold a book drive, additional information will be sent. Ask that the postage-paid cards be returned whether or not the school is going to participate.

When the book sale committee receives the postcards, send an information packet to the schools who have agreed to hold a book drive. The packet should include a letter to each librarian or book sale coordinator at the participating school (fig. 1.6); posters and bookmarks to be used during the campaign; and a sample letter for the school librarian to send home with students explaining the book drive (fig. 1.7). Set a specific time frame (about a three-month window) for when the book drive should be held. Set the end of that window no later than one month before your sale to allow time for incorporating these books into your sale.

Once the books have been collected at the school, the school librarian or book drive coordinator should call you to arrange to have the books picked up from the school and taken to your sorting facility. Ask the schools to fill out a brief report on the book drive (like the one in fig. 1.8), including the number of books collected.

Keep a list of participating schools from year to year so you can target different schools for participation in rotation. Don't forget to acknowledge participating schools as book sale supporters wherever community supporters are listed!

### Details from Our Sales

#### Lancaster

Approximately 98 percent of Lancaster's sale books come from community donations. The other 2 percent are withdrawn volumes from the library's permanent collection. This mix of mostly donated books is a big draw to book shoppers and collectors, who are often not enchanted with ex-library copies. Some book sales have a much larger percentage of withdrawn volumes. While attending the Denver annual book sale many years ago, Pat noted a huge amount of withdrawn books in the sale. A sale committee member said that 80 percent of their sale books were withdrawn from the library's shelves. We hope that Denver has begun soliciting more donations from its huge community. In the much smaller city of Lancaster, the five trucks packed with books for the spring sale weighed in at 100,000 pounds—fifty tons!—almost all of them donated by the public.

Lancaster advertises and truly believes in our mission to get affordable books into the hands of our local citizens. Many times we have received books from estates that were settled. We also make it convenient for the public to donate books. While the library accepts book donations from the public during regular library hours, the book sale committee has set up book donation drop-off days. Donations are accepted on the first Saturday of every month and also at three other specified times during the week when we are sorting books. The donations are accepted at our sorting warehouse, with plenty of free parking and volunteers with

School name \_\_\_\_\_

Our school **is / is not** interested in having a book drive this year.

Contact person for book drive \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of your book drive \_\_\_\_\_

Number of posters needed \_\_\_\_\_

Number of bookmarks needed \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date for book pickup \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 1.5** 

Information to include on a school book drive response card. Enclose with request letter to schools; use a stamped postcard with your return address on the reverse.

Dear Book Drive Coordinator,

Thank you so much for helping your school collect used books for the annual Friends of the Library book sale.

Enclosed you will find the bookmarks and poster you requested. We are looking especially for children's and teen books. Your task is to coordinate the drive in your school by working with school personnel to set up the collection drive in your building. Below is a list of suggestions on items to help make a successful book drive. A committed librarian, lots of publicity, and an incentive for the students are the keys to success.

Some suggestions:

- Meet with the librarian to plan any specific activities and publicity.
- Contact the PTO to see if they will provide a lunch treat to the winning homeroom at each level.
- Prior to the book drive, send notices home to parents along with report cards.
- Locate a room parent to collect books in homerooms on each collection day.
- Consider using cafeteria tables staffed by room parents on collections days.
- Ask a local business for a prize (pocket dictionary, etc.) for the student who donates the most books.
- Ask students to place donated books in a bag labeled with their name, their homeroom, and the number of books.
- Advertise the book drive on hall bulletin boards and via the public address system.

Thank you for supporting the book drive.

Sincerely,

**Figure 1.6** 

Sample school book drive letter to participating school. Letters regarding your sale should be printed on official Friends or Library letterhead.

Dear parents,

Here is a chance to weed out your bookshelves, help your school library, and help your public library.

The Friends of the Lancaster Public Library are preparing for their annual book sale, to be held in May. All proceeds of the sale benefit the Public library system. Our students are being asked to contribute good used books to this sale. Both paperbacks and hardbacks—especially children's and teen books—are welcomed. Our own school library will have first choice of the books collected to add to our school library collection.

Books will be collected between the hours of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

We hope you will help your children find some books for this drive. Recycling used books in good condition benefits everyone!

Sincerely,

**Figure 1.7** 

Sample school book drive letter from school to parents. Include your version of this letter in the packet you send to schools. Schools should reproduce it on their own letterhead.



### SCHOOL BOOK DRIVE REPORT

School James Martin Elementary

School book drive coordinator Barb John

School principal Joyce Sands

School librarian Kathy Leader

Dates of book drive April 4, 2010 through April 11, 2010

Total number of books collected 470

Total number of boxes of books 8

Number of books kept by school librarian 80

Number of books redeemed with coupons (if applicable) 15

Briefly discuss the details of your drive. Attach any letters, flyers, news releases, etc. that you used.

**Publicity** Letters were sent home to parents in March, advising them of the book drive. The PTO also advertised in their March newsletter. Several art classes made posters to put on the bulletin boards throughout the school.

**Incentives** The classroom that collected the most donated books was treated to an ice cream party. Also, for every five books that a student donated, they were allowed to select a donated book to keep. This was great fun and very popular.

**Procedure** Working with our school PTO group, we received donated books from 8 to 9AM each day of the book drive. Two volunteers from the PTO helped each day. Children who brought in 5 books to donate were able to select a book of their choice from all the donations to keep. We discussed the importance of libraries in a community and also took a field trip to the Lancaster Public Library, where we got a tour of the library from the Manager of Youth Services.

On the back, please feel free to make any comments or suggestions for future book drives.

Please return this completed form, the rest of the packet, and extra bookmarks in an envelope or box with your collected books.

**Figure 1.8** 

Sample school book drive report form.

carts to help unload donated books. Books donated at the library need to be loaded on the library truck and transported to the warehouse, so if we can entice the public to bring books directly to our warehouse, it helps out the library maintenance staff tremendously.

### **Potsdam**

In its first year, the Potsdam Friends accepted book donations every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The donations were slow in coming at first but grew quickly as word spread through the community. The first year we were getting fifteen to twenty boxes of book donations each Saturday. Many were in “gift” condition and certainly helped the quality of sale offerings. We received a large donation of 250 boxes of nice leftover books from the Lancaster Friends sale to help get our base of books up to a very healthy number. With this Lancaster donation, the first spring sale offered more than 20,000 books and attracted customers from a wide area. With the nice influx of public donations,

Potsdam’s books were 95 percent donated, with only 5 percent of the sale books from library withdrawals.

### **Oro Valley**

The Oro Valley Friends receive donations daily at their two Book Shoppes. There the donations are priced and sorted (for Book Shoppe, Internet, or book sale), and those that are slated for the book sale are then taken to the sorting location to be processed. Our books are 90 percent donated and 10 percent library withdrawals. Volunteers will also pick up books in the immediate area.

---

The key to keeping a continuous supply of book donations coming is to make your donation site convenient, with regular hours, plenty of parking, and lots of unloading help. The public feels good about donating to the library, and you can provide the means to make this happen.

# 2

## Setting the Scene

### Site Considerations and Sorting Room Setup

For accepting, sorting, and storing books for your sale, you'll need a safe and dry, heated/air-conditioned site (depending on your region). In the beginning you may not get exactly what you want. Ideally, the same facility can be used to accept donations as well as sort and store them until your book sale. Keep in mind that books are very heavy, and you want to keep the need to move them from place to place at a minimum. Some facilities may even be adaptable to use for a small sale. There should be ample, and preferably free, parking for book donors to be able to drop off their books. Another selling point to encourage book donations is to offer help with unloading books from the donors' vehicles. Some of your donors may not be able to lift or carry books and may not bring them to you if no help is available.

Try to get a free donated space from a gracious community-minded person or business. Some ideas to consider are local empty storefronts, unused space at schools or universities, or a space in a business or industrial complex. Price is a serious consideration if you can't find a free site. Every dollar you pay for rent, heat, and utilities translates to more books you have to sell just to cover expenses. We are not opposed to begging or cajoling—whatever it takes within reason—to get donated goods and services in support of the library. Don't be shy! Many local businesses are more than willing to forgo their profits and give you services or materials at their cost.

