Services for Seniors and Baby Boomers

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Natrona County Public Library
Wyoming Library Association Conference
September 29, 2011
Service to seniors is part of Natrona County Public Library’s strategic plan, created in 2006:

“Serving the Growing Senior Population: Investigate methods to serve senior citizens in our community. Including ‘young-old’ (active seniors) and ‘older-old’ (homebound and those with limited mobility).”
Why Seniors and Boomers?

✶ The Baby Boomer generation (those born 1946-1964) are reaching retirement age.
✶ Casper’s central location, medical facilities, shopping, assisted living
✶ Boomer Study
How to Start?

- Senior Center
- Meals on Wheels
- Webinars, conference sessions
- Library “stars”
  - Senior Spaces, Old Bridge Public Library (NJ)
  - SeniorSpace, Cuyahoga County Library (OH)
- Senior Network and Adult Protection Groups
Successful Retirement

- Mental Fitness
- Social Interaction
- Health & Wellness
- Financial & Legal Stewardship
Programming - What Works?

- Introductory computer classes
- Wednesday Writers
- Genealogy programs
- Independent film series
- Book discussions
- Medicare Open Enrollment
- Digital photography classes
Programming - What Doesn’t?

✦ Crafty Afternoon
✦ Afternoon book chat
✦ Readalouds
✦ Local/western history
✦ Events for Older American’s Month
✦ Book discussion at the Senior Center
✦ “When I’m 64” – senior agencies panel discussion
Programming – Still to Try

- Cooking demonstrations, tastings
- Travelogue and meal
- Volunteer-led programming
- Current events/coffee klatch
- Blood pressure clinic
- Aging and spirituality
- Value of jewelry
- Intergenerational programming
Community Outreach – What Works?

- Boomer Study
- Senior Network and Adult Protection Groups
- Booths at senior-focused fairs
- Being “The Speaker” at meetings and events
- Chew & Chat at Senior Center
- Service organizations
Community Outreach – What Doesn’t?

- Senior Center board meetings
- Assisted living centers
- Meals on Wheels
Community Outreach – Still to Try?

- Better reader’s advisory
- Welcome Kit for new seniors
Library Services and Collections

- Books By Mail
- Welcoming, friendly assistance
- Large print, bestsellers, books on tape and CD, Playaways
- Opening earlier
- Bookmobile
Challenges

- Targeting promotional materials
- Generational differences
- Communication
- Technology
- How do you reach the widest audience?
- How do you know if you’re effective?
Benefits

- Support from seniors
- Increase opportunities for word-of-mouth marketing
- Direct-care professionals can help spread the word
- Important, growing demographic to serve
Your Turn

☆ What services or programs for seniors or Baby Boomers are successful at your library?
☆ What didn’t work?
☆ What would you like to try? If money and staff were not limited?
For Further Reading

- “Older Adults and Readers’ Advisory” by Alicia Ahlvers, May 9, 2011, Reference and User Services Quarterly
- *Boomers and Beyond: Reconsidering the Role of Libraries* by Pauline Rothstein and Diantha Dow Schull
- *5-Star Programming and Services for Your 55+ Library Customers* by Barbara T. Mates
Thank You

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