

Libraries are community spaces for older adults

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FULL TEXT

Beyond the stacks, public libraries have always been community spaces, creating an ideal environment to provide valuable programs and services for all individuals.

As with every age, older adults face new challenges each day. Libraries in the Fox Cities create opportunities and offer resources aimed to teach, support, engage and inspire those individuals in our communities.

Libraries in the Fox Cities not only provide access to important resources, but go a step further, offering instruction through programs and reference librarians. Older adults benefit from having a familiar, accessible place to seek out resources, ask questions and learn new ideas.

Tax assistance becomes less daunting when the appointment is scheduled right next to a familiar shelf of mystery books. Library patrons can feel comfortable asking for help with everything from setting up an email account to avoiding online scams.

Librarians are available to assist with navigating the technology required to complete many daily tasks. After all, everyone is curious to know how Snapchat really works and the library can help. Other services include free tax assistance sponsored by AARP, monthly legal clinics, computer and Wi-Fi access, genealogy research assistance, book club services, home delivery of library materials and outreach programs to assisted living facilities.

Many older adults incorporate the library into their everyday routines. It is an accessible space to connect with others in the community and seek out information. A movie at the library is the perfect way to break up a long afternoon, popcorn included! Workshops and discussions offer insight into current technology and trending topics. Concerts are a fantastic chance to experience live music in an unrestricted venue.

A new hobby is right around the corner with knitting groups, ukulele classes, seminars with a Master Gardener or open chess night. Library programs are an excellent way for older adults to stay active and engage with individuals of all ages in the community.

Collaboration with local organizations is a wonderful opportunity to share resources and create programs.

Working with local historical societies and museums, libraries feature programs that provide insight into historical events and current topics. Experts from local businesses and universities present programs on a variety of topics, from antique appraisal to balancing a monthly budget.

Introduction to Medicare presentations are hosted at libraries with the Aging and Disability Resource Center. Libraries host Memory Cafés with the Fox Valley Memory Project for individuals experiencing early stage dementia, mild memory loss or cognitive impairment. It is a great opportunity for lively discussions, creative projects and

support from gerontology professionals.

Libraries in the Fox Cities will continue to offer resources, instruction, programs and services that will grow with the needs of our communities and benefit individuals during every stage of life.

Upcoming library events:

Appleton Public Library: 10 a.m. March 3, Outagamie County Master Gardeners Seminar. apl.org

Menasha Public Library: 7 p.m. March 14, Night of Irish Music. menashalibrary.org

Kaukauna Public Library: 2 p.m. March 12, Fox Valley Memory Café. kaukaunalibrary.org

Neenah Public Library: 7 p.m. March 15, Planning a City- The Story of Neenah's Planning History. neenahlibrary.org

Meghan Odegard is an adult services librarian at the Neenah Public Library. Librarians from around the Fox Cities write monthly columns about area libraries and their services.

Meghan Odegard

Guest columnist

DETAILS

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