## Details from Our Sales

### Lancaster

The Lancaster warehouse is called the Book ReSort, which was the winning entry of the naming contest we held. It is our third sorting facility in fifty-seven years of book sales. We started out in the basement of the library and then moved to the auditorium. Soon our space was needed for library use, and also the sale was growing. We moved to a donated basement in a local realtor's office building. Sorting and warehousing occurred at this facility, but all books were still being donated at the library and had to be trucked to our donated basement. We had to use conveyors to take the books out a small front basement window to trucks waiting to transport the books to the book sale site. Growing pains!

As the donations and sale continued to grow, a small committee was formed to find a bigger place for sorting and storage. The committee listed the criteria for a new site and found a suitable warehouse building. The Book ReSort is just six blocks away from the library and large enough to accept donations as well as sort and store the books. The ReSort also has an amazing, well-lit, year-round bookstore. Mini book sales are held at the ReSort twice a year to help pay the rental expense.

The Book ReSort is safe, secure, dry, and heated, and is a fun place to sort books. We keep a small used refrigerator there, along with a garage sale radio. There is bright fluorescent lighting, and we've hung book-related posters from the library to brighten up the sorting area. The sorted books are stored on wooden pallets awaiting transport to the spring book sale. A volunteer warehouse manager keeps the facility logistics running smoothly. Book donations are accepted at the Book ReSort during scheduled, advertised sorting/pricing sessions.

### Potsdam

The first Potsdam warehouse sorting site was a donated space above an appliance store. The owner was a true gem who helped the Friends quickly find a home for their books—luckily the second-floor site had a freight elevator! The space, however, was not adequate for the long term (no heat or insulation in Northern New York), and the Friends soon settled into a facility donated by a local university. The warehouse was suitable for sorting

### STORAGE ON A BUDGET

The Chandler (AZ) Friends group found a unique way to solve their storage problem. They acquired a storage pod (a self-storage container, usually on a flatbed trailer for portability) that they placed on the library's loading dock. What a great idea!

### FRIENDS OF THE POTSDAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOK SALE WISH LIST

- Handcart to move books
- Filing cabinet
- Coffeepot
- Record player for checking quality of donated records
- Clock
- Radio
- Bookshelves

#### Figure 2.1 WEB

Sample wish list.

as well as storage, with lots of room, heat, and lights, one wall of windows, and room for a tiny bookstore. Later, the university sold the building, and book sale operations moved to the basement of the Potsdam Library, where they continue their processes. The Potsdam community had become very aware of the Friends and their successful book sale activities in support of the library, and the book donations grew nicely.

Potsdam needed a few specific items for their sorting facility, so they posted a wish list (fig. 2.1). Amazingly, the sought-after items were quickly donated.

### Oro Valley

In the new Oro Valley Library there was a 10,000-square-foot portion of the building as yet undeveloped. Books were sorted, priced, and stored there with no heat or air conditioning. Arizona does get rather cold in the winter,

and in summer . . . well! When the library building was subsequently completed, the Friends had to find new quarters. A Friend offered a three-bedroom house with very low rental cost, which worked well for a number of years. We have now moved to a more central storefront location among other small retail shops. We have opened the front area of the building as our second bookshop, Book Shoppe Too. This facility also houses our Internet sales office and sorting operation.

The above examples show the ingenuity and creativity of Friends groups to explore opportunities and make the most of temporary or unappealing sites. Although temporary conditions may not have been ideal, these groups made the most of their situation and moved forward with longer-term goals. With any luck, you will be so successful in your book sale endeavors that in a few years you may outgrow your first facility!

The work space is where your books and your volunteers will spend a lot of time. Look carefully for a desirable site. Once you've moved and set up the site to accommodate your processes, you want to be able to stay there for a while. You will be advertising your address, and it helps if you can get established in a permanent place.

Acquiring a location that meets your needs will help your organization get a continual supply of donated books. Creating a pleasant place to work will keep your volunteers coming back to sort and price books.

## **SORTING ROOM SETUP AND SCHEDULING**

The physical attributes of your workspace will help determine how to design your book-sorting and book-storage areas. There are some basic considerations that will help you set up an efficient operation.

### **Sorting Surfaces**

You will need tables or other flat surfaces for sorting and pricing your books. Lancaster uses a combination of old, discarded library folding tables (they do not need to be pretty, just sturdy), a 6-foot table acquired at a cheap cost from a garage sale, and tables they commissioned a local vocational school to make for them at



### **TIP**

If you are lucky enough to have a telephone in the sorting facility, leave an answering machine message about upcoming sorts so volunteers are informed.

cost. Potsdam received donated tables from the library and a local business benefactor, and some tables they purchased themselves. Oro Valley also purchased 6-foot folding tables. Be creative, beg a little for the library, or use sawhorses with 4-foot sheets of plywood or an old door for a tabletop.

### **Alphabetical Categories**

Whether you have a few or a multitude of categories, it will be easier for your sorters to find the right category box if the boxes are in alphabetical order on the sorting tables. You will likely have a few exceptions—for example, you may want to put Special Price/Rare books in a separate area for later pricing.

### **Informative Category Signs**

The sorting categories need to be clearly marked for your sorters. Make signs and either hang them or place them securely on signposts on the tables. Lancaster uses an old clothesline and clothespins to hang signs. Oro Valley tapes category labels to the table edge and covers them with clear tape. See our sample category signs including special notes (fig. 2.2). Either laminate these signs or put them in plastic sleeves so they stay nice and bright.

### **Sorting Space**

Leave room in the middle of the sorting area for boxes you are currently sorting. You may want to have a section near the middle of your category boxes where you put the unsorted boxes of books you will be sorting from. Sorters can then pick up a book and, after deciding on the correct category, walk to the box and deposit the book.

### **Sorting Supplies** **Packing Boxes**

Packing boxes are necessary for accumulating the books by category and storing them until your sale. You can

use any type of box, including those boxes you receive donations in. However, as your sale grows and you have many books to store, having boxes of uniform size is a real plus. Stacking odd-size boxes from grocery or liquor stores can be hazardous if not done carefully, and these heavy boxes filled with books are not what you want to see tumbling down on your workers. Volunteers should not be asked to move large, heavy, or unwieldy boxes of books.

## ARTS AND LITERATURE

### Includes Drama and Poetry

Place these exceptions in the Collectible box:

Coffee-table (large-size) books  
 Modern Library  
 Movie editions of novels  
 First editions of famous authors  
 Edward Steichen, Ansel Adams, other prominent illustrators  
 Charles Dickens  
 Mark Twain

## CHILDREN

Place these exceptions in the Collectible box:

Alice in Wonderland  
 Cherry Ames  
 Bobbsey Twins  
 Dick and Jane readers  
 Pop-up books  
 Shirley Temple

Put children's book sets on sets table.

The nice sturdy boxes that gallons of spring water come in are an excellent option. Your local supermarket or drug store will be glad to give you these, as they will not have to flatten or pay to have these boxes carted away. Have a volunteer with a truck pick them up on a regular basis and deliver them to your sorting facility. Another option is to use collapsible boxes, which you can fold and store in flat stacks until needed. These flat boxes are much more compact when taking the empty boxes back to your warehouse facility after unpacking them at the book sale. Check with box suppliers for misprinted or otherwise unsellable merchandise that they may be willing to donate. Moving companies might have this type of collapsible box and may be willing to donate some gently used ones to the library.

Your best option may be file storage boxes with cut-outs for your hands. These boxes are easy to lift and have separate reusable tops. Even when filled with books, they are light enough for most of the volunteers to move. They also flatten for easy storage when not in use.

## Category Labels

You will need category labels to put on each end of your sorting boxes. These labels will be critical as you set up for your sale. As full boxes of books are unloaded from the trucks at your book sale site, they can be easily identified and placed at the appropriate sale table during your setup. Once you have selected the categories you will use, have a volunteer write or print labels for each category. Keep them in a convenient location in your sorting area, along with a supply of blank labels and markers in case you run out during a sorting session.

## Tape

We recommend using packaging tape and tape dispensers to seal sorted boxes. Although it is not absolutely necessary to seal the boxes, they will be stored for months at a time and then transported to our sale site. The sealed boxes are much more secure, less apt to break open as they are moved, and keep books free from dust and creepy crawlers that may want to peruse or nibble on them.

