

OWLS Take Flight: Outreach to Senior Communities

The Central Rappahannock Regional Library

Purpose of Lobby Stops and OWLS Program:

- Supply services that residents of senior communities might not otherwise have the chance to receive
- Present educational/informational opportunities
- Engage seniors by providing a connection to the community and an opportunity to socialize

What We Learned From Planning A Senior Program:

- Make sure your library administration is behind the program you are creating
- Involve your seniors from the beginning, both when naming the program and when gathering ideas for topics
- Have colleagues, who are not involved in the project, look over your plan to provide objective input from other perspectives
- Cultivate good relationships with senior community activity directors
- Find colleagues to work with that complement each other and love working with seniors
- Always have more activities planned than you think you will need
- Leave a little time at the end just to chat one-on-one with the residents
- BE FLEXIBLE -- not just during the program but also regarding external factors

OWLS (Our World: Lives Shared) Basic Program Outline:

- Introduce ourselves and the topic
- Discuss people, places, things, and events related to the topic while showing or passing around pictures, objects, or memorabilia -- let the conversation go in whatever direction the participants' interests lie (have plenty of questions on hand to get the conversation started and ideas planned to keep the discussion going)
- Initiate a sing-along and make sure to pass out lyrics in large print -- some participants may even want to dance
- Plan games or activities such as bingo, trivia, word searches, or crossword puzzles
- Supply a cart of books, CDs, and DVDs related to the topic that residents can check out

Our Starting Point:

Bi-Folkal Kits

Bi-Folkal Productions

<http://www.bifolkal.org/>

Retiring in January 2016!

Check out the archived newsletters on their site for ideas.

Remember: We used Bi-Folkal kits as a starting point because we had access to them. However, you don't need a kit -- you can just as easily do this on your own for no cost!

Tips for Doing This on Your Own:

Topics

- Look at reminisce.com for ideas.
- What area is your library strong in? Do you have a lot of information on farming, carnivals, etc.?
- What is your area known for? For example, if your area is on the shore, the seniors in your community might be interested in fishing or life by the shore.
- Poll some seniors that you know, or check with the activity director. What kinds of topics are they interested in?
- Try a "Virtual Field Trip"--Music, food, costumes, culture of another country.
- Look up activities for memory care or independent living residents for ideas. Adjust to your needs.

Planning the talk

- Use what you have in your library...music, maps, videos, etc. (double-check copyright for this)
- For props...what do you have in your basement? Check with friends and coworkers to see if anyone has anything interesting you can borrow.
- Create a word search or crossword to hand out using Puzzlemaker.

Audio/Visual

- Look for photos on American Memory or Virginia Memory.
- Find photos in a book to pass around.
- Find audio clips online (American Memory has some) or use the cds that your library owns.

Resources:

Reminisce Magazine-

reminisce.com

Website to accompany the print nostalgia magazine.

American Memory

memory.loc.gov

The digital collections from the Library of Congress.

Virginia Memory

viriniamemory.com

The digital archives of the Library of Virginia.

Recharging Retirees

rechargingretirees.blogspot.com

A blog with programming ideas for activity directors in independent living facilities.

Puzzlemaker

puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com

Make a crossword puzzle or word search.

Ohio Library Council, Outreach and Special Services Division: Elderberries

olc.org/OutreachElderberries.php?RedirectCheck=1

From the Ohio Library Council's Outreach and Special Services Division, this publication gives lots of ideas for programming for older adults, whether in the library or Outreach.

ElderSong Publications

eldersong.com/

Distributor of books, DVDS, CDS, and more, filled with creative activities for older adults. Check out the Activity Ideas Blog for more ideas (blog.eldersong.com/).

Let's Continue the Discussion:

Outreach to Senior Communities Discussion Board

<https://sites.google.com/a/crrl.org/senior-outreach/>

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