Memory Café

Shrewsbury Public Library

Adults

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Intergenerational

Memory Café

Mar 1, 2017

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Byline

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A Memory Café is a gathering space for people with Alzheimer’s disease and their care partners to get together, socialize and enjoy a relaxing afternoon. These gatherings are held in venues across the country and provide a safe, comfortable, supportive space for people to listen to music, play games or just be together.

Our Memory Café meets on the first and third Friday of the month from 2 to 4 p.m. We provide refreshments and plan some recreational activities. We launched the program at our library in October 2016 and plan to continue it for at least two years, as it is supported by a grant.

Advanced Planning

Librarians often witness older patrons and longtime visitors being forced to give up habits of regular library visits due to dementia issues. We decided to apply for a grant to offer a program for this population.

We started researching Memory Cafés before applying for the grant (a two-year, $10,000 Library Services and Technology Act grant administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners). We visited other Memory Cafés in the area (none in a library) and started discussions with the local Council on Aging and area nursing homes to assess the need for this type of service.

The local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association was very helpful, and a professional from the organization came to the library to do a workshop on the subject. It was open to both the staff and the public. Library staff also attended a workshop at a nursing home on the topic of interacting with dementia patients. The director and assistant director of the library drafted the grant application and created a job description for a coordinator for the Memory Café.

Marketing

After the grant was secured, we sent out a press release that was published in local print and online publications such as The Shrewsbury Lantern.

Our quarterly print newsletter is mailed to over 14,000 homes, and our electronic mailing list reaches over 1,000 patrons; both of them contained information about this new project. Fliers were mailed to nursing homes, the senior center and assisted living centers that are visited by our outreach librarian.

The Memory Café's meeting time is also listed in a directory of Memory Cafés from the Jewish Family & Children's Service.

Budgeting

Grant funds will be used to pay a coordinator to run the program, purchase memory kits, books, DVDs, puzzles and other materials from the Alzheimer's Store, and engage performers, such as musicians and artists, to help with recreational activities. Volunteers from the local veterinary school have promised to bring therapy dogs to some of the meetings.

Librarians can invite community members to share their talents pro bono. An a cappella group performed at our Memory Café without charging a fee.

Day-of-event Activity

The meeting room has to be set up with tables and chairs, refreshments laid out, name tags and markers have to be kept ready, and, if there's a performer/musician, whatever they need has to be handled. We have not faced any unexpected challenges, and one staff member or custodian can set up the room.

Program Execution

The attendance numbers have varied from two to twelve. We have to be very flexible and go with the flow. The caregivers have expressed appreciation for the program, and everyone seems to love musical performances!

It's too early to evaluate the program, though, as we've had only half a dozen meetings. As more people hear of the program, and with spring around the corner, we hope that attendance and participation numbers will grow.

Advice

Assess the needs in your community and talk to people who work at senior care facilities; if you perceive a need, this is a great program to offer at the library. The Memory Café toolkit is available online, The Alzheimer's Association's website has a wealth of resources and, if you have a caring, dedicated staff, your program will be successful.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
memory_cafe_flyer.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



More Programs

Jan 19, 2017
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



Exploring Memory and the Brain with Kids

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Mar 19, 2015
Intergenerational+ | $
Image



Senior Expo

Audiences:

Intergenerational
Apr 24, 2015
Intergenerational+ | $
Image



Remember When StoryTime

Audiences:

Intergenerational