



Vital Aging Network
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December 2003 Bulletin

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Tuesday, December 9 VAN MONTHLY MEETING

"Vital Force: Older Adults Actively Engaged in the Community"

Presenter: Jim Scheibel, former St. Paul Mayor, Director of the National Senior Corps, Director of Progress for Pride in Living (PPL), and now Director of Ramsey Action Programs (RAP)... and an active member of the Vital Aging Network.

Time: 10:00 to 12:00 a.m., December 9, 2003

Place: Midtown YWCA, Lake St. & Hiawatha Ave., Minneapolis

Our aging population is a vital force ready to be tapped to help build our communities. Older adults want to give back to their communities, share their rich experiences and make a difference. They want to leave a legacy. They want to continue to learn, explore, and grow spiritually. They seek to be active participants in their community.

Jim Scheibel has both passion and good ideas about how to recruit, organize, and support older adults as coaches for community projects. Let's get together and talk about his ideas and how best to proceed on some projects.

Directions: The new Midtown YWCA is located at the southwest corner of Lake Street and Hiawatha Avenue (Hwy 55). Free parking is accessible from Lake St at 22nd Avenue, just west of the Lake Street exit from Hiawatha Avenue. Enter the main door of the YWCA from the parking lot. There will be a VAN greeter in the lobby.

Questions? Need a ride? Call the Vital Aging Network (VAN) at 612-626-5555. There is no cost for VAN monthly meetings. Everyone is welcome.

For other VAN programs, check out the VAN Web site at www.van.umn.edu.

REPORT ON "Know and Grow: Education for Vital Aging"

VAN Adult Education Forum held on November 6, 2003

The Know and Grow forum held at the Hotel Radisson Roseville on November 6 met its attendance goals:

- We hoped for 100 and welcomed 121
- We encouraged attendance from different parts of the state and found that every region of the state was represented

- We registered a broad range of education and service providers who showed through their table talk that they plan to reach out in many different ways to older adult learners and education partners.

Thanks to our partner, the Minnesota Association for Continuing Adult Education, every participant received a copy of a brand new resource: The Directory of Adult Education Programs in Minnesota.

The conference committee is still collecting the material that will be posted on the VAN Web site, www.van.umn.edu, by the end of December. Click on “Know and Grow” in the left column of the home page about December 17 and you will find summaries of:

- State Demographer Tom Gillaspay’s presentation on “Aging Minnesota”
- VAN Senior Advisor Jan Hively’s presentation on “Vital Aging: The Market for Older Adult Education”
- Small group responses to the questions:
 - What is central to education for vital aging?
 - What assets (strengths, resources) can you tap to expand access to high quality teaching and learning for older adults?
- Presentations on innovations by practitioners
 - “Community-based Learning”, Kris Orluck, Maple Grove Parks and Recreation
 - “Electronic Learning,” JoAnn Hanson, and “AccessE.info”, Rae Montgomery, U of M
 - “Affinity Group Learning,” Jane Cunningham, MN Humanities Commission
- “Implications” – Strategies, next steps, and reflections discussed by small groups and summarized by VAN Coordinator Sharon Anderson
- Summary of pre and post evaluations
- Bibliography/List of Resources

Here are some quotes from the discussion to whet your interest:

“Learning creates energy”.....”Learning keeps me alive”....”Learning helps us figure out what doesn’t work”....”Learning sustains mental function”....We teach what we need to learn”....”Learning is power”....”We are the teachers we have been waiting for!”

CCAL RELEASES CONSUMER EDUCATION VIDEO

"Choosing Assisted Living...What You Need To Know"

Every day millions of Americans are confronted with difficult decisions about how to care for themselves or their loved ones as their health declines and they acquire disabilities. Assisted living is an increasingly popular housing option that bridges the gap between home and nursing home. There are many considerations in selecting the right location and consumers frequently don't know where to turn for answers. Now there is a new guide.

In celebration of Family Caregivers Month, a special time for family and thanksgiving, the Consumer Consortium on Assisted Living (CCAL), the leader in assisted living consumer education, has just released "Choosing Assisted Living...What You Need To Know." Through the voices and experiences of residents, family members and professionals, the video covers the wide range of information people need to consider.

"This video is a helpful and welcome first step" to choosing the right assisted living

facility says Sen. John Breaux (D-LA), the ranking member of the U. S. Senate Special Committee on Aging. Karen Love, the founder and chair of CCAL and a former assisted living administrator and family member of an assisted living resident notes that "CCAL's aim with the video is to provide individuals considering assisted living with beneficial information to help them make informed decisions."

CCAL teamed with Robin Smith, an Emmy award-winning producer, to develop "Choosing Assisted Living...What You Need To Know." CCAL also publishes a highly acclaimed consumer publication -"Choosing an Assisted Living Facility: Considerations for Making the Right Decision." This booklet has a facility comparison guide to compare features on tours of multiple facilities.

For further information, contact Jackie Pinkowitz, CCAL Board of Directors, at 732-212-9036 or jp@futurage.com.

SPOTLIGHT ON A VAN MEMBER...