## Price Stickers

Self-adhesive, removable dots are useful for pricing some items (records, kids' board books, games, CDs, etc.). These dots can be purchased at almost any stationery store.

**Figure 2.2**  Sample category signs.

## Carts

Saving volunteers' backs needs to be a priority, so you will need some method for moving large numbers of books quickly and efficiently. Lancaster and Oro Valley have purchased or had donated several flatbed carts and book trucks for their sorting facilities. These are used to transport books from the sorting area to their storage area (in the same room, but books are heavy and they move six full boxes at a time). They also use the carts on book donation days, to bring books from the donors' cars into the facility and for removal of the discarded books (more on that sensitive topic in chapter 6). The Potsdam sale used a donated appliance dolly, and several volunteers brought other carts for use at the setup. A local bookstore chain was getting rid of some obsolete book trucks, and a Lancaster volunteer who works there part time got them for the warehouse.

## Box Tally Sheets

Hang a tally sheet near the sorted box storage area where you can mark the category name of filled boxes before they are put in the storage area (fig. 2.3). It is important that all volunteers know how to properly inventory sorted boxes as they are placed in the storage area. An accurate count by category of all sorted books is essential for a smoothly run sale. Your sale layout and publicity committees will need this vital information. For mini sales, we have a separate tally sheet and a separate warehouse section to gather selected categories we want to sell at these smaller sales.

## Ambiance

Ambiance—what an overused word! But there is something to be said for creating a pleasant atmosphere for your sorting and pricing workspace. Check with local carpet retailers for remnants that they might be willing to donate, especially if your facility has concrete floors. It will make such a difference to volunteers who stand in virtually the same place the entire time they are sorting or pricing books. Scour garage sales for a radio/CD player, a small refrigerator, a clock, and other amenities to make the place homey. A bulletin board not only gives a place to hang a scheduling calendar, it also serves as a spot for volunteer achievements, pictures, and other newsy items. Bring in colorful posters from the library or the local travel agency or movie theater to brighten things up. You might even try a few live plants!

## Details from Our Sales

### Lancaster

In Lancaster, we have two long rows of sorting tables. The volunteers sort between the two rows, turning around as needed to find the correct category. Unsorted books are in the middle of this area on their own table. Discard boxes are under all the tables, where sorters can throw musty, unsellable books. We use a clothesline tacked to wooden supports dropped from our high warehouse ceiling to hang our category signs. We also use this "laundry line" to attach special sorter's notes such as requests from the library and book club lists.

As much as possible, we schedule sorting times to accommodate our volunteer sorters. Wednesday mornings a group of volunteers who have become very close friends come and sort books. They sort for two hours, and often several of them then go out for lunch. This group also had a shower for a volunteer who recently adopted a baby from Guatemala, and they generally just like their sorting buddies, which include several male retirees. We also have a Sunday afternoon sorting time that is popular. Be sure to hang a calendar in the sorting room with the scheduled work times posted.

### Potsdam

Potsdam's sorting room was set up in a U-shape, again with the category boxes placed on the tables alphabetically. Once priced, boxed, and tallied, the books were placed in the finished stacks after having been properly marked on the tally sheet. Sorting for Potsdam took place during the donation drop-off each week.

### Oro Valley

We use a setup similar to Lancaster's with unsorted boxes in between two long rows of sorting tables. Because books are donated at our library and our warehouse, pricing is done at both sites. The books are then sorted, boxed, and stored at the warehouse.

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Acquiring a facility that meets your needs will help your organization get a continual supply of donated books. Set up your workroom so that it is efficient and uses your space wisely. Be sure that you keep sufficient

**BOX TALLY SHEET**Sale Spring 2004Date 5/24/04

Category	Sorted Boxes	Total
\$1.00 Paperbacks		9
Arts & Literature		16
Biography		12
Business/Law		6
Children		20
Christmas		2
Computer Science		4
Foreign Language		8
Gardening/Cookbooks		13
Hardback Novels		36
History/Politics		8
Home Arts and Hobbies		7
Large Print		3
Light Romance		8
Medicine/Health		6
Music		4
Mystery/Adventure		24
Newer Fiction		32
Newer Nonfiction		28
Oldies—Novels		11
Paperback Novels		28
Philosophy/Eastern Religion		4
Psychology/Sociology		11
Records/Tapes/Videos		15
Reference/English		9
Religion		16
Romance—Excl. Lt. Romance		12



Science Fiction/Western	//// //	9
Science/Nature	//// //// //	14
Sets/Encyclopedias	//// //// //// /	16
Signed by Author	///	4
Special-priced—Arts	//// //// //	12
Special-priced—Children	//// //// /	1
Special-priced—History	//// //// //	14
Special Priced—All Other	//// //// ////	15
Sports/Humor	//// //	9
Teens	//// ////	10
Textbooks	//// //	7
Travel/Geography	////	5
Total Boxes		478

**Figure 2.3**  Sample tally sheet for sorted boxes.

inventory of necessary supplies (a posted list of needed supplies is helpful) so sorting can continue uninterrupted. Schedule and communicate work times that

are convenient for your volunteers. Making the facility a pleasant place to work will keep them coming back to sort and price books.

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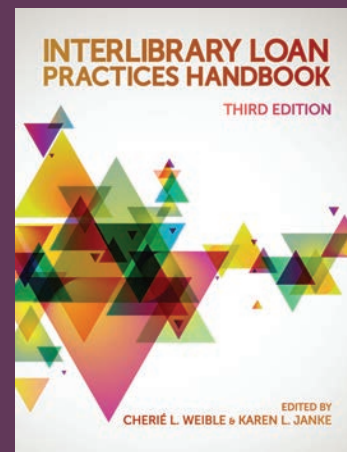
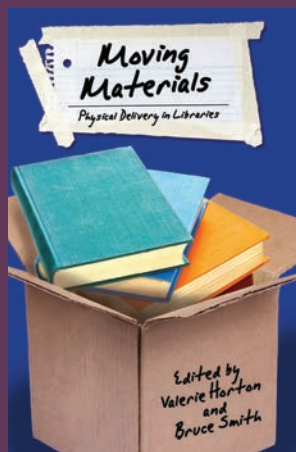
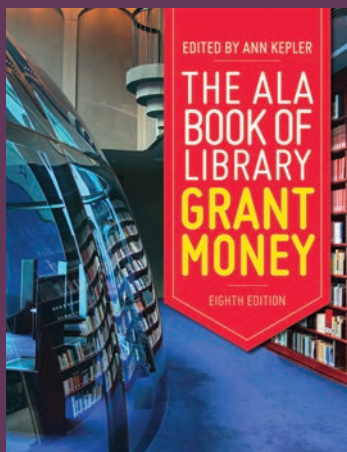
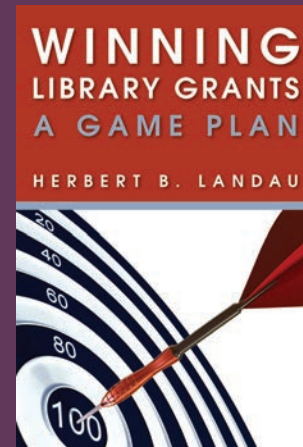
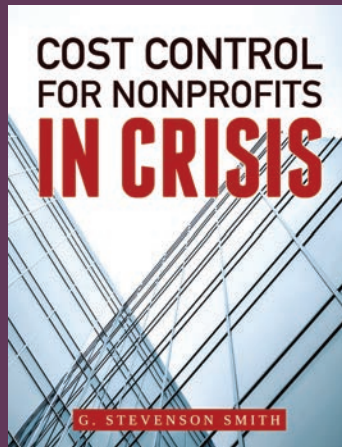
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**WEB** See [alaeditions.org/webextras](http://alaeditions.org/webextras) for blank, reproducible versions of the sample documents shown in this book.



# Introduction

Even as libraries successfully evolve in our technology-based world and continue to serve an ever-increasing number of people, the funding for these vital institutions is being assaulted. State funding cuts and federal program cutbacks have resulted in budget deficits, forcing libraries to cut book budgets, curtail hours of operation, and lay off staff—a woeful situation.

