



Alabama Virtual Library

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It is often a challenge to find meaningful, economical forms of entertainment for residents that don't participate in group activities. Before entering a Skilled Nursing Facility, many residents filled their hours with imaginative trips to other times and places through books. Administration and Activity Departments are challenged with purchasing books or finding ways to transport residents to libraries. Residents that once purchased books online are now limited to \$30 per month to supply all their wants. Diminishing eyesight is another challenge to avid readers. The Alabama Virtual Library is a solution to these challenges.

This Best Practice addresses the challenge of finding meaningful, economical forms of entertainment for residents through literature.

The Alabama Virtual Library is open to anyone with a library card from a participating library in the state. Ebooks or audio books can be virtually borrowed for a 2 week period, just like borrowing from the local library. These virtual books can be accessed from a smart phone, tablet, or laptop. The facility has purchased several tablets to allow residents that don't have devices of their own to access the virtual library. Residents that are visually impaired can increase the font size for easier reading or borrow books and listen to audio books. There are two library cards issued per resident. The resident keeps one and the Activity Staff keeps the other in case the resident misplaces their own card.

This program has enhanced the quality of life for several residents. Our residents, who have limited resources, tell us how thankful they are that they are that they now have access to books from their room without having to purchase or arrange transportation to the library.

The only challenge faced was keeping the tablets charged. The Activity Department maintains, keeps them charged and in working condition and checks them out to residents.

The Alabama Virtual Library is free of charge. A local library partnered with the facility to provide library cards to the residents. The facility purchased 3 tablets at a cost of less than \$50 for all 3 tablets. In order to work with the virtual library, the tablets must have the capability of WIFI connections and each tablet required its own email. The facility established an email account for each tablet. Several residents had their own tablets or laptops, therefore only needing a library card. The Activity Department or Administration is able to help residents that need assistance with borrowing the books, such as connecting to the internet or navigating the web site. Some residents have requested assistance on choosing which book to read. No extra staff is used for this Best Practice.

Often in our profession, we lose sight of the fact that our residents find joy in the same things we do. Being able to enhance the quality of life for our residents for a minimum investment of time and money makes this Best Practice excellent and innovative.