

News OF OLDER AMERICANS

Helping Seniors Keep Reading In Their Lives

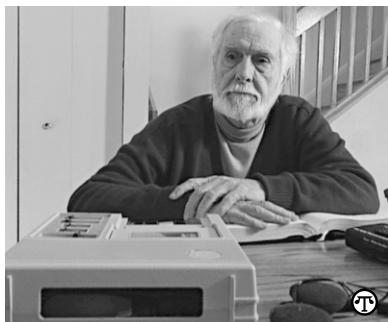
(NAPSA)—Older Americans are one of the fastest-growing groups in the country. As a result, a rising number of younger family members are being asked more and more to make recommendations on resources and activities that will improve the health and lifestyles of their older family members.

For older relatives, finding out that they can no longer read the standard print of a newspaper, or even the pages of a large-print book, can be one of the most difficult changes to accept. It can cut out activities they've always loved to do, like reading the sports page or using a cookbook.

Talking Books, a free program offered through the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) network of regional libraries, helps those who have trouble reading a standard printed page keep the pleasure of reading in their daily lives. The program loans members a wide selection of recorded books and magazines, braille books and magazines, and music scores in braille and large print.

"Reading plays an important role in our daily lives, whether it's for information or just for fun," said NLS director Frank Kurt Cylke. "Through Talking Books, we are able to put books back into the lives of those who thought they might have to give up reading."

Anyone who is a resident of the United States or an American citizen living abroad and who cannot read or use standard print



Talking Books can help older Americans continue to enjoy their favorite books.

materials because of a visual or physical impairment may qualify to participate in the Talking Books program. Applications may be requested from the regional or subregional library closest to the eligible family member. A searchable list of locations is available at www.loc.gov/nls. The application does require the signature of an official source—such as the eligible family member's doctor, case-worker or an NLS regional librarian—in order to join the program.

Once an application is completed, the playback equipment for the Talking Books program will be sent within three working days. An initial shipment of books and catalogs is usually sent within the following two working days. An NLS reader advocate may also follow up to better personalize the selection of materials that a program participant receives. Materials are shipped at no cost via the U.S. Postal Service.

For more information or additional assistance, call 1-888-NLS-READ or visit www.loc.gov/nls.