

ORANJ SURVEY OF CCRC LIBRARIES
Summary Report – March 12, 2014
Originated by Fellowship Village Library Committee
Survey Manager: Anne Ryan, 908-660-9007

Introduction

The Fellowship Village 2013-14 Library Committee started their new fiscal year in September, 2013. Wanting to plan the coming year's activities, they researched the ORANJ archives to see if a library survey was available. The topic was discussed with members of the ORANJ Executive committee and it was concluded that an ORANJ library survey had not been carried out in the past.

In October, 2013 Anne Ryan, Chair of the Fellowship Village Library Committee created a draft proposal for a survey, including suggested questions. This was presented to the November 13 ORANJ Executive Committee meeting held at Harrogate. Ron Whalin, Northeast Region VP made the presentation. The recommendation was enthusiastically accepted. Comments on the draft helped identify improvements that could be made before the final survey was sent out.

The details of the survey were modified in November and by December 6, 2013 the survey and cover letter were ready to distribute to CCRCs in New Jersey. Many of the Residents Association Presidents were ending their terms in December so it was decided to release the survey before the new Presidents took office. Surveys were sent to CCRC RA Presidents and ORANJ Executive Committee members. They were sent two ways: emailed files and US Postal Service paper copies (with stamped self-addressed envelope for returning).

Surveys were returned as emailed MS-Word files and/or as US Postal Service delivered paper copies. In three cases, the survey was completed in a telephone interview. All 25 CCRCs responded to the survey. The final response was received January 17, 2014.

The census of residents in CCRCs surveyed range from 200 to 1900.

All CCRCs reported that they have libraries. All except three are operated totally by resident volunteers. One had a part-time paid librarian. Another CCRC library was entirely managed by Administration. The third had a library in Skilled Nursing managed by Administration.

Most locations have a special library room but some place books in public areas like lobbies, halls, or lounges.

Hours of operation

All but two of the respondents have libraries open all the time: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. One is open 7 am to 8 pm and the other from 8 am to 10 pm. All but three are generally unattended.

Types of library items

The survey responses showed the importance of different types of items. The average rankings are shown in the following table.

Type of Item	Average Ranking
Books	First
Newspapers	Second
Magazines	Third
Audio	Fourth
Video	Fifth

Two CCRCs have only books and one has only newspapers and books. One CCRC ranked newspapers highest. Eight CCRCs have no newspapers in the library. Average importance of Audio and Video are essentially the same. Also, average rankings of Newspapers and Magazines are about the same. Residents often have their own subscriptions to newspapers and magazines so libraries do not subscribe.

Number of Volumes in the Library

Number of books ranged from 1,000 to 6,111 (average about 3,000). If media numbers were reported, they ranged from 100 to 1,000. Ten reported no media for their library. Six locations were unable to provide an estimate of the number of volumes in their library. Counting the inventory of materials in the library is probably not a high priority. Some locations only track hard-cover books, not paperback.

One location reported that they have recently reduced their inventory by about 2,000.

Does the library take requests for new books from residents?

Eleven of the CCRCs replied that they do accept residents' request for books. One commented that the library keeps a notebook on the library desk for residents to jot down their requests.

How long can books and media be checked out by residents?

More than half of the respondents reported that there is no limit on how long residents can keep books. Where limits exist, they range from 14 days to 120 days. Average of these CCRCs is 49 days.

Source of Funds

Funding varies widely between locations. Ten reported no budget. The rest reported annual budgets ranging from \$50 to \$18,000 (that location had a part-time librarian). Average budget reported (leaving out the zero budgets, \$50 and \$18,000) is \$2,073. These funds come from Residents Associations, Gifts, Fund Drives, Memorial Funds and Administration.

Do you accept book donations?

All CCRCs reported that they accept book donations. One only accepts books from residents. Another specifically reported that all of their books are donated. Most of the locations without budgets receive their books solely from donations.

Overdues and Fines

Only three CCRCs send out overdue notices routinely. At another location, the library follows up with residents if they have kept books more than 4 months. Most libraries do not have firm return policies. However, where books are supplied by local municipal libraries, they must be returned. The library staff finds and returns these to avoid paying for the books.

No location assesses fines for holding books too long.

Loss of Books

Fifteen CCRCs said they were not concerned about the loss of books. Many of these libraries operate on the honor system and they do not know how many losses they have. Ten said they do have a problem with losses - generally less than 100 per year. Most losses are much lower than 100.

Tracking Systems

Book tracking systems range from nothing to an MS-ACCESS database system. Four CCRCs did not provide any survey information about their tracking methods. Six reported that they have no system or that they use the honor system. Six locations indicated that they use cards. Five use a notebook for residents to log the books they check out. Three mentioned that they keep an inventory/catalog of their books on a computer spreadsheet (like MS Excel).

Number of Libraries

14 CCRCs have more than one library and 4 have only one. Six did not answer this question. Multiple libraries sometimes serve Independent Living, Assisted Living, or Skilled Nursing. They also serve different categories like travel, religion, nature, media, paperback, hardback and reference. There can also be multiple libraries to better service different buildings or communities.

Disposal of Books

Each CCRC seems to have found their own local method of disposing of books and other materials which are no longer needed. AAUW was mentioned by three. Six mentioned giving them to the county library. Some are given to charities or to residents who want them. Some are put in recycling or donated to rummage sales.

Computers

Eight CCRCs have no computer in the library. Seventeen have at least one computer in the library. The library computers are usually available all of the time. Lessons are provided for users as required. The computers are used to manage library inventory, checking county library, general purpose computing, and playing games.

Seven sites reported their CCRCs have Computer Labs managed by another organization.

Guidelines for the Future

One CCRC reported that a new library was completed a few years ago. In the library are four general purpose computers maintained by the IT department. This represents an approach similar to public town and county libraries. Many citizens use the public library as a computing resource and as an access to on-line information. They are also moving into electronic books read on Kindle or Nook. Perhaps someday ORANJ CCRC libraries may follow this trend.

A few CCRCs work with local town and county libraries on bookmobile-type services. Four reported that the local library periodically delivers boxes of books that would be of interest to residents.

Many CCRCs have minimal automated tracking systems for books and other items in their libraries. It may be possible to find a vendor-supported computer system that would economically store and manage library items. Use of a simple computer spreadsheet should be considered as a simple but effective tracking tool.

The Bottom Line

CCRC libraries are the creation of their Residents. These highly qualified library workers have taken on the mission of building and operating excellent libraries. Each is suited to the unique conditions in their facility. They continually improve the flow of information to all of the residents. ORANJ is proud of the work of the selfless library volunteers.