

2019 Annual Review

The Friends of the Sun City Libraries, Inc. are passionate about making our community a better place through our support for the Sun City Libraries. Library user feedback has always confirmed our success in doing so, but never quite so much as in 2019. Simply put, 2019 was an outstanding year for both the Sun City Libraries and the Friends. We made life better for hundreds of folks in the Sun City community. Here's how:

Sun City Library Drive-through Book Drop

On October 16, 2019, the long awaited project for a two way drive up book drop at the Sun City Library was completed. This joint effort between the Friends, Maricopa County Library District (MCLD) and the Recreation Centers of Sun City (RCSC) was managed by RCSC, overseen by Maricopa County Library District and championed and funded by the Friends who reimbursed RCSC for the cost of the project: **\$66,475**.

"I want to thank the Friends so much for their ongoing support. The drive up book drop has been wonderful! We have so many customers who are so pleased with the book drop and tell us it is so helpful, and will be even more so during the hot summer months." Library Manager Brianna King

Ten Year Anniversary Celebration

The Friends organized and funded a full day of fun activities on August 12, 2019, to celebrate the ten year anniversary of MCLD managing the Sun City Library. From opening to closing we enjoyed refreshments, face painting, balloons, flowers, posters, and fantastic programs. All of this was designed and orchestrated by organized, dedicated Friends volunteers with full library staff support.

"This is so much fun...who says face painting is just for kids!" celebration attendees Dave and Beverly Pedersen

"I loved this event! Sun City senior citizens had more fun and were more excited with the face painting and balloons than many of the little kids who attend my children's programs!" Professional Face Painter Andreona Garlid

Awesome Bookstore

For the 5th year in a row the Friends Books Around the Corner Bookstore broke their previous year sales record. Managed by long time volunteer **Mary Anne McDonald**, 2019 saw a record breaking **\$49,596** in gross sales, up almost 8% from 2018. This is thanks to the many Sun City citizens who donate and buy our books. It would not be possible without the support of the 47 Bookstore volunteers who provided over 6,000 hours of service. This wonderful little bookstore is well utilized and appreciated by the Sun City Community.

“The bookstore has so much good stuff at unbelievably low prices. It’s a place where you can yield to temptation and still feel good about yourself.” Volunteer and frequent bookstore customer Pat Bates

Rejuvenated Book Buddy Program

Book Buddy Director, volunteer **Monica Fallon**, put her heart and soul into the Book Buddy program in 2019, and it shows. The Book Buddy program is the busiest it has ever been. We now have 25 volunteers serving home bound library patrons. Together they donated over 656 hours to the Book Buddy program in 2019.

“Thank you so much for bringing books to my mom. You are helping to keep her mind active. We appreciate it so much.” Daughter of Book Buddy recipient, Margaret B.

Successful Book Friends Program

In 2017, volunteer **Charlotte Klose** started the Book Friends program which sends volunteer readers to memory care facilities. This program was so successful in 2018, that Charlotte doubled our efforts by opening the program at a second facility in 2019 with an additional manager, **Linda McKnight**. In 2019, 20 Book Friend volunteers donated over 600 hours of their time to this program. Volunteers typically provide about 5 reading sessions per week. Not only does this program enrich the lives of the grateful people we read to, but it does the same for the volunteer readers and many other appreciative members of the community.

“To witness a quiet Alzheimer’s patient unlock their mind and smile as I’m reading is one of the most fabulous experiences I’ve had in my life since I retired.” Volunteer Joan Newton

Library Programs that Span a World of Varied Interests

Our two Sun City libraries hosted 390 programs in FY19, which 5,455 attendees enjoyed. The Friends paid **\$25,687.37** in support of those library programs. Area residents learned about orchids, hummingbirds, healthy cooking, cupcake decorating, organizing, gingerbread house building, gardening, national parks, iphones, Androids, golf, Windows, robots, chocolate, the Beatles, self defense, oil painting, drumming, genealogy, current events, meditation, yoga, tai chi and much more.

Program attendees didn’t just learn things in 2019. They were also entertained with flute music, Native American dances, puppets, flamenco guitar, holiday music, hand pan performances, and more.

