

Friends of the Olympia Library Newsletter

March 2026



Friends of the Olympia Library

Our mission

To support, promote and augment the operations of the Olympia Library.

Find us on the [web](#)
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Olympia Timberland Library
313 Eighth Ave. S.E.
(360) 352-0595

Hours: 10-6 Monday-Saturday
Closed Sunday

West Olympia Library
625 Black Lake Blvd SW
In the Capital Mall
(360) 764-4440

Hours: 10-6 Monday-Saturday
11-6 on Sunday*

The Way Forward for the Olympia Library

As reported in our last newsletter, in January 2026 Timberland Regional Library discovered a \$3.8-million-dollar shortfall in the budget going forward and announced proposed cuts to staff, collection development, hours and services across the board.

On Sunday, March 15, the library system sent layoff notices to 61 staff who work in the local branches. Victoria Harmon, Regional Manager of the Olympia and West Olympia Libraries confirmed that “on May 15th Olympia will lose 9 of 14 library assistants, leaving a staff of 1 regional manager, 1 library supervisor, 5 librarians and 5 assistants to cover open hours at the Olympia and West Olympia Libraries. May 15th will be the last day for those who received the layoff notice. May 16th we will move forward with the remaining 12 staff members”. Other changes to the hours of operation and programming at the Olympia branches are still unfolding.

For further information on budget reductions, FOL members and the general public can look at TRL’s Funding and Budget page on its website. <https://trl.org/budget>. The TRL Board will discuss the budget at its March 25 meeting, which begins at 5:30 pm. Interested people can Zoom this meeting live *and* view recordings of past TRL Board meetings at: <https://trl.org/board/>.

TRL’s budget situation is being covered by the Olympian, the Aberdeen World, the Jolt and other media. You can find additional perspectives on the union’s website: Home - AFSCME Local 3758 and The Patron Coalition’s Instagram account: @TRL.patrons. The Patron’s email is WeLoveLibraries@proton.me.

Friends of the Library members are encouraged to stay informed about the budget situation because FOL will need to provide support to the library and its staff going forward.

Recently FOL President Jann Hoppler, and Board Member, Pat McLain met with Timberland Board of Trustee Thurston County representative Mary Beth Harrington to talk about FOL as a vital link between TRL and the Olympia community. We have more volunteers than ever covering open hours in the Book Store accepting donations, selling books and media and interacting with library patrons. Jann and Pat also requested more two-way, trusted communication with TRL administration and Board of Trustees. Ms. Harrington said she would carry our feedback to TRL Administration and Board of Trustees.

Thanks to the generous donations of books and media, the FOL Board was able to approve a spending plan of \$36,304 for programs at the Olympia Libraries this year. We are open to increasing this amount, especially with the budget reductions underway. Over the last six years FOL has provided more than \$63,200 for programming and purchases of books and materials at the Olympia Library. Thanks to everyone who donates and everyone who purchases from the FOL Book Store.

****The Friends of the Olympia meet every month on the second Tuesday
in the Olympia Library Meeting Room from 1-3 pm.
You are invited to attend and find out what we are planning for the future!***

Programs Sponsored by the Friends of the Olympia Library

From Betsy Storey, Librarian

Olympia Reads- Renee Watson Feb 10th - 100+ participants

We were the kickoff event for Renée Watson's series of events across Olympia and Lacey, including presentations at the libraries and schools, and it was a great way to start everything off!

- o This is our third year of Olympia Reads!! but the first time we have held an after-hours event at the library, and it was a huge success! Over 100 people came, and everyone had a wonderful time. Renée was able to meet the bookmark contest winners before the event, and sign books, take photos, and chat with them. It was really meaningful for the students who were able to come, and they seemed to have a great time.
- o The Olympia High School Food and Nutrition Class provided a wide array of delicious treats, and received many compliments. We love being able to support the local students, and this was a fun way to go about it!
- o After the event all of the school teacher-librarians were so pleased, and many of them told me that they thought holding an event at the library made it feel much cozier than in an auditorium, and felt that it was more successful and accessibly for the community, and hope to continue offering an evening program in the future.
- o All of these events are so important to both the community, and particularly the students, because it allows them the chance to interact with authors they otherwise would probably never meet. They are able to draw similarities between themselves and the authors, and I like to think it gives them hope and inspiration for the future. Encouraging the arts is so incredibly important, especially now, so allowing space for them to listen, to learn, and promote creativity is essential. None of this would be possible without our Friends of the Library supporting us.

□ Pilot Magazine Presents- Feb. 11th - 58 participants

Pilot Magazine is a locally south sound produced arts and cultured magazine. They helped us curate an eclectic group of local poets and acoustic musicians to present new and old works at the Olympia library. It was a very successful arts focused evening, and the audience was very multigenerational.

□ Lantern Lights the Library-Feb 13th - 63 participants, all ages!

Our ongoing live all ages series collaboration with local downtown record store Lantern Records. This particular event focused on Suicide Prevention Awareness and started with a light show and march at Sylvester Park that ended at the library for live music! It was a wonderful evening of community connection!

□ Deep Dive into Dandelions with Jenne Redecker- Feb 17th -25 participants, all ages!

This workshop was led by Chehalis tribe member and wild harvester, Jenne Redecker. She taught patrons to *understand* that “weed” in your yard. Dandelions are actually one of the most nutritious and medicinal plants on earth! It was a hands-on exploration of the dandelion and all its medicinal and wellness uses including how to harvest and preserve all elements of the plant.

For More Events at the Olympia and West Olympia Libraries:

<https://timberland.bibliocommons.com/v2/events?locations=OL%2CWO>

FOL VOLUNTEER FORM



Friends of the Olympia Library

The mission of the Friends is "To support, promote and augment the operations of the Olympia Library".

Volunteer

Would you like to help the Friends of the Olympia Library?
There are varying degrees of participation for every interest level!

Fill out this form and leave it in the box on the FOL slat board wall opposite the FOL Book Store inside the Olympia Library. The FOL volunteer coordinator will contact you.

If you have questions, please contact: fol73volunteers@gmail.com for more information. *The Olympia Library requires all volunteers to have a background check.*

Name: _____

Best way to contact me: _____

Email: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Jobs that interest me:

___ Accepting book donations on Wednesdays or Saturdays.

___ Emptying the donation bin.

___ Book sorting and/or pricing.

___ Stocking ongoing book sale shelves.

___ Help with publicity, membership and volunteers.

___ Help with FOL Board activities.

Date _____ *Your information will not be shared.*

For more about the FOL: www.olylibraryfriends.com

FOL MEMBERSHIP FORM



Friends of the Olympia Library

Join the Friends of the Olympia Library

Members receive our newsletter *and* the good feeling of supporting your local library.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

E-mail _____

Telephone (_____) _____

*None of your personal information will be sold, given, or traded to any third parties for any reason.

New Membership _____ Renewal _____ Date _____

Memberships are for one (1) year, except "Friend for Life".
If your dues are for more than 1 year, indicate # of years here _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP (Tax Deductible)

Individual	\$ 10.00
Family	\$ 15.00
Senior (65+)/Student	\$ 5.00
Business	\$ 50.00
Best Friend	\$ 100.00
Friend for Life	\$ 150.00

Please mail this application and your check to:

Friends of the Olympia Library

313 8th Avenue SE

Olympia, WA 98501

or

place it in the membership box on the Friends slat board wall opposite the FOL Book Store
in the Olympia Library, or join online: www.olylibraryfriends.com/join