



2023 ANNUAL REPORT – JUNE 30, 2022 TO JULY 1, 2023

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Board of Directors

Jerry Syslo	President and Events Co-Chair
Elizabeth McInerney	Vice President and Events Co-Chair
Beth Summers	Secretary
Marc Chauche	Treasurer
Kathleen Doig	Education Chair
Jeff Koterba	Membership Chair and Café et Conversation Liaison
Marty Skomal	Fundraising Chair
Amélie Raoul	French Film Chair

Committee Chairs

Denise Arnold	Désir de Lire Chair
Anne Baxter	Apéro Chair
Mitzi Friedman	Student Scholarships and Teacher Resource Grants Chair
Jean Hanson	Database Chair
Christine Kluka	Website Chair
Erin Leger	Email Chair
Miranda McQuillan	Social Media Chair
Sue Mehal	Finance Chair

Ex-Officio Board

Bernie Duhaime	Past President and Sister City Liaison
Cédric Fichépain	French Honorary Consul
Anne Marie Kenny	Past President
Holly Richmond	Immediate Past President

Other Positions

Ghaida Alsalami	French Instructor
Linda Gjere	French Instructor
Nelly Hinnawi	French Instructor
Bonodji Nako	French Instructor
Colleen Sariscsany	Teacher Resource Grants Administrator
Krissy Stiles	Lead French Instructor
Nancy VanderBosch	French Instructor

SUMMARY

Throughout the year, the leadership team worked very hard with a high degree of engagement and professionalism to support the organization. We forged new partnerships, enhanced existing relationships, produced new events, worked on internal efficiencies and expanded our community outreach. Meanwhile, we continued to deliver on our established programs like French language classes and student scholarships.

Our highest-profile activity was undoubtedly our efforts to welcome Omaha's newest Sister City, Isigny-Omaha Intercom, a region in Normandy. AFO member Bernie Duhaime co-chaired a joint committee between AFO and Omaha Sister Cities Association to orchestrate a series of events, tours and dinners to formalize and celebrate the new relationship.

Overall, we ended the year on a positive note by most measures while making very good progress on our longer-term goals and objectives. We continue to look for ways to improve by demonstrating value and meeting the needs of our members.

BOARD CHANGES

Four board members are retiring as of the July 2023 annual meeting. They are all to be commended for their time and talents given to AFO:

Marc Chauche	Treasurer
Amélie Raoul	French Film Chair
Marty Skomal	Fundraising Chair
Beth Summers	Secretary

FINANCE

Our **financial position** is strong. We have reserves that could cover operating costs for two years if needed. Our annual internal audit found no material discrepancies.

To better support the board's fiduciary responsibilities, we've adopted the following **financial guidelines** to help analyze and assess our cash flows:

- Membership dues should offset our operating expenses.
- Our year-end appeal for donations should fund our scholarships and teacher grants
- Ticket prices for events should be set to offset our projected event expenses. If needed, we will solicit donations to make sure an event will break even.
- Tuition for French classes should offset our teaching expenses and provide a margin to help fund our general long-term goals.

Our 2022 results closely followed these guidelines. To address some minor shortfalls, we've already identified some expense savings for this year.

EVENTS

Managed by Elizabeth McInerney, our events were a wonderful mix of social, cultural and educational opportunities. In addition to **eight member events**, there were **five collaborations** with community partners, which gave us exposure to hundreds of people beyond our membership.

A total of 499 event tickets were sold on our website. Not included is the number of attendees for four of the five collaborations. Filmstreams directly sold all of the tickets for the two sold-out film events. Admission was free for both the One Community Cultural Festival and the Black Elk Celebration of Nations. Hundreds of people attended each event.

July 10, 2022	Bastille Day Picnic chez Marc Chauche
September 18, 2022	One Community Cultural Festival at Stinson Park; a collaboration with the Nebraska Chinese Association, coordinated by Anne Marie Kenny and Holly Richmond.
October 2, 2022	Bienvenu Celebration chez Carol Lydiatt
October 16, 2022	French Politics Today with Jody Neathery-Castro at Field Club
November 9, 2022	Van Gogh – Sold out film event, a collaboration with Film Streams and the Omaha Symphony
November 20, 2022	Beaujolais Wines at Blackstone Corkscrew
December 11, 2022	Fête de Fin d'Année at Le Voltaire
January 12, 2023	Scholarship and Teacher Grant Awards at Field Club with a presentation by April Hawkins
March 10, 2023	Les Misérables at the Orpheum Theater
March 30, 2023	Black Elk Celebration of Nations, a collaboration with Sister Cities, held at Black Elk Elementary School.
April 21, 2023	Chevalier – Sold out film event, a collaboration with Film Streams and KVO
May 19, 2023	Gala Reception and Dinner, a collaboration with Omaha Sister Cities to welcome Omaha's newest Sister City, Isigny-Omaha Intercom, a region in Normandy.
June 19, 2023	Seminar in History and Politics – Part One, with John Jordan at Field Club.

MEMBERSHIP

We've added **over 50 new members** in the past twelve months. Our total number of current members has remained constant around 250. Total revenue from membership dues increased by over 7%.

In 2023, we increased membership dues for the first time since at least 2016 to put us more in-line with other AF's of similar size. We created a new category, Household, to replace two other categories, Family and Couple.

When new members answered how they heard of AFO, the most common reply was from a friend, colleague or family member. The second most common reply was a Google search.

The other important referral source for new members continues to be our association with the Café et Conversation group. Between AFO and C&C, the Omaha community has a weekly French language meet-up throughout the year, where members of either group can practice their French in a relaxed, social environment.

PLANNING

At a separate **planning meeting** in January 2023, the board recommended a set of shared values which we believe are held by our membership. Over time, we plan to incorporate these values in our communications and collateral:

Alliance Française Omaha's **shared values**:

- Personal development (Lifelong learning)
- Fraternity (Importance of social connections)
- Community (Connections to other groups within our city)
- Stewardship (Support for a cultural institution)

At that same meeting, the board agreed to prioritize the following **special projects** for 2023:

- Leadership – succession process, training
- Technology – database integration, website upgrade
- Marketing – key messages, strategies, budget
- Fundraising – purpose, strategies, donor relations

These special projects are being worked in addition to our existing programs.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS AND TEACHER GRANTS

These two programs, chaired by Mitzi Friedman and supported by Colleen Sariscsany, awarded a total of \$4,430 in the past twelve months. We had decided that our year-end appeal would be for the sole purpose of funding these programs and we raised just over \$5,000 during that campaign.

FRENCH CLASSES

Our French language school, chaired by Kathleen Doig, continue to be our largest recurring source of revenue. Almost all of our classes continue to be offered via Zoom, which was the preferred method identified in a student survey last year. We hope to offer some in-person classes this fall and plan to survey our students again this year to see if opinions have changed.

AFO French Classes	July 2022 thru June 2023	Change from prior year
Revenue from tuition	\$24,234	Up 1%
Total number of classes	26	No change
Total number of class registrations	218	Down 14%

We have raised tuition rates the past two years to recover from steep discounts offered at the start of the pandemic in 2020 and expect to make more changes this fall.

Tuition Rates by Year: Standard 10-week class	Member rate	Non-member rate
2011 through 2019	\$200	\$225
2020	\$90	\$100
2021	\$125	\$150
2022	\$165	\$200

Respectfully submitted, Jerry Syslo, Président, July 9, 2023