

Friends of the Alameda Free Library News

Spring 2026



Inside:

A Letter from our new President and Executive Director

How FAL raises and spends funds

Upcoming 2026 events

Volunteer Spotlight: Philip Barry

Visit us:

Books For Friends
Open Wed 12 - 6 pm
and Thu, Fri, Sat
12 - 4 pm

Books & Bites Cafe
Open Mon - Sat
12 - 4 pm

Join us:

Used Book Sale
Friends @ Home
Live @ the Library



*Our vision: To have a vibrant and relevant library that is the heart of our diverse Alameda Community.
Our mission: To raise funds and advocate for the success of the Alameda Free Library.*

An Introduction to FAL

When a nonprofit organization achieves its fiftieth year, as Friends of the Alameda Free Library (FAL) did in 2024, there is a significant reason to contemplate our organization's future. To fulfill FAL's mission to raise funds and advocate for the success of the Alameda Free Library (AFL), we have to consider protection of the written word as part of our indelible right to inform ourselves. FAL commits to working closely with the Library to remove barriers to information and allow for free access to all. For more than fifty years strong, Friends of the Alameda Free Library has raised funds to support the Library and its strategic plans.

FAL was originally formed in 1974 to raise funds for the construction of a new library to replace the Carnegie Library (which could no longer be occupied) that had opened in 1903 at a cost of \$35,000. FAL participated in several bond campaigns to fund construction of a new library and after a number of unsuccessful attempts, Measure O was approved in 2000. In partnership with FAL, over \$26.1M was raised to construct and open the new building. The new building, the Main Library at 1550 Oak Street, opened in 2006. In addition, both the Bay Farm and West End Libraries received interior remodeling as a result of FAL's fundraising efforts. Also, Books & Bites Cafe, a FAL volunteer-run space inside the Main Library that offers local baked goods, coffee, tea and other beverages, found a permanent home there. In 2026, the Main Library celebrates its twentieth birthday.

The Alameda Used Book Sale relies heavily on long-term, dedicated volunteers that work throughout the year to recirculate loved books back into the community, all to benefit the Library. In March 2022, FAL expanded its book reselling efforts with the opening of Books For Friends, a permanent used bookshop located inside the Main Library. Year-round, shoppers can purchase curated, high-quality offerings at intentionally low prices, to support the AFL.

FAL is managed by a passionate volunteer board, currently composed of twelve members and an Executive Director, and is supported by more than one hundred volunteers. When issues affecting the AFL are considered by the city, county or federal government, FAL advocates for the library through letters, phone calls and testimony. In May 2025, during the City's biennial budget process, FAL's most recent advocacy efforts led to the approval of additional staff on-site at the Library, including a full-time clinical social work professional.

The funds that FAL generates through the Alameda Used Book Sales, Books For Friends, the Books & Bites Cafe, community grants and gifts from generous donors support outstanding library programs and digital resources. FAL invites you to attend our Friends @ Home program series, offering free virtual and in-person docent and author talks, or Live @ the Library, a ticketed live music concert series in the evenings. You may get involved by signing up for our monthly e-newsletter, volunteering your time and/or expertise or making a donation to FAL. Please visit our website alamedafriends.com to learn about all the ways to connect with us to support the Alameda Free Library.

We will meet you at the library!



