

WHITEFISH BAY LIVING

DEC 2025



Friends of the Whitefish Bay Public Library

A COMMUNITY OF GIVERS WHO VOLUNTEER
TO UPLIFT THE LIBRARY-LOVING COMMUNITY

Cover Photo by House Wren Photography

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WHITEFISH BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY

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FRIENDS OF THE WHITEFISH BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY



Book Sale



Friends of the Whitefish Bay Public Library

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With more than 27,000 books on the shelves, in almost every imaginable category, there's a wide selection for book enthusiasts. In addition to books, we sell CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, sheet music, games, and puzzles. Volunteers sort and categorize books all year, and their dedication makes for a better, well-organized shopping experience for everyone.

Volunteers and donations are EVERYTHING

"Our volunteers are the core of our operation!" exclaims Reesa Gottschalk, volunteer coordinator. "We have 124 active volunteers, some of whom are in every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 9:30am to noon, and others who help with specific projects on an as-needed basis. The amount

of time it takes to get a donated book from the yellow bins in the lobby into the hands of a patron is tremendous and it couldn't be done without the support of these volunteers."

Donating a book may seem like a small thing, but each donation contributes to a much larger benefit for the library. Book prices at the Book Sales and in the Book Room are very reasonable, and the large number of items sold results in a healthy profit.

eBay items are priced for a global marketplace, and these sales can be very profitable and exciting to track. In April, an Encyclopedia Britannica set from 1891 sold for \$430; sets of artistically themed Tarot cards have sold for \$50 or more. Art books, niche craft and hobby magazines, collector guides, and antiquarian books are fun to research and can

result in surprising revenue. While some donated books may look like "trash," they can certainly turn into "treasure."

"In general, eBay sales make up 50% of our revenue," states Leah Dean, president of Friends-WFBPL. "The Book Room is another 20% and our two community book sales are 20%. With these monies, plus membership fees, donations, and miscellaneous revenue (8%), we are usually able to fulfill the WFBPL Library's annual budget request to the Friends. For example, in 2025, we approved \$48,000 in funding. And since 2005, Friends-WFBPL has allocated more than \$500,000 toward special programming and equipment. Every book that's donated is a significant part of these numbers."

Where does the funding go?

It buys seeds for the seed library. It refurbishes the furniture in the Children's Area of the library. It supplies prizes for the Summer Reading Program and buys the puzzles for the Puzzle Competition. It expands the items in the Take-and-Tinker program and offers patrons day passes to popular attractions like the Milwaukee County Zoo and Wisconsin State Parks.

"Our Friends-WFBPL is the platinum level of Friends groups," said Nyama Reed, WFB Public Library director. "The organization funds 99% of our special programming, and allows us to offer our patrons modern amenities like the self-check-out kiosk, the pick-up lockers, and a new book-repair machine this year. The group just gave us \$20,000 this year to update the furniture in the Children's Area - new tables, new chairs, all easy to clean and move to accommodate traffic patterns. We truly would not be the library we are without its generous financial support."

Ultimately, the same people who donate the books also benefit. Whitefish Bay has a tremendous library with a broad community reach, and the Friends-WFBPL is proud of our dedicated board of directors and other volunteers who work very hard to make it so.

The life cycle of a book donated to Friends-WFBPL ends when a book winds up in someone's hands. We thank you for the book donations you've already made and the donations you'll make in the future. We thank those who shop our two Book Sales, our Book Room, and those who choose to become dues-paying members of Friends-WFBPL. Your support helps us achieve our mission by complementing the library's own mission to connect people, inspire a love of learning, and provide access to information and resources. Every donated book assists us in accomplishing that.

"I've been a Friends-WFBPL volunteer for almost 20 years," says Maureen Hart-Donahue. "In that time, I've done various 'jobs' in the basement, from book sorting to chairing the Book Room. It gives me great joy to give back to the community and a tremendous sense of satisfaction every time I see a patron using the items we've funded. To know that we have more than 1,300 kids and almost 200

EVERY BOOK HAS A PURPOSE – education, entertainment, information. But a book donated to the Friends of the Whitefish Bay Public Library (Friends-WFBPL) has an additional purpose – supporting library programs and equipment.

"Almost every donated book we get supports the community in some way," says Francine Curtis, Friends-WFBPL book sorting coordinator. "We sell books to provide funding, but we also stock two Friends-sponsored Little Free Libraries, we have a free shelf for the public in the library lobby, and we donate countless books to various community resources, including domestic abuse shelters, senior centers, the Milwaukee County Jail, and others. Those that are damaged or can't be rehomed are responsibly recycled."

Donated books, as well as games, puzzles, CDs, and DVDs, are collected in the yellow bins in the library lobby. The Friends-WFBPL also arranges pick-ups of big-book donations generated by house clearings, estate sales, or cleaning efforts. Most books are accepted as long as they are not contaminated by mold, mildew, or animals. Every Tuesday and Thursday morning, volunteers unload the books in the basement workroom for sorting, and every Monday and Wednesday afternoon, more volunteers categorize the books for sale.