Yet, individually, people are passionate about their local library and believe in its mission. You'll find that, if asked, members of your own community will be happy to donate books from their personal collections and can be a huge source of free books. *A Book Sale How-To Guide* is designed to help you take advantage of your patrons' willingness to provide in-kind support. It offers a tested and successful formula for making money for local libraries in a practical and fun way—a library book sale.

## THE BENEFITS OF A BOOK SALE

Book sales can help alleviate funding deficits while fostering a healthy library volunteer community. By holding a successful library book sale, you can make a difference in your own community by

- offering affordable books to everyone, but particularly local citizens;
- raising enormous amounts of money for the library in a fun, satisfying way;
- promoting a rare sense of community that is unbelievable in scope;

- developing lifelong friendships—an amazing camaraderie grows around sale activities;
- developing skills of volunteers that can translate into lucrative jobs or a more fulfilling lifestyle for them;
- providing enormous savings for the library because of the opportunity to put some of the donated books directly into the permanent collection;
- becoming the largest recycling effort in your community;
- generating commercial traffic at local restaurants, hotels, stores, tourist attractions, and the like from book sale customers;
- creating a positive reflection on your community as a caring place to live and work.

And while our assumption in preparing this guide is that proceeds will benefit your local library, the material included can also be adapted for other nonprofit or for-profit organizations.

## THE BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING THIS GUIDE

This book was born out of a need to share the knowledge gained over many years at the Lancaster (PA) Public Library book sale, now in its fifty-seventh year. In 2010 the Lancaster book sales raised \$170,000, bringing their cumulative total book sale profits to over \$2.5 million.

The Lancaster Library Friends used their extensive book sale knowledge to help the Potsdam (NY) Friends of the Library group start a small book sale modeled after Lancaster's huge sale. Success with the sale in Potsdam proved the value of sharing this information with others. With Lancaster's help, the first year's proceeds in Potsdam (\$6,100) far exceeded their expectations. It took Lancaster seventeen years to make over \$6,000 from one sale!

Potsdam's first foray into ongoing book sales began in a small way through telephone conversations with Pat Ditzler in Lancaster. She encouraged her sister, JoAnn Dumas, to approach the Potsdam Friends group with the idea of holding a book sale. This would mean finding a sorting site and also soliciting book donations from the public. Luckily, the Friends' president was very excited and willing to work toward that end.

Using Lancaster's documented book sale information, Potsdam held their first sale in a church basement, with all the Friends (six people!) working very hard. The Potsdam Library director was thrilled with their fundraising success.

When JoAnn moved to Arizona in 2002, the brand new Oro Valley Public Library was just about to open. She immediately joined the Friends group, which had already held two small book sales under a tent in conjunction with a local arts council. The book sale committee reorganized, and they too began using Lancaster's book sale model. Using Lancaster's techniques, they recruited new volunteers, increased book donations, learned how to research and price books, and held their first major book sale in October 2002. Oro Valley Friends now have two large, very organized, professional, and well-attended sales each year, and have also expanded their horizons into other selling opportunities. These efforts raised over \$80,000 in 2010.

Throughout this guide, you will find specific "Details from Our Sales" for each of these libraries, which show how the information provided has worked in practice and, often, how it has been modified to meet the needs of the individual sales.

### SALES HISTORIES FOR BOOK SALES REFERENCED IN THIS GUIDE

#### Lancaster (PA) Public Library

1954 (first year) sale . . . . .	\$153
2008 sale . . . . .	\$180,000
2008 books sold . . . . .	250,000
Total income of all sales to date. . . . .	\$2,250,000

#### Potsdam (NY) Public Library

1999 (first year) sale . . . . .	\$6,100
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#### Oro Valley (AZ) Public Library

2002 (first year) sale . . . . .	\$10,000
2008 sale . . . . .	\$66,000
2009 sale . . . . .	\$80,352

## ORGANIZATIONS THAT TYPICALLY SPONSOR BOOK SALES

### Friends of the Library

Organizations in support of libraries have a long history. The Library Company of Philadelphia was started by Benjamin Franklin in 1731 to “render the benefit of reading more common” and is still in operation today. The first Friends of the Library was started in Paris in 1913, and the first American branch was organized in Berkeley, California, in 1930. Friends of Libraries U.S.A. is now part of the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, which is in turn a division of the American Library Association.

Local library Friends organizations vary in structure, purpose, and activities based on their own communities and local needs. These organizations help their libraries by raising funds for special books, periodicals, and other unbudgeted items and amenities that help keep the library current and make it a welcoming place in the community. The Friends provide volunteer help to the library in many ways, including assistance with programs and public relations, both of which keep the library prominent in the community. Friends groups are advocates of the library. While few would argue against the necessity of the library, Friends are proactive in arguing for it, committed to making the community aware of the library and its importance to the

### WHO'S IN CHARGE?

The book sales that form the basis for this guide are under the auspices of the Friends of the Library groups. The Lancaster sale is run by a special book sale committee, which reports to the larger Friends group. Because the Potsdam Friends is a very small organization (but growing steadily!) the entire group handles the book sale as well as all other Friends activities. Oro Valley has a director of book sale operations, which is a permanent Friends board of directors position.

vitality of the community. Particularly in these times of underfunding, the dollars the Friends raise have become an important part of the library's financial picture.

### AAUW

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) sponsors many book sales around the country and, in fact, started the Lancaster book sale. When the group decided to focus its resources on national AAUW issues, the Friends took over the Lancaster book sale. The transition was an easy one, as the same people who worked on the book sale under AAUW continued their volunteer efforts by joining the Friends. The difference is that now the library is guaranteed 100 percent of the book sale proceeds.

### Women's Clubs, University Organizations, and Other Clubs

Many successful book sales are run by a myriad of non-profit organizations. The sponsoring group is immaterial, as long as everyone agrees on who gets the profits. While getting reasonably priced books into the hands of the public is laudable any way you can accomplish it, there are undeniably added benefits for the book-reading public when the proceeds go to your public library.

However you decide to organize your group, take special care to ensure that those who know and run the book sale have ample authority to make simple decisions concerning the sale. Don't jeopardize the success of your sale by getting bogged down with dozens of approval levels and having to get total consensus from a governing board or huge group of Friends. Keep it simple!

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

*A Book Sale How-To Guide* covers every aspect of book sales, from book storage to sorting and pricing books, volunteer recruitment, sale-day issues, money matters . . . and so much more. If you've never held a book sale before, everything you need to develop a book sale is here, from start to finish. If you've held book sales and want to increase your fund-raising dollars,

this book can help you build a sustained money-making operation.

A book sale has various phases that in many ways mirror those involved in producing a stage play. The chapters of this book are organized to help the reader identify the various aspects of the “production.”

As with the production of a show, much work happens before anyone enters the theater on opening night. The important point, though, is never to lose sight of what this venture is all about. Thus chapter 1 is titled “The Main Attraction” and details how your group can gather the many books you’ll need for sales. Chapter 2, “Setting the Scene,” provides guidance on where to price, sort, and store your donations. Chapter 3, “Directing the Show,” gives organizing principles for book sale committees. Cultivating a volunteer base of support is the lifeblood of a good sale, thus chapter 4, “Casting Call,” discusses general recruitment. Chapter 5, “Production,” addresses the major (and majorly fun) undertaking of sorting books and other media. Guidance on how to set prices to get the best value for both you and your book sale patrons is covered in chapter 6, “Ticket Price.” Chapter 7, “Venue and Promotion,” guides you through presale activities, including how to make your publicity shine. And then chapter 8, “Showtime,” covers conducting the actual book sale from setup to cleanup. Here you’ll find direction on how to make all aspects of your sale day function smoothly, and how

to manage sticky situations—rare but not unheard of. Handling funds is serious business and is addressed in chapter 9, “Box Office Receipts.” Chapter 10 is, of course, “Encore! Encore!,” which explores Internet sales and other opportunities for revenue during the year that can augment a main book sale event. The many forms and figures provided are yours to adapt to your local operation to help you develop your own unique take on this fabulous fund-raiser.

