



In the Library

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“The library is a place you go to for information. Here, you can find everything from A to Z. So why not use the library to learn how to manage your health?”

— Kim Williams-Odom

Kim Williams-Odom is on a mission. She wants everyone to check up on their health before they check out at the library.

“The library is a place you go to for information. Here, you can find everything from A to Z. So why not use the library to learn how to manage your health?” she asks.

Williams-Odom is a public library manager in a rural area of Hollywood, South Carolina, and works with the REACH Charleston and Georgetown Diabetes Coalition. Lee Moultrie II is the coalition's community outreach coordinator. Together, they help people find health information in the library, on the Internet and through local health experts.

“I teach people how to use the computer, whether on the Internet or through the library's catalogs or databases, to find the best information on diabetes and nutrition. I suggest Web sites that are easy to understand and that use culturally relevant images and facts. At health fairs, I also show members of faith-based organizations how to use the Internet and share the information they find on it,” explains Williams-Odom.

Moultrie believes that showing people different ways to find health information will help increase health literacy.

“Low health literacy affects everyone. You can be highly educated and not understand your health,” he says. “Our goal is to connect people with reliable and current information so they can use it to make better health decisions with their doctors.”

The REACH Coalition works toward this goal by teaching people about health resources at libraries. It creates easy-to-understand posters and bookmarks to help people find both print and online information for diabetes and related health issues. It also sets up computer stations in the community so people can use the Internet more easily and at no cost.

Although these resources are available to anyone who needs help, people with less than 12 years of education or who are age 60 and older find the program especially helpful.

“The computer can be frightening for some people. Even using a computer mouse can be a challenge at first. But by the end of our program, people use the computer by themselves,” says Williams-Odom.

“They find the Web sites they bookmarked. They get new healthful recipes. They learn about their medicines. They discover how to talk with their doctors.”

Moultrie says he's always looking for new and better ways to share health information. “I listen to the radio. I read the newspaper. I look at the television. I try to find messages and words that can get people to understand health matters and health care issues.”

Williams-Odom agrees that the way information is shared is key. “An important part of health literacy is being confident with what you know. If you have the information and you understand it, you can act on it.”

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 1955: Rosa Parks arrested for refusing to give her seat to a white man, sparking the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott.	2 1884: Granville T. Woods patents telephone transmitter.	3 1847: Frederick Douglass publishes first issue of <i>North Star</i> .	4 1906: Alpha Phi Alpha, first black Greek letter fraternity, founded at Cornell University.	5 1955: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. organizes Birmingham, Alabama, bus boycott, marking beginning of the Civil Rights movement.	6 1942: Richard B. Spikes patents automatic gearshift.
7 1941: Navy steward Dorie Miller shoots down four Japanese planes during attack on Pearl Harbor.	8 1925: Entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. born.	9 1976: P.B.S. Pinchback of Louisiana becomes first black governor.	10 1950: Dr. Ralph J. Bunche becomes first black awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.	11 1926: Blues singer Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton born.	12 1995: Willie Brown defeats incumbent Frank Jordan to become the first African American mayor of San Francisco.	13 1942: First black servicewomen sworn in to the WAVES.
14 1829: John Mercer Langston, congressman and founder of Howard University Law Department, born.	15 1883: William A. Hinton, first black on Harvard Medical School faculty, born. 1994: Ruth J. Simmons named president of Smith College.	16 1976: Andrew Young nominated by President Jimmy Carter to be U.S. ambassador to United Nations.	17 1802: Teacher and minister Henry Adams born.	18 1865: Congress passes 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery.	19 1875: Educator Carter G. Woodson, “Father of Black History,” born.	20 1860: South Carolina secedes from the Union, initiating the Civil War.
21 Hanukkah Begins (sundown) 1911: Baseball legend Josh Gibson born.	22 1883: Arthur Wergs Mitchell, first black Democrat to be elected to Congress, born.	23 1867: Sarah “Madam C.J.” Walker, businesswoman and first black female millionaire, born.	24 1842: Charter granted to Georgia Infirmary, the first black hospital.	25 Christmas 1907: Cab Calloway, bandleader and first jazz singer to sell 1 million records, born. 2006: James Brown, legendary R&B singer and songwriter, dies.	26 Kwanzaa Begins 1894: Jean Toomer, author of <i>Cane</i> , born.	27 1862: African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church founded in New Bern, North Carolina.
28 1905: Earl “Fatha” Hines, “Father of Modern Jazz Piano,” born.	29 1924: Author, sportswriter A.S. “Doc” Young born.	30 1842: Congressman Josiah Walls born. 1892: Dr. Miles V. Lynk publishes first black medical journal for physicians, the <i>Medical and Surgical Observer</i> .	31 1930: Odetta, blues and folk singer, born.			

Fact Number 12

Literacy is the single-best predictor of health status. It is a stronger predictor than age, income, employment status, education level, or racial and ethnic group.