Josh Dapkus
FAL President



Marcie Soslau Johnson
FAL Executive Director



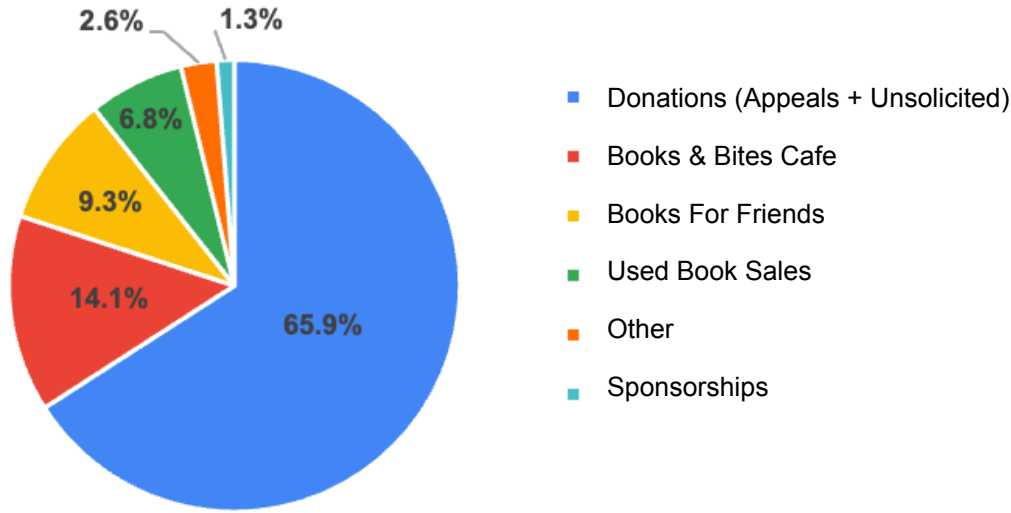
Karen Butter
Outgoing President

FAL 2025 Financial Information

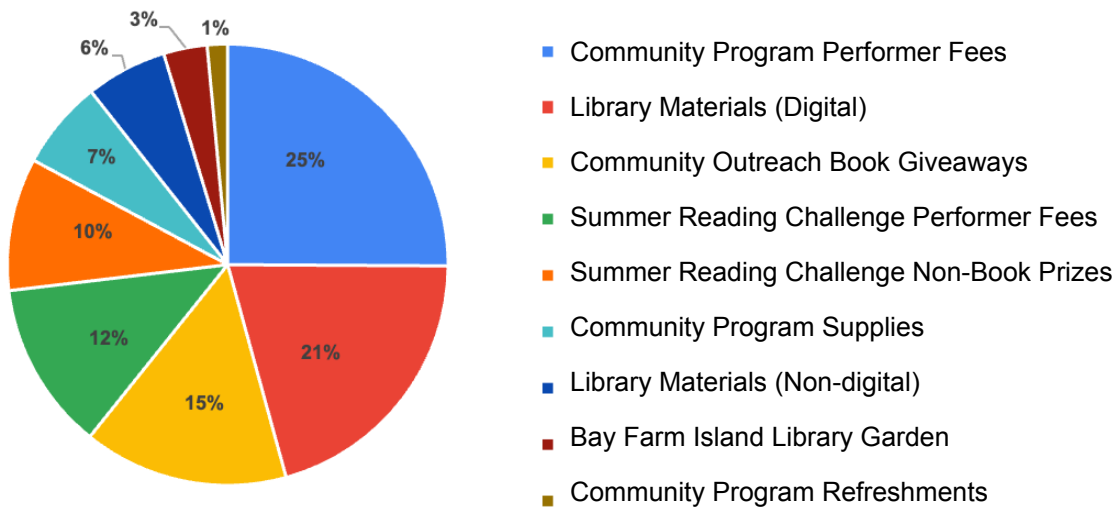
The top pie chart represents FAL's sources of gross income. The disbursement amount is requested by the Library Director annually, approved by the FAL Board of Directors and spent as discretionary funds. The second pie chart represents Alameda Free Library's expenditures of FAL funds for year 2025.

For more financial details, please visit: <https://alamedafriends.com/fal-form-990-tax-filings/>

FAL's Gross Income Sources, 2025



Alameda Free Library's Expenditures of FAL Funding, 2025



2026 Upcoming Events

March

- March 11: Friends @ Home | Japanese Arts
- March 14: Volunteer Appreciation Event
- March 28: Live @ the Library | Tammy Hall



April

- Apr 11: Live @ the Library | Mads Tolling
- Apr 15: Friends @ Home | Monet & Venice



May

- May 11: Docent Talk | Matisse
- May 13-16: Alameda Used Book Sale
- May 14: Docent Talk | Matisse
- May 30: Author Talk | Alka Joshi



July

- July 4: Fourth of July Parade Walk



September

- September 4: Corica Park Night Out

October

- October 14-17: Alameda Used Book Sale

Sign up here for our monthly newsletter & weekly event updates!