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### **WHAT CAN YOU ACCOMPLISH?**

The Friends of the Lancaster Public Library were the largest contributors to the library’s 1995 capital campaign and continue to be a huge revenue resource in the library’s annual budget. The Potsdam Friends are dedicating funds to a library expansion. Friends of the Oro Valley Public Library book sales have purchased computers, outdoor furniture and a patio roof, programming, new books for the library collection, and most recently a Smart Board and a public address system.

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# 1

## The Main Attraction

### Getting Book Donations



Do not keep or sell videos, cassettes, or CDs that have been recorded by a donor. It is impossible to review the content and quality of these items. They need to be discarded.

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A constant supply of generous donations is the key to successful book sales. Without book donations, you have no sale! Our experience has been that people want to donate their books. You just need to give them the opportunity. Once you start receiving book donations, word of mouth spreads the news quickly through the community.

Kick off your efforts by issuing a press release that solicits books as well as donations of compact discs, videos, audiobooks, and records (fig. 1.1). These electronic items sell very well and bring new customers to your sales. Radio and TV stations and newspapers are usually happy to give time and space for library activities. Especially in smaller communities, your weekly newspaper may be willing to donate space for a standing box ad stating that the Friends group is looking for books for resale to benefit the library. Include information about when and where to donate books and a contact number for questions or for pickup requests.

Enlist help from other organizations and businesses! Print the content from your newspaper ad, perhaps with a small map, on bookmarks and ask local businesses to keep them by their registers. Place brochures and posters in waiting rooms and in shop windows, as well as in prominent community areas.

**FROM:** Jane Doe, Publicity Chair  
**SUBJECT:** Lancaster Public Library Book Sale Accepting Book Donations  
**DATE:** March 15, 2000

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Donations will be accepted for the Lancaster Public Library Book Sale on Saturday, April 3, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Book ReSort located at 650 Janet Avenue, Lancaster. Donations are also accepted Monday and Wednesday mornings from 10 a.m. until noon.

Volunteers will be available on the first Saturday of each month to help unload donated books. There is ample free parking, easy access to the facility, and plenty of staff ready to help.

People bringing large quantities of books should bring them in cardboard boxes. All donations must be in good condition. Children's books are urgently needed. Records, videos, sheet music, cassette tapes, and CDs are also accepted. Textbooks should be no older than 10 years. Reader's Digest condensed books and magazines cannot be accepted.

Donations are accepted at the Book ReSort on the first Saturday of each month, and the Friends of the Library prefer that donations be made at the Book ReSort. However, anyone unable to drop off books at this time should bring them to the rear of the Lancaster Public Library, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

For more information and directions, please call the Book ReSort at (717) 493-9327.

**Figure 1.1** 

Sample book drive press release. Press releases should be printed on official Friends or Library letterhead.

Offer your donors a signed donation receipt (fig. 1.2) that they can use as proof of a charitable contribution. Do not give dollar estimates for these donations, but rather provide price suggestions that the donors themselves can assign. We suggest the following:

- hardbacks—\$2
- paperbacks—50 cents
- videos—\$1
- audiobooks and DVDs \$2
- LPs—50 cents to \$1
- newer items of any kind—add \$1

Whatever values you choose, keep them low. Some items you will be able to sell for more than your estimate, some for less, and some not at all. The values provided above are very rough but, on average, very fair estimates.

Play on your community's sense of environmentalism. Lancaster's marketing strategy emphasizes that their book sale is the largest recycling effort in the county.

In fact they have resold some of the same volumes again year after year, as shown by sales receipts found in donated books. Community members are redonating the volumes they have purchased at prior book sales! This phenomenon is also happening in the Potsdam and Oro Valley libraries.

Appeal to your donors' love of the library. Those with a passion for the library will come through with some unbelievable book donations. Opening a recent box of Lancaster donations, volunteers pulled out amazing books—colonial architecture of the East Coast, *The Socinian Creed* by John Edwards (circa 1697), and an autographed book by Richard Nixon. Lancaster made a lot of money on this one donation, which the donor could have sold to a used bookstore, but instead chose to donate to his local library. Oro Valley recently received the complete personal library of a Friend who was moving out of state. The eighty boxes of beautiful books he donated have already brought in hundreds of dollars to the library's benefit.

**SNOWBIRD DONORS**

If you are in a mild and sunny climate, don't overlook soliciting donations from the snowbirds—people who have a permanent home elsewhere but spend the winter months in your area. Many will be happy to donate their recently purchased books to the Friends rather than store them in their small winter homes or ship them back to their permanent residences. These current, like-new books are a welcome addition for any book sale.

Identify community members who may be downsizing or moving to retirement homes and, sadly, will have no room for their lifetime collection of beloved books. They will be happy to know that their cherished books will benefit the library and the community. Similarly, identify those who must forgo creating personal collections, such as college students or seasonal residents.

Go where the goods are. Visit garage sales and ask that any “good books” left over after the garage sale be donated to the library. If you can offer to have someone pick up the books, you increase your chances of getting them. Before you ask for the leftover books, be sure that the books you ask for are salable. Some garage sale items may not be of acceptable quality. See the example garage sale donation request (fig. 1.3), which is designed to allow you to tear off a slip to give to the garage sale person with your contact information.

**SCHOOL BOOK DRIVES**

As sales increase, you will likely find that there are never enough children's and teen books to meet customer expectations. One way to address this is to get to know and work closely with the school librarians. Schools are often looking for good community projects and are willing partners in endeavors where students can learn about community service. A school book drive can serve this purpose and also help meet demand for good used children's and teen books at your sale.

To Whom It May Concern:

The Lancaster Public Library acknowledges receipt of \_\_\_\_\_ books donated to the library by \_\_\_\_\_.

If the books cannot be used in the collection, they will be turned over to the Friends of the Library for use in upcoming book sales to benefit the Lancaster Public Library.

Received by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lancaster Public Library representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Figure 1.2** WEB

Sample donation receipt. Donation receipts should be printed on official Friends or Library letterhead.

Please consider donating your leftover books to the Friends of the Potsdam Public Library book sales. All our proceeds benefit the Potsdam Public Library. Please call the number below, and we will gladly pick up the books at the end of your sale.

**Call (315) 264-9999 for book donation and pickup**

**Figure 1.3** WEB

Sample garage sale donation request.

School book drives are projects that individual schools run, with some basic information and tools provided to the school by the book sale committee. The schools send letters home to the parents, line up a few PTA/PTO volunteers to help with the drive, and offer incentives to the students (often resulting in some very lively competitions between classrooms).

## Encouraging Schools to Participate

Send a letter to each school librarian in your library service area asking the school to sponsor a book donation drive (fig. 1.4). Encourage the school librarian to pull some books from the donations to keep for the school library before sending the rest of the books to your sale. We also suggest that for every five to ten

books a student donates, the librarian allow the student to choose a book from all books collected. This way, the schools get good books for their library; the students have a personal incentive to collect donations, and they get different books to take home and read; and the book sale gets an excellent assortment of juvenile books to offer to the community at the next sale.

Dear Librarian,

The Friends of the Lancaster Public Library will again be sponsoring the annual spring book sale for the benefit of Lancaster Public Library. This year the sale will be held at the Overlook Roller Rink May 3–5, 1999.

The public donates books year-round for this sale. These books are then sold to provide inexpensive reading materials for the community, as well as to help the financial needs of the public library system. Last year our various book sales raised over \$120,000 for the library!

The Friends of the Library would again like to expand the idea of public service by offering schools the opportunity to sponsor book donation drives. You, as the librarian, could select from the books collected at your school to enhance your own library collection. In addition, your students could, after making a donation of five to ten books, choose a book from those collected. Since our greatest need is always children's books, please encourage your students to donate these.

Many schools that have been involved in the past have used PTO or other volunteers to help with the book drive. Books should be collected to arrive in our warehouse by April 1 so we can sort them and take them to our May sale.

Your interest and help in this project will be greatly appreciated! A kit of materials will be sent to help you with publicity and the mechanics of carrying out your book drive. We can arrange with our library staff to pick up your packed cartons at the conclusion of the campaign. We can also provide you with boxes for the drive.

