

Best Practices from the Network: Spreading the Word about NLS

August 1, 2012

The Detroit News ran a story last month about the “sensory garden” in Scripps Park behind the Frederick A. Douglass branch of the Detroit Subregional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Specialist Librarian **Dori Middleton** suggested the garden, and patrons, volunteers, and library employees teamed up to plant it last summer. The garden was expanded this year.

“I’d love to plant something and say *I grew this*,” patron Ava Johnson, pictured at right, told the newspaper. Johnson, who has been blind for 25 years, “participates in everything we do,” Middleton says.

You can read the story at

[www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/](http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/201206170100/OPINION03/206170313)

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The June issue of the Homewatch Caregivers of Ann Arbor (Michigan) e-newsletter included information about the **Washtenaw Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled**. The Ann Arbor District Library’s manager of outreach and neighborhood services, **Terry Soave**, says she got the coverage by taking these actions:

- Develop and promote your brand by telling the community about what you offer.
- Do that through personal contact, local media (news, local cable access), visiting senior residences, meeting with service-providers of all types, and talking with (or e-mailing, or meeting with, or writing to, depending on what works best for them) anyone else who might help you promote your service.
- Offer to provide the content for an article or mention of your services. Proactively seeking out and initiating the contact and offering to provide the content is really key, since it then requires very little effort on the part of the contact to include it.
- Keep in mind that sometimes it happens very quickly, while other times it may take months or even years before things really click.
- Be aware of turnover at these facilities/organizations/businesses—that’s why persistent follow-up is important.
- Research + strategy + communication + persistent follow-up = success!

To share your event with the network, e-mail Jane Caulton at jcau@loc.gov.