2025 Donors

\$0-124 (231 DONORS)

Jean Abbe
Amy & Ken Aguon
Sharon Anderegg
Deirdre Araujo, in tribute to the Friends Cafe
Rina & Richard Austin
Jennifer & Paul Ayres
Cathy Baker
Sonia Baur
Carol Beaver
Sandra Berger
Michelle Berkovich
Rachel Bird
Shirin Black
David Bratzler
Bright Funds
Margaret Brogan
Linda & John Brooks
Carol Brotman White, *in memory of Donna Vaughn*
Donna Brown
Lauren Brown
Kevis Brownson
Candace & Peter Burns
Pat Butensky
Sue & Clyde Capps
Kris Carey
Linda & Robert Carloni
Helga Carlson
Allwyn Carvalho
Eric Case
Roselyn Caselli
Linda Castellani
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Philip Chang
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Tanya Wodinsky
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Helene Young
Felice Zensius
Jeannette & John Zugnoni
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2025 Donors

\$125-\$499

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Anita & Robert Battle
Blanca Bell
Catherine Bierwith
Malyon Booth
Jessica Bosanko
Jean & John Brennan
Alan Chi & Serena Hom
Janice Cantu
Anonymous,

in Honor of Ann Casper & Mark Irons Casper

Katherine & Hugh Cavanaugh
Jane Chisaki, in memory of Bill Gibbs[1]
Paul Cho
Susan Correa
Anna Crane
Marilyn Dalisay Godfrey
Diane Deering
Marguerite & William Deichman
Margaret Dial
Judy & Roger Ecker
Susan Erdmann
Gloria Evans
Honorable Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Kumar Fanse
Robert & Elizabeth Farrar
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Delbert & Doris Gee
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Reyla Graber
Jan Greene
Mark D. Greenside
GreenwayGolf
Fallan Groth
Hilary Gutman
David & Veronica Hall
Meleah Hall
Hollis Harris
Michael Hartigan
Andrea Helmbolt
Gretchen Herbkersman
Emily Hill
C.J. Hirschfield
Eve Holguin
Burritt Hubbard

Family & Friends of Alice Huie
Judy Jacobs
Philip Johnson
Thomas E. Kail
Barbara Kennedy-Dalder
Karen Kenney
Erica Kesel & Heath Wickline

Christine Klem
Constance Kozlowski
Mary Lancot
Charles Landecker & Judy Udell
Eddy Lehrner
Evelyne & David Lennette
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Daveena MA
Mary & Jim Manning
Ruth Mesing
Karen Miller
Kaytee Miller
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Mykael Moss
Douglas Neu
Susan Obrien
Lynn Oveson
Ruth Palmer
Laurel Pantel
Tucker Peck
Christina & Tony Poggio
Robert & Rochelle Pola
Carolyn & Richard Pounds
Tina & Bob Presta
Rochelle Reed
Shannon Reese
Emily Regnier
Debbi & Billy Reinschmiedt
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Joanne Robinson
Elizabeth Rogers
Marishka Rosinski
Gayle Saldinger
Josephine Sam
Sharon Schainker
Joanne Schneider
Linda G. Schowalter
Merek Siu
Renata Frey & Erich Stiger
Timothy Stowe
Ann Sy
Connie & William Sylte
Marilyn & James Tham
James Thomas
Tiffany Treece
Meg Valentine
Stephen Van Meter
The Family of Donna Vaughn
Kris Venturini
Linda & Ronald Walker
Kenneth Werner
Emily Wilson
Cynthia Wood
Anonymous (10)

\$500-\$999

Alameda Municipal Power
Beverly Blatt
Luzanne Engh, in recognition of Karen Butter's
service to FAL
Linda Felts
Sue Greenspan
Karen Haines, *in memory of Donna Vaughn*
Patti & Glenn Itano

Stephen & Marcie Soslau Johnson
John Keel
Erica Kesel
Stephen Kofman
Barbara Krummel
Marc Lambert
Stephanie Lipow
Eric Lloyd
Allan Mann
Michael Marx
Therry Olken
Ted Lee Owyang
Jarvis & Ron Pahl
Kate Rome
Holly & Geoffrey Sylvester
Jean Wolslegel
Anonymous (2)

