

Bridges Library System receives memory project grant

Locals with memory loss to have their stories preserved

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WAUKESHA — The Bridges Library System has received a two-year \$35,000 grant from Bader Philanthropies for the Library Memory Project, designed to serve those with memory loss and preserve their stories.

Youth and Inclusive Services Coordinator Angela Meyers said the program is “for folks that are living with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia, along with their family members or care partners.”

Bridges libraries have already been holding memory cafés for the past several years as opportunities for patients and caretakers to enjoy social engagement. Meyers said it can be beneficial to bring people who are experiencing similar circumstances together and help them feel less alone.

“It brings people together that may be feeling isolated because of their disease,” she said. “It’s just getting people out of their homes and socialization and having a good time with other people.”

Through the new grant, the Library Memory Project will bring the StoryCorps from New York to Waukesha County, where

locals with memory loss will have their personal stories told in an interview with a loved one or caretaker. Those stories are preserved for the family and, with permission, can be archived as a piece of local history at the American Folk Life Center in the Library of Congress.

A photo of the individuals from the interview is taken, and the recording is done via audio.

The grant funds will go towards training for librarians and necessary technology, as well as technical support for 18 months.

Meyers said while StoryCorps has worked with libraries in the past and on memory loss, it’s likely Bridges is the first library system in the nation to work with them on memory loss. “We’re spearheading that,” she said. “It’s really a targeted initiative with libraries to record people’s stories.”

The funding is currently in the process of being approved by the Waukesha County Board of Supervisors. County Chairman Paul Decker said the program will help “keep the stories intact between generations.”

Bridges Library System serves both Waukesha and Jefferson counties.

Interviews are anticipated to take place through

2022 and 2023. Those interested in learning more can reach out to Meyer at 262-896-8245 and at librarymemoryproject.org.



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