The big sort

The first sorting category is for books to sell on the Friends-WFBPL thriving eBay store at [eBay.com/str/friendsofwfblibrary](https://www.ebay.com/str/friendsofwfblibrary). Books that are antique, rare, niche, coffee table, art, Wisconsin-oriented, or just plain interesting are placed on a cart for additional research. Volunteers then research the books to determine their value by comparing them to similar books for sale. Once a price is determined, more volunteers list the books on eBay with photos and a description. Once a book is sold, a crew packages it for shipping, and off it goes.

A second sorting category of books goes to the retail Book Room, operated by the Friends-WFBPL on the main floor of the library next to the front desk. These books are typically current fiction, popular children's books (Dog Man, Captain Underpants, anyone?), travel guides, puzzles, and even a section with required reading for WFB High School English classes. The Book Room is a hit with patrons and is restocked frequently.

The final sorting category is where most books go – to be shelved for the very popular, twice-yearly Community Book Sale. These sales are held the first weekend of every May and November, with a member preview on the Friday evening before.



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adults involved in the Summer Reading program, or that we've given two students a college scholarship every year, means my efforts support a reader. I'm happy to give my time for that."

If you'd like to become a member, visit WFBLibrary.org/friends. If you'd like to volunteer with Friends-FWFBPL, email friendswfblibrary@gmail.com.

Finally, check out our fantastic eBay storefront at eBay.com/str/friendsofwfblibrary.

And, as always, you can drop off your book donations in the big yellow bins in the library lobby - or contact us via the Friend-WFBPL's e-mail address and we'll arrange a large pick-up. Thanks in advance!



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LARGE PROJECTS FUNDED BY FRIENDS OF THE WHITEFISH BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY

2005-2025

Furniture - \$57,000

2005 \$5,000
2008 \$4,300
2009 \$7,800
2010 \$2,600
2014 \$2,300
2017-2019 \$35,000 All new comfy chairs and study chairs

Area "Refresh" - \$40,800

2011 Children's Area \$8,500
2012 Children's Area \$3,500
2015 Program Room \$5,300
2022-2023 Teen Area \$21,000
2024 Children's Tower \$2,500

Technology - \$57,000

2016 Website Redesign \$10,000 (co-funded with private donation)
2019-2020 Program Room Projector & Hearing Loop \$25,000
2023 Self Check Machine \$20,000
2025 Book Repair Machine \$2,000

Take & Tinker - \$14,100

2021 \$2,900
2022 \$2,500
2023 \$2,500
2024 \$2,700
2025 \$3,500

Memberships/Passes -

\$13,855
2022 \$2,100
2023 \$3,500
2024 \$3,755
2025 \$4,500

Hot Reads - \$6,800

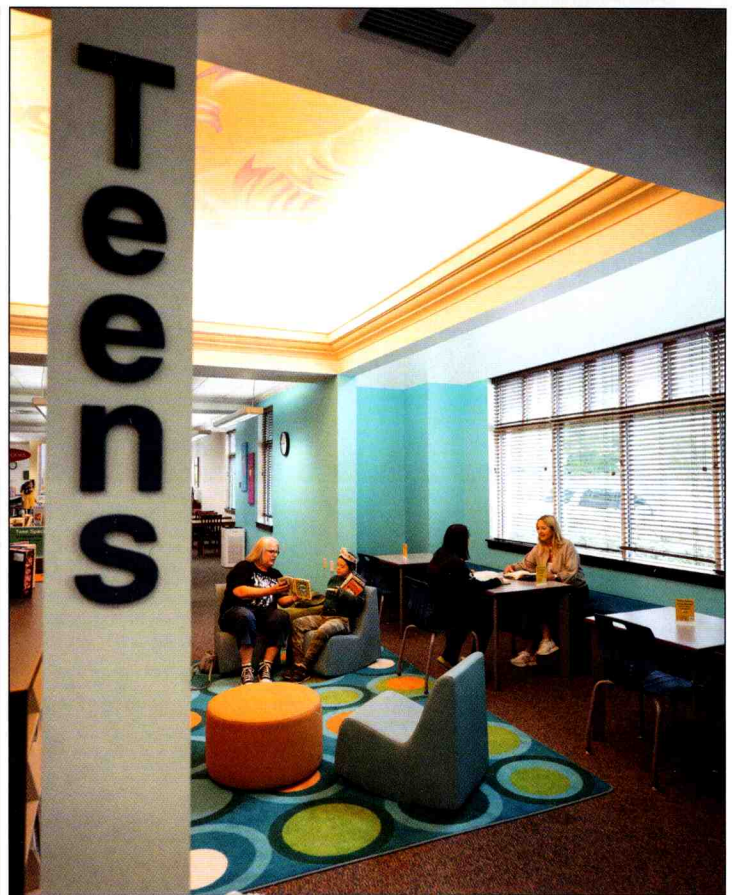
2023 \$2,000
2024 \$2,300
2025 \$2,500

Programs and Events -

\$164,000
2022 Library's 85th Anniversary Events \$5,000
2005-2025 Adult and All Ages Programs \$78,000
2005-2025 Children's and Teen Programs \$81,000

Special Projects - \$8,000

2022 "Phone" Booth \$5,000
2024 Starter Collection for Wonderbooks \$3,000



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