

## Reading Around the Community

Reading Around the Community is a community service project sponsored by the Kappa Beta Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society at The LeMoyne-Owen College. The program was designed to address literacy and support community awareness in underserved populations in the city of Memphis.

The Reading Around the Community (RAC) program currently operates inside the College Park Apartments, which is a community exclusively for senior citizens. Residents gather in the multi-purpose room where group reading sessions are held from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month. Individual one-on-one sessions are also offered for individuals who need and desire more intense coaching in reading and comprehension. The final component of the program provides computer training. There is a bank of three computers available for use by our program. Registration for this service is currently full. Participants will receive instructions on how to operate a computer and how to navigate its software. Future classes will focus on using the Internet, as the apartment complex plans to install Internet service on the computers in the near future.

The materials currently in use for the group reading sessions are The Commercial Appeal newspaper and Memphis Magazine. Newspapers are provided by Alpha Kappa Mu volunteers, and the magazines are donated by the publisher. The materials used in the one-on-one sessions are selected by the participants. Those currently signed up for this service desire to use The Holy Bible. We also offer to use our regular reading materials or to help with reading and understanding other literature/correspondence.

In group sessions, the participants read along while one of our volunteers reads the article aloud. We pause at various intervals throughout the articles in order to recap, explain and/or expound upon the segment previously read. Audience feedback during the sessions is welcomed and is quite strong. We have also received very positive feedback from the participants regarding the program.

We look forward to continuing this service project as well as expanding it to other venues. Possible future sites include struggling elementary schools and area community centers.

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