

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cumberland County Library System's Service to Adult Readers (STAR) Celebrates 35 Years of Service to Homebound Residents

Mechanicsburg, PA – Serving homebound residents since 1987, the Cumberland County Library System celebrates 35 years of Service to Adult Readers (STAR). Trained volunteers are partnered with homebound residents to discern their reading preferences, then select and deliver reading materials for them, and return materials to the library. Volunteers also maintain self-serve “mini libraries” in nursing homes and assisted living communities throughout the county, for residents who can't get to their local public library.

STAR volunteers develop longtime friendships and provide companionship to their patrons.

“I brought books to a homebound resident, Agnes Thompson. She described the books she liked, and I brought them to her, sometimes including some surprises the librarian helped me to choose. Two weeks later we would discuss what she had read. Five years of visits before she died in 1992 included much more than book talk, I learned she taught school in the 1920s, rode a donkey in the Grand Canyon, and taped her voice reading stories to mail to her grandchildren in Germany,” said Roberta Grace, Camp Hill STAR Volunteer.

STAR volunteers say that they get as much fulfillment from the experience than their patrons. “I am a retired librarian, grateful to be able to give back to people who need services the most. Previously, I selected and delivered materials to four homebound individuals at a local nursing home,” said Heidi Stadnicki.

STAR depends on its network of trained volunteers to provide direct services. These volunteers receive their training from the Library System's Adult Outreach Services Coordinator, who also maintains relationships with nursing homes and assisted living facilities that house self-serve mini libraries for their residents and oversees all aspects of the program.

In its 35-year history, more than 250 STAR program volunteers have served 400+ homebound residents. In its first year, 33 homebound residents were served by 10 trained volunteers, and there were 28 self-

serve mini libraries. Currently, there are 78 trained volunteers serving 72 homebound participants and self-serve mini libraries at 23 locations throughout the county.

Supplemental STAR funding for the purchase of large-print books is provided by individuals, foundations and organizations, and the Cumberland County Library System Foundation.

For more information about STAR – about volunteering, about receiving services, please visit cumberlandcountylibraries.org/STAR.

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The Cumberland County Library System is a federated library system consisting of seven member libraries, one branch facility, an administrative headquarters, and a non-profit foundation. Member libraries include Amelia S. Givin Free Library in Mt. Holly Springs, Bosler Memorial Library in Carlisle, Coy Public Library of Shippensburg, East Pennsboro Branch Library in Enola, Fredricksen Library in Camp Hill, John Graham Library in Newville, New Cumberland Public Library, and Simpson Library in Mechanicsburg.