Thank you for taking the time to help provide quality reading materials for the children of Lancaster Public Library. If you would be willing to see that your school is involved in this great recycling of books, kindly return the enclosed card by Dec. 1, 2000.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Barbara Jones  
Friends of the Library  
School Book Drive Coordinator

### Figure 1.4

Sample school book drive letter to school librarian. Letters regarding your sale should be printed on official Friends of Library letterhead.



### School Book Drive Procedure

Along with the letter to each school librarian, enclose a postcard for schools to return (fig. 1.5). Note on the postcard that if the school agrees to hold a book drive, additional information will be sent. Ask that the postage-paid cards be returned whether or not the school is going to participate.

When the book sale committee receives the postcards, send an information packet to the schools who have agreed to hold a book drive. The packet should include a letter to each librarian or book sale coordinator at the participating school (fig. 1.6); posters and bookmarks to be used during the campaign; and a sample letter for the school librarian to send home with students explaining the book drive (fig. 1.7). Set a specific time frame (about a three-month window) for when the book drive should be held. Set the end of that window no later than one month before your sale to allow time for incorporating these books into your sale.

Once the books have been collected at the school, the school librarian or book drive coordinator should call you to arrange to have the books picked up from the school and taken to your sorting facility. Ask the schools to fill out a brief report on the book drive (like the one in fig. 1.8), including the number of books collected.

Keep a list of participating schools from year to year so you can target different schools for participation in rotation. Don't forget to acknowledge participating schools as book sale supporters wherever community supporters are listed!

### Details from Our Sales

#### Lancaster

Approximately 98 percent of Lancaster's sale books come from community donations. The other 2 percent are withdrawn volumes from the library's permanent collection. This mix of mostly donated books is a big draw to book shoppers and collectors, who are often not enchanted with ex-library copies. Some book sales have a much larger percentage of withdrawn volumes. While attending the Denver annual book sale many years ago, Pat noted a huge amount of withdrawn books in the sale. A sale committee member said that 80 percent of their sale books were withdrawn from the library's shelves. We hope that Denver has begun soliciting more donations from its huge community. In the much smaller city of Lancaster, the five trucks packed with books for the spring sale weighed in at 100,000 pounds—fifty tons!—almost all of them donated by the public.

Lancaster advertises and truly believes in our mission to get affordable books into the hands of our local citizens. Many times we have received books from estates that were settled. We also make it convenient for the public to donate books. While the library accepts book donations from the public during regular library hours, the book sale committee has set up book donation drop-off days. Donations are accepted on the first Saturday of every month and also at three other specified times during the week when we are sorting books. The donations are accepted at our sorting warehouse, with plenty of free parking and volunteers with

School name \_\_\_\_\_

Our school **is / is not** interested in having a book drive this year.

Contact person for book drive \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of your book drive \_\_\_\_\_

Number of posters needed \_\_\_\_\_

Number of bookmarks needed \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date for book pickup \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 1.5** 

Information to include on a school book drive response card. Enclose with request letter to schools; use a stamped postcard with your return address on the reverse.

Dear Book Drive Coordinator,

Thank you so much for helping your school collect used books for the annual Friends of the Library book sale.

Enclosed you will find the bookmarks and poster you requested. We are looking especially for children's and teen books. Your task is to coordinate the drive in your school by working with school personnel to set up the collection drive in your building. Below is a list of suggestions on items to help make a successful book drive. A committed librarian, lots of publicity, and an incentive for the students are the keys to success.

Some suggestions:

- Meet with the librarian to plan any specific activities and publicity.
- Contact the PTO to see if they will provide a lunch treat to the winning homeroom at each level.
- Prior to the book drive, send notices home to parents along with report cards.
- Locate a room parent to collect books in homerooms on each collection day.
- Consider using cafeteria tables staffed by room parents on collections days.
- Ask a local business for a prize (pocket dictionary, etc.) for the student who donates the most books.
- Ask students to place donated books in a bag labeled with their name, their homeroom, and the number of books.
- Advertise the book drive on hall bulletin boards and via the public address system.

Thank you for supporting the book drive.

Sincerely,

**Figure 1.6** 

Sample school book drive letter to participating school. Letters regarding your sale should be printed on official Friends or Library letterhead.

Dear parents,

Here is a chance to weed out your bookshelves, help your school library, and help your public library.

The Friends of the Lancaster Public Library are preparing for their annual book sale, to be held in May. All proceeds of the sale benefit the Public library system. Our students are being asked to contribute good used books to this sale. Both paperbacks and hardbacks—especially children's and teen books—are welcomed. Our own school library will have first choice of the books collected to add to our school library collection.

Books will be collected between the hours of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

We hope you will help your children find some books for this drive. Recycling used books in good condition benefits everyone!

Sincerely,

**Figure 1.7** 

Sample school book drive letter from school to parents. Include your version of this letter in the packet you send to schools. Schools should reproduce it on their own letterhead.

### SCHOOL BOOK DRIVE REPORT

School James Martin Elementary

School book drive coordinator Barb John

School principal Joyce Sands

School librarian Kathy Leader

Dates of book drive April 4, 2010 through April 11, 2010

Total number of books collected 470

Total number of boxes of books 8

Number of books kept by school librarian 80

Number of books redeemed with coupons (if applicable) 15

Briefly discuss the details of your drive. Attach any letters, flyers, news releases, etc. that you used.

**Publicity** Letters were sent home to parents in March, advising them of the book drive. The PTO also advertised in their March newsletter. Several art classes made posters to put on the bulletin boards throughout the school.

**Incentives** The classroom that collected the most donated books was treated to an ice cream party. Also, for every five books that a student donated, they were allowed to select a donated book to keep. This was great fun and very popular.

**Procedure** Working with our school PTO group, we received donated books from 8 to 9AM each day of the book drive. Two volunteers from the PTO helped each day. Children who brought in 5 books to donate were able to select a book of their choice from all the donations to keep. We discussed the importance of libraries in a community and also took a field trip to the Lancaster Public Library, where we got a tour of the library from the Manager of Youth Services.

On the back, please feel free to make any comments or suggestions for future book drives.

Please return this completed form, the rest of the packet, and extra bookmarks in an envelope or box with your collected books.

**Figure 1.8** 

Sample school book drive report form.

carts to help unload donated books. Books donated at the library need to be loaded on the library truck and transported to the warehouse, so if we can entice the public to bring books directly to our warehouse, it helps out the library maintenance staff tremendously.

### **Potsdam**

In its first year, the Potsdam Friends accepted book donations every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The donations were slow in coming at first but grew quickly as word spread through the community. The first year we were getting fifteen to twenty boxes of book donations each Saturday. Many were in “gift” condition and certainly helped the quality of sale offerings. We received a large donation of 250 boxes of nice leftover books from the Lancaster Friends sale to help get our base of books up to a very healthy number. With this Lancaster donation, the first spring sale offered more than 20,000 books and attracted customers from a wide area. With the nice influx of public donations,

Potsdam’s books were 95 percent donated, with only 5 percent of the sale books from library withdrawals.

### **Oro Valley**

The Oro Valley Friends receive donations daily at their two Book Shoppes. There the donations are priced and sorted (for Book Shoppe, Internet, or book sale), and those that are slated for the book sale are then taken to the sorting location to be processed. Our books are 90 percent donated and 10 percent library withdrawals. Volunteers will also pick up books in the immediate area.

---

The key to keeping a continuous supply of book donations coming is to make your donation site convenient, with regular hours, plenty of parking, and lots of unloading help. The public feels good about donating to the library, and you can provide the means to make this happen.

# 2

## Setting the Scene

### Site Considerations and Sorting Room Setup

For accepting, sorting, and storing books for your sale, you'll need a safe and dry, heated/air-conditioned site (depending on your region). In the beginning you may not get exactly what you want. Ideally, the same facility can be used to accept donations as well as sort and store them until your book sale. Keep in mind that books are very heavy, and you want to keep the need to move them from place to place at a minimum. Some facilities may even be adaptable to use for a small sale. There should be ample, and preferably free, parking for book donors to be able to drop off their books. Another selling point to encourage book donations is to offer help with unloading books from the donors' vehicles. Some of your donors may not be able to lift or carry books and may not bring them to you if no help is available.

