

# Villa's Popular Read-Aloud Program Goes Virtual

## *Residents video record themselves reading aloud to the delight of community*

A poem by Robert Frost, a grandfather's letters to his family, a children's book adults can enjoy, a family memoir, excerpts from a novel, the humor of Robert Benchley or the tales of Mark Twain. These are just a few examples of works residents have read aloud to each other.



*Resident Lois Harrison records her Read-Aloud selection.*

Villa's traditional Read-Aloud events began more than a decade ago when a small groups of friends would occasionally meet in the Villa Gardens library and enjoy their favorite books. One day, resident Edith Grady posed the question to the group ... wouldn't it be fun to read aloud to each other? The group embraced the suggestion and enjoyed either taking a turn or just listening.

"There is something relaxing about hearing other people read to you and when it's people you know, it's an additional delight," said resident Winnie Reitnauer, who has chaired the Read-Aloud committee for the past three years. "It's exciting to learn new things, reminisce and just be entertained by good stories and storytelling. The variety of selections never ceases to amaze me. Our residents are interested in a variety of subjects so they just love it."

Soon, the "Read-Alouds," as residents call them, became so popular, a larger space was needed to host the quickly expanding group. The Villa Vista room, a large community room on campus, was able to host upwards of 40 residents who would meet monthly.

Then in the spring of 2020, COVID-19 hit, and many of Villa's group activities transitioned to virtual or socially distanced events and the Read-Aloud program moved on to its next phase.

"We put our thinking caps on and developed a new way to keep the program going safely," Winnie said. "We decided to try something new with the help of the Villa Gardens staff."

"Villa residents have taken on the challenge that pandemic has brought to us and have adapted to changing conditions," Winnie said. "Adapting the Read-Aloud program is just one example of the spirit of our community."

Visit the Villa Gardens website and click the YouTube icon on the top right to search for the Read-Aloud videos.