



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

Amy Sobrino, co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness is the 2019 recipient of the Illinois Library Association’s Alexander J. Skrzypek Award. The award, presented and sponsored by the Illinois State Library, is given to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of library services for the blind or physically disabled in Illinois.

At an early age, Sobrino experienced first-hand the difficulties family members have when being the main care-givers of those with Alzheimer’s. Amy and her family spent thirteen years caring for her beloved grandmother.

Graduating with a Master’s of Social Work, Amy began a career targeting geriatric social work. She quickly realized there was a need for education and resources for care-givers of those with dementia. Her vision became the impetus for the Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness (EAAA), a non-profit organization she co-founded with her mother Shannon Nosbisch, to support and educate anyone involved with dementia in any form.

Knowing that local libraries are often the only meeting place in rural areas, she began giving educational programs at the Effingham Public Library. These efforts now extended to partnering with local public libraries on bringing presentations from community professionals on topics related to dementia, aging, and care-giving.

Sobrino quickly realized that along with the support that caregivers need, a collection of resources on related topics was vital. Working on the idea for a targeted resource collection, she collaborated with the Effingham Public Library. It became the first library to host a Forget-Me-Not Resource Center.

Due to the rural nature of southern Illinois where residents are often outside a library district, a unique solution to the non-resident was devised. Utilizing a single purchased non-resident card, any individual can check-out items from the Forget-Me-Not collection. As a pilot project, the results of the library card have been positive.

The Forget-Me-Not Resource Centers provide educational materials such as books, videos, and kits available to the community free of charge. All items are specific to dementia, aging, brain health, and care-giving.

There are now seven centers in Southern Illinois public libraries, including Evans Public Library (Vandalia), Flora Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Mattoon Public Library, Newton Public Library, and Shelbyville Public Library.

The Alexander J. Skrzypek Award will be presented at the Awards Luncheon to be held on Tuesday, October 22, during the 2019 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference in Tinley Park.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release