Renée S Fredericksen, Chair, VAN Leadership Group

Renée S Fredericksen, VAN Leadership Group Chair 2003, is truly from Minnesota. Outside of the first 5 years of her life spent in Anchorage, Alaska, that is. Born at St Cloud, MN in 1951, by 1956 she was being raised, along with three younger sisters, by a widow and inspiring grandparents and older neighbors at Monticello, MN. Her respect and admiration for older people began with her grandparents and these neighbors. It was enriched as a PCA (Personal Companion) for frail, older women through her high school years. She has lived and worked throughout Minnesota, while she and her spouse pursued careers in public service and raised two daughters. When asked where they are from, they proudly say Minnesota – all of it.

Her husband's career as a school administrator enabled the family to experience urban, suburban and small town life, and also afforded Renée the opportunity to work in a variety of positions in education, business and aging. She worked as a teacher, lumberyard management team member and librarian early on. Next, she worked as a county social service/public health nursing liaison and developer of aging services and a regional economic development planner. Then, she became an Area Agency on Aging director, adjunct college faculty member, and juvenile offender tutor. At the state level she worked as an education and conference planner for Minnesota Board on Aging, state consultant on adult foster care and adult day care, and state coordinator of the Seniors Agenda for Independent Living (SAIL). Later she became the interim Long Term Care Ombudsman, legislative liaison for the Minnesota Board on Aging, and program consultant/evaluator for the Area Agencies on Aging. Currently she works as a community resource development evaluator for DHS programs in aging.

In her spare time she volunteered in the trenches and as a board member in Lutheran churches, Girl Scouts, Jaycee Women Chapters, Lioness Chapters, Park and Recreation Boards, Study Clubs, Women in Housing, Minnesota Gerontological Society, National Park Service and libraries.

Ms Fredericksen was technically prepared to engage in the above activities with degrees in social science education, library science (media generalist), and human ecology. This year, she has completed a doctorate in public administration from Hamline University. Renee's Ph.D. dissertation exemplifies her philosophy of life: full engagement at every

age. Yes, her dissertation was on retention of older public service employees to ease labor shortages as “Boomers” plan exits into retirement.

Renée’s interest in older people began as a child but her career in aging began by accident. As with many of her colleagues, it was the first job to come along and in the recession of the 1970’s it was likely to be the last one she’d see for quite a while. So, she took it! She laughs as she states, “I’ve tried to run away from aging personally and professionally for years, but I can’t escape what comes naturally. I keep getting older and older people keep my life worth living.” As the bio above indicates, she has taught, led and learned for, by, and with older adults for over half of her 52 years. What pleases her most is that her family respects and reveres older adulthood, as well. On more than one occasion her husband and daughters performed some challenging acts of kindness to comfort her demented paternal grandmother, who was in their care for eight years, and her maternal step grandfather, during his last year of life. What pleases her most is that it goes beyond the family. Her husband has made special efforts to join hands across generations in community projects through public schools across the state. Her daughters living in Washington, DC and San Diego, CA, email messages back to Minnesota about the exciting older person at work who is helping them figure out what makes business communities work. One acceptable excuse for arriving home late for holidays is because an older neighbor just needed a little help until his/her own kids got into town.

Renée saw that the message about vital aging was learned and practiced by her children. Her mission on this earth seemed complete. In a near death accident this past summer she was reminded by her survival that the mission did not begin nor end with her children. During her recovery, she reasoned that her mission of vital aging had only just begun. She believes vital aging begins with life itself if we take advantage of the opportunities for it. Vital aging is about engagement by, with, and for others in a vast array of communities for the common good of all people. It’s about uncovering and developing the assets within each and every one of us that gives purpose and meaning to our own lives and those of others. Unfortunately, we all have barely scratched the surface and have a lot more uncovering and developing left to do. Renee feels that’s why she survived and that’s where VAN comes in.

VAN is an organized effort to surface, develop and exchange the talent, experience and energy of older adults with all generations for the good of the whole community! VAN helps its members and those they touch to live life to its fullest through a website of contacts/networks, a biennial summit conference, and monthly forums providing expertise on a myriad of specific topics. Each contact, conference or forum attracts more members anxious to engage themselves in life and community. In a nation so rich in human talent but so poor in its recognition and utilization of this talent, movements like VAN are needed to realize our potential.

It is Renée’s sincere hope that at least 100 others will join her in the VAN movement each year as ambassadors for community engagement and rich personal living. Through VAN’s ambassadors, dignity, creativity and productivity are encouraged and possible. VAN is a vital force supporting vital communities!

DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

If you attended the 2003 Vital Aging Summit, you KNOW you don’t want to miss the 2004 event. If you missed it and have been kicking yourself ever since, don’t make the same mistake twice...Mark your calendar today!

Thursday, May 13, 2004

“Vital Aging ~ Vital Communities—The 2004 Summit”

Four hundred places have been reserved. Make sure that one of them is waiting for you. Registration opens January 5, 2004. Watch the Vital Aging Network web site---
www.van.umn.edu. or call 612-626-5555.

VAN connects older adults with education to promote and support their self-sufficiency, community participation, and personal enrichment. VAN is supported by the University of Minnesota’s College of Continuing Education. See the VAN Web site at
www.van.umn.edu



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