**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 14, 2024**

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**Gov. Walz Issues Proclamation Declaring October 20-26
“National Friends of Libraries Week in Minnesota”**

**SAINT PAUL, MN [10/14/24]**  –– Next week (Sunday, October 20 - Saturday, October 26) marks National Friends of Libraries Week 2024. This annual celebration is coordinated through United for Libraries, the library Friends and trustees arm of the national American Library Association.

United for Libraries summarizes the purpose of National Friends of Libraries Week as follows:

“This celebration offers a two-fold opportunity to celebrate Friends. Use the time to creatively promote your group in the community, to raise awareness, and to promote membership. This is also an excellent opportunity for your library and Board of Trustees to recognize the Friends for their help and support of the library.”

Earlier this fall, in keeping with that mission, the Minnesota Association of Library Friends (MALF) petitioned the Office of Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan to officially recognize Friends of the Library and other library volunteers in Minnesota during the month of October.

MALF is pleased to share that the Governor’s Office has officially designated October 20-26 as Friends of Libraries Week in Minnesota!

This honorific is well deserved.

Statistics maintained by MALF and the State of Minnesota indicate that Friends groups conservatively boast a collective reach of 19,700 members. Friends of the Library can be found across each of the state’s congressional districts and in nearly every county.

Moreover, Friends provide more than nominal or token support for libraries. In many places and cases, an active Friends of the Library group allows for the margin of excellence that empowers library staff to transform their *good* institution into a truly *great* one.

 **What Do Friends Do?**

* Among core activities, Friends of the Library fill a vital fundraising function: soliciting donations from private, corporate, grant and other philanthropic sources. These funds unlock collection, program and outreach opportunities that would often be otherwise beyond their partnering library’s budgetary reach. “
* Friends are particularly visible as the coordinators of regular and beloved used book sales, proceeds from which also underwrite library programs and services in their community.
* Beyond fundraising, many Friends groups supplement their library’s offerings by hosting programming in their own right: author talks, book clubs, children’s programs, and much else of interest to library patrons.
* Friends in many Minnesota communities (and particularly small or rural ones) can also be found volunteering their time in the library itself: reshelving books, manning desk shifts, and even providing custodial or “handyman” services.
* Last but not least, Friends are vocal and stalwart advocates for their library’s continued public funding. No public library can open its doors, let alone excel, without sustained public funding sources. Friends are a bulwark in times when their library’s existing budget is in jeopardy, as well as when circumstances argue for a funding increase.

**Visit** [**mn.gov/governor/newsroom/proclamations/**](https://mn.gov/governor/newsroom/proclamations/) **to read and download the full proclamation declaring October 20-26 the first-ever Friends of Libraries Week in Minnesota.**

We hope you take this opportunity to stop and appreciate the constant and invaluable – but often unseen and ordinarily unsung – work of the Friends of the Library in your own community.

**About Us.** The Minnesota Association of Library Friends (MALF) has been a mainstay in the Minnesota library community since 1979. We are a Saint Paul- based private foundation, but truly statewide in scope and impact. Our mission is to connect grassroots Friends of the Library organizations, offer valuable resources to support their work, and provide a strong voice for Friends. We offer educational programming, networking opportunities, grants, and awards geared towards these ends.

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