\$1,000-\$4,999

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Alameda Welfare Council
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William Boller
Marian Breitbart
Suzanne & Italo Calpestri
The Cunningham Trust
Marnie Curry
Hazel Dolio Tag-At
Marie & Greg Dunford
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Mary Ann Munro
Natalie Porter
Beth Sibley
Martha Siegel
Thomas Simonson
Josee Smith
Joanne Takata
Linda Thurston
Anonymous (3)

\$5,000-\$9,999

Lina Au
Karen Austin, *in recognition of*
Carole Robie's service to FAL
Karen Butter
Louis Calvert
The Estate of Bill Gibbs
Denine Keltner
R. David & Donna Little
Andrew Robert & Hannah Lee
Carole Robie

\$10,000+

The Muchmore Trust
Steve Silberstein
Anonymous (1)

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: THE BOOKISH JOURNEY OF PHILIP BARRY

FAL would like to express its deepest gratitude toward Philip Barry. Describing Philip as a vital FAL volunteer doesn't quite capture the impact he has on the organization and the community. Philip was integral to the creation of FAL's used bookshop, Books For Friends (BFF) and its ongoing success. Philip has worked tirelessly to ensure a selection of high-quality books, manning shifts during retail hours and providing excellent customer service.

Philip Barry has always been a reader. In 1969, Philip moved from Queens, New York where he had lived his whole life, to Greenwich Village where he was introduced to independent book shop culture. After traveling back and forth Kerouac-style from New York to the Bay several times and picking up retail work at Woolworth's in NYC to Odyssey Records in Berkeley, Philip found himself working for Shambala Booksellers. After reading Michael Phillips' *Seven Laws of Money*, Philip began to consider living a less nomadic life that would be more conducive to community-building. Philip became the manager, then partner by the early 1990s, and ultimately full owner. In 2003, Philip sold the lease to the shop and began working at both Moe's Books and Cody's Books. But then circumstances converged, leading to his move to Reno where he worked for Sundance Books and Music and Grassroots Books.




After almost thirteen years in Reno, Philip relocated to Alameda in 2019. He came at the request of Janet Terra, his now wife (and BFF volunteer), whom he worked with at Kaufman's Fabric Land years before. Janet had searched for Philip and found him as the listed consigner for Sundance. He began to volunteer at The Bookmark Bookstore (the used bookshop run by the Friends of the Oakland Public Library). Philip eventually reached out to FAL to learn about our used book sale operations and met with now-Executive Director Marcie Soslau Johnson and sorting volunteer Heather Zaks to discuss the possibility of opening a used book store at the Main Library, in the room where FAL accepted book donations. With the full support of the Library Director and a small team of dedicated volunteers, Books For Friends became a reality with Philip taking on the roles of curator and shop keeper. In the almost four years that BFF has been in operation, Philip has leveraged his relationships with local and far-flung independent bookshop owners and purveyors to help circulate books and place them in the hands of individual readers. Over time, Philip has formed new relationships with regular customers and volunteers. There is nothing more satisfying to Philip than matching a book to a reader or helping to expand a customer's literary knowledge. Philip's ability to recall a book and match it to the perfect person is what makes Books For Friends special.

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

 **43,480**
books donated by
388 donors 

6444
Volunteer hours worked by
118 people! 

 **349** volunteer hours
per used book sale

Q: What first attracted you to volunteer with FAL?

PB: The used book sale; Sundance Books and Music in Reno had a used book section that was small, but very lucrative.

Q: What was the biggest surprise in launching BFF in March 2022?

PB: Number and quality of book donations.

Q: What are you most proud of in your work with leading BFF?

PB: People who shop here really seem to enjoy it, appreciate it and are very complimentary.

Q: Share with us some of your favorite books or authors. We're always looking for recommendations!

PB: *On Tyranny* by Timothy Synder, *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius, and Buddhist books, contemplative, monkish choices.

Q: What's next for you in your literary or non-literary journey?

PB: Clear the floor in the small room of our apartment that holds my current book collection, which I've been trying to sell since leaving Reno and moving to Alameda! I also plan to write vignettes of my life so that my son may know me better.

FAL can't thank Philip Barry enough for the time, energy and heart that he has invested in BFF.

Friends
of the
Alameda
Free Library

Friends of the Alameda Free Library
P.O. Box 1024
Alameda, CA 94501

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or visit <https://bitt.ly/73xuzt>



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