

## FOCUS ON COMMUNITY: BRINGING LIBRARY OUTREACH SERVICES TO SENIORS



The Farmington Community Library provides services to older adults in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, independent living facilities and to individuals unable to get transportation to the Library. Over twenty five facilities receive these services.

These services include book deliveries for deposit collections, non- deposit collections, monthly book clubs, senior stories, memoir writing, Book Buddy visits and computer classes.

Today I am going to talk about how book deliveries, programming, computer classes can all be done with one full time Librarian and a dedicated core of volunteers.

You will hear about the kinds of programs we do at the Farmington Community Library for older adults in the various living arrangements, i.e. independent living, assisted living, nursing homes, and homebound individuals.

Before I talk about programming, I would like to tell you about volunteer recruitment and retention.

Many of my volunteers are recruited through our Library paper, InfoExchange. Once they begin volunteering, many will say that they have friends that would like to also volunteer. I don't seem to have any problems keeping volunteers. When someone has to leave, either they are going back to their home country, going back to work, moving or other reasons, a friend of theirs will join the core of volunteers. Our Library also recognizes volunteers twice a year with a volunteer appreciation luncheon and a holiday tea in the winter. I always let my volunteers know how much I appreciate them. I will give them little tokens of appreciation once in awhile in addition to always letting them know how much I like them.

Volunteers assist me every day. Some of them help with the delivery of books, others read stories to older adults, and others are Book Buddies to one or two individuals who are unable to visit our Library. This has proved to be a very rewarding way to deliver books to the homebound and those living in senior facilities that need a little extra attention and friendship.

**Outreach Services at the Farmington Community Library offers:**

Delivery of books to deposit sites and non-deposit sites, in both large print, regular print and other media as requested by residents and activity directors.

A series of classes on learning about the internet. These are six week classes that continually run, are free and residents can drop in on a class or classes at any time, repeating as many times as necessary.

Book discussion groups at some of the sites we provide service to.

Thematic programming on famous people, art, and music. We also have Remember When programs, use the Bi-Folkal kits, read stories to groups and have sing alongs.

Memoir writing groups.

Book Buddies deliver books and friendly visits to homebound residents and other individuals who may need some personal attention.

Working as an Outreach Services Librarian for older adults is very rewarding. There are many very interesting older adults that have done much with their lives and have quite interesting stories to share. Others are just remarkable people in their own quiet way. They look forward to the monthly visits from our Library; whether it is delivering books, presenting a program or just a nice friendly visit with books to share. Each visit is important because it is making a difference in someone's life and as an Outreach librarian, you are sometimes their window to the world.