The Friends were also happy to pay **\$11,475.55** for items that the Library needed in 2019 including baby changing tables, a new in-wall book drop, seeds to stock our free seed library, electronic equipment, summer reading prizes, charging stations, book pods, prizes and more.

“A BIG THANK YOU for the recent 'Music After Hours' Classic Soul with Kenny Gilmore at Fairway. It was truly delightful!! I enjoyed it tremendously, and I think everyone else attending did too. We did a lot of singing along with the oldies.”
10/27/2019 program attendee Rose Van Sickle – Friends web site comment

Library Utilization that Defies National Norms

While the rest of the country reports that library utilization, especially walk in traffic, is down, the Sun City Libraries are enjoying INCREASED utilization. In FY19 our two libraries served 148,579 customers and circulated 443,580 items.

These terrific utilization numbers are due to several factors; excellent library management by Brianna King and staff, great programs, 3,538 hours donated this year by dedicated library volunteers, increased resources, and the organized outreach efforts managed by the Friends Outreach Committee, headed by Board volunteer **Sue Blechl**.

Those outreach efforts included two Discover Sun City events, farmer’s market booth, church presentations, Sun City Home Owners Association (SCHOA) open house, Condo Association open house, and the SCHOA new Resident Orientation. These presentations are appreciated by our community organizations.

Frequent outreach presentation attendee comments; “We didn’t know Sun City had two libraries!” “I did not know there was a bookstore in the Sun City Library.” “I didn’t know you could read so many magazines on-line, for free!”

Best and Happiest Volunteers

As always, none of this would be possible without a super group of volunteers. The Friends are supported by a total of 110 volunteers who support every aspect of the Friends, including the bookstore, the Library, the Book Buddy Program, the Book Friends program, the finance committee and the Board of Directors. Board Director, **Cathy Weyers** and Volunteer Coordinator **Ruth Polanski** make sure our volunteers know how much they are valued and appreciated. Volunteer recognition events in 2019 included a volunteer recognition spring banquet at Palmbrook Country Club on March 21st, a volunteer get-together on July 11th, and a Christmas Tea on December 10th.

We handed out our second bi-annual volunteer satisfaction survey at the March event and results were stellar. Volunteers unanimously told us they love working with the Friends. And once we get a volunteer, they stay with us. Retention is remarkable, with many volunteers serving more than 10 years so far. According to MCLD management, the Sun City Libraries have 20% of all the volunteers in all the MCLD libraries in the county. Now you know why.

“It’s (volunteering) a way to give back to others and I’m really giving to myself as well. It’s just such a joyful experience to give happiness and love to others.”
Volunteer Irene Nathanson

Strong Board of Directors

The Friends Board of Directors oversees all of the Friends projects and programs. We keep the Board fresh and exciting by maintaining a six year Board term limit. In November, 2019, Board President **Marcia Davis** reached her six year term limit and turned the reins over to very capable **Sue Blechl**.

In addition, 2019 saw the addition of three new Board members, **Monica Fallon, Irene Nathanson** and **Linda McKnight**. Lest anyone think that we lose the valuable experience of our Board members who reach their term limit, fear not. Most past board members continue to serve the Friends in other volunteer capacities. **Tom Everitt**, past President continues to serve as Board advisor and writes the monthly Volunteer newsletter and the Sun Views column. Past President **Mary Ann McDonald** serves as Board advisor and Bookstore manager. Past Board members **Carol Hager, Camilla Kuberka, Kathy Shawl** and **Sue Painter** all volunteer at the Bookstore. **Marcia Davis** will continue to serve as Board advisor and Webmaster.

We are happy to do our part, along with our dedicated volunteers, the fantastic library staff, and a supportive customer base, to enhance the Sun City community through support for our libraries. We did just that in 2019.

“The work you (the Friends) do and the time and effort you spend in your respective roles are not only appreciated but also invaluable to our libraries. We are able to do so much because of your support! Many librarians go their whole career without working with such a strong and supportive Friends group. Thank you.” Library Manager Jackson Hadley