Try to get a free donated space from a gracious community-minded person or business. Some ideas to consider are local empty storefronts, unused space at schools or universities, or a space in a business or industrial complex. Price is a serious consideration if you can't find a free site. Every dollar you pay for rent, heat, and utilities translates to more books you have to sell just to cover expenses. We are not opposed to begging or cajoling—whatever it takes within reason—to get donated goods and services in support of the library. Don't be shy! Many local businesses are more than willing to forgo their profits and give you services or materials at their cost.

## Details from Our Sales

### Lancaster

The Lancaster warehouse is called the Book ReSort, which was the winning entry of the naming contest we held. It is our third sorting facility in fifty-seven years of book sales. We started out in the basement of the library and then moved to the auditorium. Soon our space was needed for library use, and also the sale was growing. We moved to a donated basement in a local realtor's office building. Sorting and warehousing occurred at this facility, but all books were still being donated at the library and had to be trucked to our donated basement. We had to use conveyors to take the books out a small front basement window to trucks waiting to transport the books to the book sale site. Growing pains!

As the donations and sale continued to grow, a small committee was formed to find a bigger place for sorting and storage. The committee listed the criteria for a new site and found a suitable warehouse building. The Book ReSort is just six blocks away from the library and large enough to accept donations as well as sort and store the books. The ReSort also has an amazing, well-lit, year-round bookstore. Mini book sales are held at the ReSort twice a year to help pay the rental expense.

The Book ReSort is safe, secure, dry, and heated, and is a fun place to sort books. We keep a small used refrigerator there, along with a garage sale radio. There is bright fluorescent lighting, and we've hung book-related posters from the library to brighten up the sorting area. The sorted books are stored on wooden pallets awaiting transport to the spring book sale. A volunteer warehouse manager keeps the facility logistics running smoothly. Book donations are accepted at the Book ReSort during scheduled, advertised sorting/pricing sessions.

### Potsdam

The first Potsdam warehouse sorting site was a donated space above an appliance store. The owner was a true gem who helped the Friends quickly find a home for their books—luckily the second-floor site had a freight elevator! The space, however, was not adequate for the long term (no heat or insulation in Northern New York), and the Friends soon settled into a facility donated by a local university. The warehouse was suitable for sorting

### STORAGE ON A BUDGET

The Chandler (AZ) Friends group found a unique way to solve their storage problem. They acquired a storage pod (a self-storage container, usually on a flatbed trailer for portability) that they placed on the library's loading dock. What a great idea!

### FRIENDS OF THE POTSDAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOK SALE WISH LIST

- Handcart to move books
- Filing cabinet
- Coffeepot
- Record player for checking quality of donated records
- Clock
- Radio
- Bookshelves

#### Figure 2.1 WEB

Sample wish list.

as well as storage, with lots of room, heat, and lights, one wall of windows, and room for a tiny bookstore. Later, the university sold the building, and book sale operations moved to the basement of the Potsdam Library, where they continue their processes. The Potsdam community had become very aware of the Friends and their successful book sale activities in support of the library, and the book donations grew nicely.

Potsdam needed a few specific items for their sorting facility, so they posted a wish list (fig. 2.1). Amazingly, the sought-after items were quickly donated.

### Oro Valley

In the new Oro Valley Library there was a 10,000-square-foot portion of the building as yet undeveloped. Books were sorted, priced, and stored there with no heat or air conditioning. Arizona does get rather cold in the winter,

and in summer . . . well! When the library building was subsequently completed, the Friends had to find new quarters. A Friend offered a three-bedroom house with very low rental cost, which worked well for a number of years. We have now moved to a more central storefront location among other small retail shops. We have opened the front area of the building as our second bookshop, Book Shoppe Too. This facility also houses our Internet sales office and sorting operation.

The above examples show the ingenuity and creativity of Friends groups to explore opportunities and make the most of temporary or unappealing sites. Although temporary conditions may not have been ideal, these groups made the most of their situation and moved forward with longer-term goals. With any luck, you will be so successful in your book sale endeavors that in a few years you may outgrow your first facility!

The work space is where your books and your volunteers will spend a lot of time. Look carefully for a desirable site. Once you've moved and set up the site to accommodate your processes, you want to be able to stay there for a while. You will be advertising your address, and it helps if you can get established in a permanent place.

Acquiring a location that meets your needs will help your organization get a continual supply of donated books. Creating a pleasant place to work will keep your volunteers coming back to sort and price books.

## **SORTING ROOM SETUP AND SCHEDULING**

The physical attributes of your workspace will help determine how to design your book-sorting and book-storage areas. There are some basic considerations that will help you set up an efficient operation.

### **Sorting Surfaces**

You will need tables or other flat surfaces for sorting and pricing your books. Lancaster uses a combination of old, discarded library folding tables (they do not need to be pretty, just sturdy), a 6-foot table acquired at a cheap cost from a garage sale, and tables they commissioned a local vocational school to make for them at



### **TIP**

If you are lucky enough to have a telephone in the sorting facility, leave an answering machine message about upcoming sorts so volunteers are informed.

cost. Potsdam received donated tables from the library and a local business benefactor, and some tables they purchased themselves. Oro Valley also purchased 6-foot folding tables. Be creative, beg a little for the library, or use sawhorses with 4-foot sheets of plywood or an old door for a tabletop.

### **Alphabetical Categories**

Whether you have a few or a multitude of categories, it will be easier for your sorters to find the right category box if the boxes are in alphabetical order on the sorting tables. You will likely have a few exceptions—for example, you may want to put Special Price/Rare books in a separate area for later pricing.

### **Informative Category Signs**

The sorting categories need to be clearly marked for your sorters. Make signs and either hang them or place them securely on signposts on the tables. Lancaster uses an old clothesline and clothespins to hang signs. Oro Valley tapes category labels to the table edge and covers them with clear tape. See our sample category signs including special notes (fig. 2.2). Either laminate these signs or put them in plastic sleeves so they stay nice and bright.

### **Sorting Space**

Leave room in the middle of the sorting area for boxes you are currently sorting. You may want to have a section near the middle of your category boxes where you put the unsorted boxes of books you will be sorting from. Sorters can then pick up a book and, after deciding on the correct category, walk to the box and deposit the book.

### **Sorting Supplies** **Packing Boxes**

Packing boxes are necessary for accumulating the books by category and storing them until your sale. You can

use any type of box, including those boxes you receive donations in. However, as your sale grows and you have many books to store, having boxes of uniform size is a real plus. Stacking odd-size boxes from grocery or liquor stores can be hazardous if not done carefully, and these heavy boxes filled with books are not what you want to see tumbling down on your workers. Volunteers should not be asked to move large, heavy, or unwieldy boxes of books.

## ARTS AND LITERATURE

### Includes Drama and Poetry

Place these exceptions in the Collectible box:

- Coffee-table (large-size) books
- Modern Library
- Movie editions of novels
- First editions of famous authors
- Edward Steichen, Ansel Adams, other prominent illustrators
- Charles Dickens
- Mark Twain

## CHILDREN

Place these exceptions in the Collectible box:

- Alice in Wonderland
- Cherry Ames
- Bobbsey Twins
- Dick and Jane readers
- Pop-up books
- Shirley Temple

Put children's book sets on sets table.

The nice sturdy boxes that gallons of spring water come in are an excellent option. Your local supermarket or drug store will be glad to give you these, as they will not have to flatten or pay to have these boxes carted away. Have a volunteer with a truck pick them up on a regular basis and deliver them to your sorting facility. Another option is to use collapsible boxes, which you can fold and store in flat stacks until needed. These flat boxes are much more compact when taking the empty boxes back to your warehouse facility after unpacking them at the book sale. Check with box suppliers for misprinted or otherwise unsellable merchandise that they may be willing to donate. Moving companies might have this type of collapsible box and may be willing to donate some gently used ones to the library.

Your best option may be file storage boxes with cut-outs for your hands. These boxes are easy to lift and have separate reusable tops. Even when filled with books, they are light enough for most of the volunteers to move. They also flatten for easy storage when not in use.

## Category Labels

You will need category labels to put on each end of your sorting boxes. These labels will be critical as you set up for your sale. As full boxes of books are unloaded from the trucks at your book sale site, they can be easily identified and placed at the appropriate sale table during your setup. Once you have selected the categories you will use, have a volunteer write or print labels for each category. Keep them in a convenient location in your sorting area, along with a supply of blank labels and markers in case you run out during a sorting session.

