



COMMENTARY/LETTERS, LIBRARY

Commentary: Dementia Friendly at the Southington Library

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The Dementia Friendly initiative has been going strong in Southington for quite some time. Most of you are probably familiar with their mission to change the way people in Southington think, act, and talk about dementia.

The Southington Public Library, striving to provide quality service to all members of our community, has made many steps towards being a Dementia Friendly organization in the past year, including ensuring nearly all our staff have going through the info sessions. We are hoping for library specific training for all staff in early fall. Recently, the library began three exciting programs that we hope will benefit those experiencing cognitive change.

“Take Me Back Totes” are borrowable kits filled with items to encourage conversation and reminiscing for people experiencing cognitive change or who have dementia. Designed to be used with caretakers and their loved ones, each tote contains a variety of multi-sensory items, including conversation cards, DVDs, CDs, tactile

objects, and books. Some of the themes available are the 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s, and cooking and baking. More will be coming soon. These kits can be found in bright red bags in between the reference desk and café area. Also in this area will be a growing collection of resources for persons living with dementia and their caregivers.

Another exciting program is a monthly memory café, open to the public, and held on the second Tuesday of the month. Memory cafés are social events for family members and individuals experiencing cognitive changes from Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia. Each café is different, but the goals for the memory café at the

Southington Public Library are friendship and fun. We strive to provide a welcoming atmosphere where library patrons will feel comfortable meeting with others who can relate to their experiences.

At the first café in June, 14 people attended for light refreshments, conversation and activities themed around gardening. Each participant left with a newly potted flower to help them recall the good time had at the Southington library. The next memory café will be held on Tuesday, July 9, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Registration is encouraged but not required. This program is not intended for unaccompanied persons with significant care needs; attendance with a family member, friend, or caregiver is encouraged.



Finally, the Southington Public Library is proud to introduce “Dementia Friendly” library cards, which will provide longer loan periods on all materials except new items. Patrons with cognitive change will have an appropriate amount time to enjoy the resources borrowed from the library. To utilize this card please speak with the circulation staff and convey that you or a loved one is experiencing cognitive change or has dementia.

Dementia Friendly Southington is made possible by generous support from The Barnes Memorial Trust at the Main Street Community Foundation. Southington Public Library’s memory cafés are sponsored by LiveWell Dementia Specialists. For more information on these services, please contact Elizabeth Chubet at 860-628-0947 or chubete@southington.org.

Kristi Sadowski is the director of the Southington Public Library. To learn more, visit them at www.SouthingtonLibrary.com.

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