



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAREGIVER KITS AT HENRICO LIBRARIES CONNECT LOVED ONES WITH MEMORY DISORDERS THROUGH CONVERSATION, CREATIVITY

Henrico County Public Library is debuting a new type of item for checkout at its five Area Libraries to benefit people and families caring for loved ones with dementia and other memory-related disorders. Caregiver Kits, available now at Fairfield, Libbie Mill, Tuckahoe, Twin Hickory, and Varina libraries, are thematic backpacks filled with books, DVDs, discussion questions, or music CDs. The kits are designed to stimulate memory and conversation using familiar themes and objects for those experiencing memory loss.

Reminiscing and engaging with images, music, and sounds, as opposed to text, can help those with memory disorders find the words they wish to use in conversation more easily. The accompanying questions allow family and friends to encourage their loved ones to share stories and gain confidence in communicating with others. By revisiting the past through the items in Caregiver Kits, those with memory loss can have more meaningful conversations and connections in the present.

Jelisa Turner, Henrico County's Advocate for the Aging, believes Caregiver Kits can open up opportunities not just for conversation and connection, but creativity and improved quality of life. According to Turner, "the Kits give those caring for their family members with cognitive impairments the opportunity to engage creatively with their loved ones. Though we understand the kits won't be able to stop memory loss from occurring, this level of social connectivity can greatly improve the quality of life for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia."

Margaret Allbee, Programming Librarian at Henrico County Public Library, worked with Ms. Turner and library staff to create and assemble the kits. "I am really excited about the role these kits can play in helping family members reconnect with each other," Allbee said. "I hope they become starting points for making memories with their loved ones."

Kits have been designed around the following themes: Automobiles, Farm Life, Food and Cooking, Holidays, Pets, Richmond History, 1940s & 1950s, and 1960s & 1970s. Twenty Caregiver Kits are now available for a loan period of two weeks with the option to renew. While the kits reside at the County's five Area Libraries, patrons may request to have Caregiver Kits sent to their nearest Henrico County Public Library location for convenience.

For more information on this topic, contact Patricia Conway, Community Relations Coordinator for Henrico County Public Library: pconway@henricolibrary.org, (804)501-1906.

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