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Friends of JMRL Selected for Award from Virginia Library Association

CHARLOTTESVILLE, August 18, 2023 – JMRL is pleased to announce that the **Friends of JMRL** have been selected to receive the 2023 Friends of the Library Award from the Virginia Library Association (VLA). The award is presented to a Friends of the Library group in recognition of distinguished service to libraries in Virginia.

The Friends of the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library (JMRL) serve the people of Charlottesville, Albemarle, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson by raising funds to support the library's mission and values. For more than 50 years the Friends of JMRL have held one of the most successful library book sales in Virginia, and in FY24 the Friends have budgeted \$158,000 to support library programming at JMRL.

"This recognition is a real testament to the Friends of the Library staff and volunteers who make our book sales such a success," said Proal Heartwell, board president for the Friends of JMRL. "The collaboration between JMRL and the Friends is such a valuable community partnership for the book-loving public we serve."

"JMRL would never be able to offer the programming that it does to the people of Albemarle, Charlottesville, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson without the tremendous support of the Friends of the Jefferson Madison Regional Library," said Library Director David Plunkett.

JMRL's Friends of the Library have supported the regional library system for decades. Since the 1970's annual book sales in the basement of the Gordon Avenue Library in Charlottesville have supported JMRL programming. When the pandemic hit, the Friends held pop-up "buy a bag of books" drive-through sales, where people paid \$5 for five randomly selected books in the genre of their choice.

Post-pandemic, the Friends moved the annual sale to Albemarle Square shopping center in Charlottesville, former home of JMRL's Northside Library. The community responded with great enthusiasm. The Spring 2023 event set records with 5,526 individual sales and \$149,317 in donations to JMRL. The Fall 2023 book sale is planned for October 7-15.

Other Friends programs include the Books Behind Bars program, which donates reading materials to incarcerated individuals statewide, and Laundromat Libraries to support literacy in the community.