## Tape

We recommend using packaging tape and tape dispensers to seal sorted boxes. Although it is not absolutely necessary to seal the boxes, they will be stored for months at a time and then transported to our sale site. The sealed boxes are much more secure, less apt to break open as they are moved, and keep books free from dust and creepy crawlers that may want to peruse or nibble on them.

## Price Stickers

Self-adhesive, removable dots are useful for pricing some items (records, kids' board books, games, CDs, etc.). These dots can be purchased at almost any stationery store.

**Figure 2.2**  Sample category signs.



## Carts

Saving volunteers' backs needs to be a priority, so you will need some method for moving large numbers of books quickly and efficiently. Lancaster and Oro Valley have purchased or had donated several flatbed carts and book trucks for their sorting facilities. These are used to transport books from the sorting area to their storage area (in the same room, but books are heavy and they move six full boxes at a time). They also use the carts on book donation days, to bring books from the donors' cars into the facility and for removal of the discarded books (more on that sensitive topic in chapter 6). The Potsdam sale used a donated appliance dolly, and several volunteers brought other carts for use at the setup. A local bookstore chain was getting rid of some obsolete book trucks, and a Lancaster volunteer who works there part time got them for the warehouse.

## Box Tally Sheets

Hang a tally sheet near the sorted box storage area where you can mark the category name of filled boxes before they are put in the storage area (fig. 2.3). It is important that all volunteers know how to properly inventory sorted boxes as they are placed in the storage area. An accurate count by category of all sorted books is essential for a smoothly run sale. Your sale layout and publicity committees will need this vital information. For mini sales, we have a separate tally sheet and a separate warehouse section to gather selected categories we want to sell at these smaller sales.

## Ambiance

Ambiance—what an overused word! But there is something to be said for creating a pleasant atmosphere for your sorting and pricing workspace. Check with local carpet retailers for remnants that they might be willing to donate, especially if your facility has concrete floors. It will make such a difference to volunteers who stand in virtually the same place the entire time they are sorting or pricing books. Scour garage sales for a radio/CD player, a small refrigerator, a clock, and other amenities to make the place homey. A bulletin board not only gives a place to hang a scheduling calendar, it also serves as a spot for volunteer achievements, pictures, and other newsy items. Bring in colorful posters from the library or the local travel agency or movie theater to brighten things up. You might even try a few live plants!

## Details from Our Sales

### Lancaster

In Lancaster, we have two long rows of sorting tables. The volunteers sort between the two rows, turning around as needed to find the correct category. Unsorted books are in the middle of this area on their own table. Discard boxes are under all the tables, where sorters can throw musty, unsellable books. We use a clothesline tacked to wooden supports dropped from our high warehouse ceiling to hang our category signs. We also use this "laundry line" to attach special sorter's notes such as requests from the library and book club lists.

As much as possible, we schedule sorting times to accommodate our volunteer sorters. Wednesday mornings a group of volunteers who have become very close friends come and sort books. They sort for two hours, and often several of them then go out for lunch. This group also had a shower for a volunteer who recently adopted a baby from Guatemala, and they generally just like their sorting buddies, which include several male retirees. We also have a Sunday afternoon sorting time that is popular. Be sure to hang a calendar in the sorting room with the scheduled work times posted.

### Potsdam

Potsdam's sorting room was set up in a U-shape, again with the category boxes placed on the tables alphabetically. Once priced, boxed, and tallied, the books were placed in the finished stacks after having been properly marked on the tally sheet. Sorting for Potsdam took place during the donation drop-off each week.

### Oro Valley

We use a setup similar to Lancaster's with unsorted boxes in between two long rows of sorting tables. Because books are donated at our library and our warehouse, pricing is done at both sites. The books are then sorted, boxed, and stored at the warehouse.

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Acquiring a facility that meets your needs will help your organization get a continual supply of donated books. Set up your workroom so that it is efficient and uses your space wisely. Be sure that you keep sufficient

**BOX TALLY SHEET**Sale Spring 2004Date 5/24/04

Category	Sorted Boxes	Total
\$1.00 Paperbacks		9
Arts & Literature		16
Biography		12
Business/Law		6
Children		20
Christmas		2
Computer Science		4
Foreign Language		8
Gardening/Cookbooks		13
Hardback Novels		36
History/Politics		8
Home Arts and Hobbies		7
Large Print		3
Light Romance		8
Medicine/Health		6
Music		4
Mystery/Adventure		24
Newer Fiction		32
Newer Nonfiction		28
Oldies—Novels		11
Paperback Novels		28
Philosophy/Eastern Religion		4
Psychology/Sociology		11
Records/Tapes/Videos		15
Reference/English		9
Religion		16
Romance—Excl. Lt. Romance		12

Science Fiction/Western	//// //	9
Science/Nature	//// //// //	14
Sets/Encyclopedias	//// //// //// /	16
Signed by Author	////	4
Special-priced—Arts	//// //// //	12
Special-priced—Children	//// //// /	1
Special-priced—History	//// //// //	14
Special Priced—All Other	//// //// ////	15
Sports/Humor	//// //	9
Teens	//// ////	10
Textbooks	//// //	7
Travel/Geography	////	5
Total Boxes		478

**Figure 2.3**  Sample tally sheet for sorted boxes.

inventory of necessary supplies (a posted list of needed supplies is helpful) so sorting can continue uninterrupted. Schedule and communicate work times that

are convenient for your volunteers. Making the facility a pleasant place to work will keep them coming back to sort and price books.

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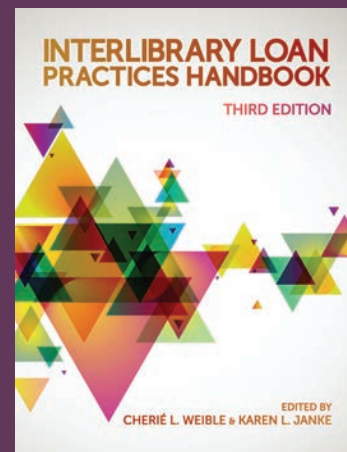
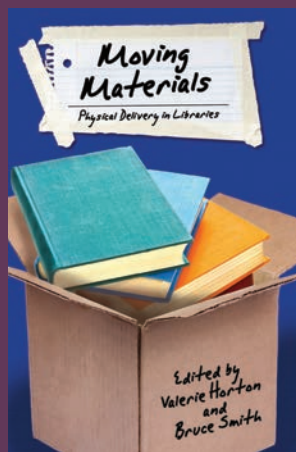
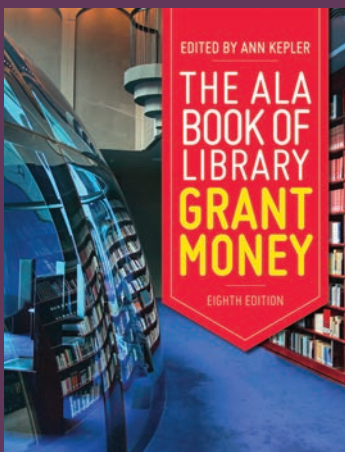
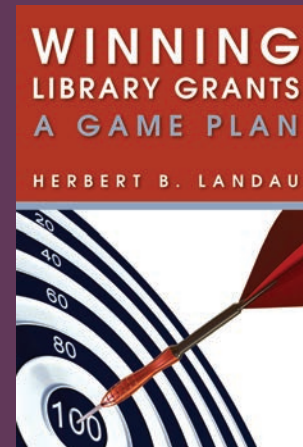
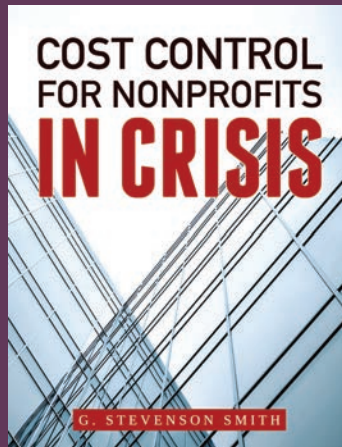
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