

We've Only Just Begun: Learning and Leisure at the Sunnyvale Library

Origins of the Project

Sunnyvale's grant project to provide more programming for Baby Boomers first began in 2007, when Library staff were inspired by a three-day California State Library Institute, *Transforming Life After 50: Public Libraries and Baby Boomers*. After hearing about the possibilities and challenges for serving this population, we were excited to move forward with a project to focus on the diverse needs of Baby Boomers. The Baby Boomer group seemed an appropriate focus because residents in Sunnyvale have such varied backgrounds, needs and interests. Meanwhile, about one fourth of Sunnyvale residents fall into the baby boomer age range.

Research

As part of our preparation for the grant application, we completed a needs assessment of library users. We learned that Sunnyvale residents close to age 50 or older are curious about many topics, and have a desire to continue learning and pursuing leisure activities. Baby Boomers who completed a "library programming for adults" questionnaire were most interested in the following topics: the arts, lifelong learning, personal finance, health and wellness, technology, authors and books, home, environment, savvy consumer, and volunteering.

After conducting our research, the Sunnyvale Library staff created our project, calling it *We've Only Just Begun: Learning and Leisure*. We applied for, and received, grant funds from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), through the California State Library.

Plans for the Project

The goals that we plan to address with *We've Only Just Begun* are:

- 1) To offer life enrichment through extended learning opportunities, and;
- 2) To locate volunteers to share specific knowledge and experience with others in the community.

To offer learning opportunities, Library staff will plan several series of programs, dovetailing with interests expressed by Baby Boomers in Sunnyvale. (Of course, library users of all ages will be welcome to attend the events.) Experts will be engaged to present programs in broad subject series such as: Science (e.g. physics, chemistry of cooking), Health and Wellness (e.g. brain health, Advance Care Directives, physical and mental health), and Personal Finance (e.g. retirement, wills, Social Security).

Staff will also work with the city's Volunteer Resources Coordinator to establish and continue a Volunteer Speakers' Bureau. Volunteer speakers will be scheduled for public programs after a selection process.

The Advisory Committee has been established to help guide, facilitate, and publicize the *We've Only Just Begun* project. It is estimated that the Advisory Committee will meet twice during the course of the project. Advisory committee members will provide valuable insight, assistance and feedback as we move forward.

Although the Sunnyvale Public Library has offered programming for adults for several years, the *We've Only Just Begun* grant project will offer the opportunity to target the growing Baby Boomer segment of the population. With this grant, the library hopes to broaden our publicity techniques to reach many more and different organizations and individuals. Another facet of the project will be to continue to obtain feedback from the participants, and make changes throughout the year and after, to better satisfy potential program attendees.



We've Only Just Begun: Learning and Leisure. This program is supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) through the California State Library (CSL).

