

# July 2004 Bulletin

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## July 13, 2004 VAN FORUM...

### Environmental Advocacy

*Presenter:* Charles (Chuck) Dayton, MN Center for Environmental Advocacy

*Time and Place:* Tuesday July 13<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to noon at the Hennepin County Brookdale Library

There are many who see global warming as the worst threat that we face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Others predict expanding conflicts over water, oil, and other natural resources. Elders have traditionally seen themselves as stewards who protect the earth for future generations. How can we do more to engage older adults as effective advocates for environmental sustainability?

Chuck Dayton is an environmental lawyer who recently retired from private practice and now works as a pro bono lawyer at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy on energy issues. As a public interest lawyer in the 1970's, he was the State's first paid environmental lobbyist and he represented environmental groups in the BWCA and Reserve Mining controversies. He sees climate change as the highest priority public issue of this century.

VAN is interested in cultivating the leadership of older adults as a Vital Force to address community needs. Chuck will lead a discussion about ways of working with others for environmental sustainability.

**Directions:** Hennepin County Brookdale Library (easy to find and to park) 6125 Shingle Creek Parkway, just south of Hwy94/694, Brooklyn Center. It's the newly renovated blue glass and brick building across from Target. There's a lunch place adjacent to the meeting room.

**Questions?** Need a ride? Call the Vital Aging Network (VAN) at 612-626-5555. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge for VAN's monthly forums.

## ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP FOR VITAL AGING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

*"If the concept of 'redesigning aging' intrigues you, the Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging Certificate Program and the Vital Aging Network is a great place to start participating in defining aging for yourself and others for the future."  
~Karen Riesett, past participant*

The deadline is fast approaching to apply for the 2004-2005 Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging certificate program (ALVA) offered by the College of Continuing Education at the University of Minnesota. Application materials and a syllabus are available at [http://www.van.umn.edu/advocate/3d\\_leadership.asp](http://www.van.umn.edu/advocate/3d_leadership.asp).

**Application materials are due July 16, 2004.**

Participants in the program will learn about current issues relevant to vital aging, develop leadership strengths to help themselves and their communities, and expand their networks to support their leadership work. ALVA is designed for adult learners of all ages. Participants in the 2003-2004 class ranged in age from 23-83.

*"The participants in ALVA are an outstanding mix of age, race, and occupation with a common passion for vital aging." ~Dolores Zeller, past participant*

Organizations and agencies working with older adults are invited to sponsor participants in ALVA. Local governments interested in taking full advantage of the assets that older adults bring to their communities also may want to sponsor applicants.

*"ALVA really encouraged me to move out of my comfort zone and to get actively involved in a project I had only thought about until now. One of the best features of ALVA is the opportunity to meet others who are interested in older adult issues and who are dedicated to the concept of vital aging. Their example has been an inspiration to me." ~Janet Jacobson, past participant*

Class sessions are the second Friday of each month from September 10 – May 13. Most are held at the Continuing Education Center on the University of Minnesota St. Paul campus.

Several partners help make ALVA possible including Volunteers of America of Minnesota, Minnesota Board on Aging, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging, Minnesota Senior Federation, and Minnesota AARP.

More information can be found at the VAN website at [www.van.umn.edu](http://www.van.umn.edu) or by calling the Information Center at the College of Continuing Education at 612-624-4000 or toll free at 1-800-234-6564. The \$1,000 registration fee, payable after applicants are accepted into the program covers all course materials. A limited number of scholarships are available.

## **CREATING MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY IN LATER LIFE: REGIONAL VISIONING COUNCILS**

A non-profit organization based in North Carolina, Second Journey, has launched a national conversation about new models for finding mindfulness, service, and community in the second half of life. Participants from around the country who attended the organization's Wildacres Conference last October (including Jim Scheibel from the VAN Leadership Group) decided to initiate a series of regional visioning councils to explore ways of creating community in later life.

The first regional council was held May 2004 in Boulder, Colorado. The second will be held in Litchfield, Connecticut from September 9-12, 2004. Another is tentatively planned for Seattle, on Whidbey Island, late April 2005.

The president of Second Journey, Bolton Anthony, would like to see a regional council meeting convened in Minnesota in 2005 or 2006. He has suggested that it would be useful preparation for future planning for VAN members to attend council meetings elsewhere.

Attendance at each Council includes 50 participants diverse in age, geographic representation, professional background and interest. The challenge is to share experience, dreams, and aspirations and to grow seedlings of new model communities – where sense of place, sustainable design, and intergenerational diversity are hallmarks.

## **EVALUATION OF “VITAL AGING IN VITAL COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT”**

A former University of Minnesota Extension Educator and current VAN volunteer, Lola Danielson Amendt, is conducting an evaluation of the Vital Aging in Vital Communities Toolkit that was introduced at the May 13 VAN Summit. Lola will be conducting phone interviews with some of the Summit participants from Greater Minnesota. She would be delighted, however, to receive comments and suggestions from others.

If you have responses to the following questions about the Toolkit materials found at <http://www.van.umn.edu/advocate/index.asp>, please send them to [van@umn.edu](mailto:van@umn.edu).

- What do you see in the Toolkit that might be useful in advocating for community changes to support vital aging?

- What is not useful?
- What needs to be added?

The purpose of this work is to stimulate thinking about ways to expand community assets to better support the vital involvement and quality of life of older adults.

## SPOTLIGHT ON... THE ADMINISTRATION ON AGING'S WEBSITE

The Administration on Aging (AoA) was designated in 1965 with the signing of the Older Americans Act. Charged with implementing the Titles of the Act, AoA works closely with older Americans, state agencies, area agencies on aging, and service providers to create a network of home and community based services for older Americans. AoA is a part of the Department of Health and Human Services and is led by the Assistant Secretary for Aging.

AoA's website ([www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov)) contains a wealth of information about services for older Americans, caregivers, providers, and the aging network. The website is divided into five pathways: About AoA, Press Room, Elders and Families, Professionals, and AoA Grant Programs.

*About AoA* explains the history of the Administration, its mandates and charges, its organizational structure, and other business related functions (job opportunities, budget, etc.).

The *Press Room* contains current and past information about the happenings of AoA, national aging policy, significant events, updates, and fact sheets. The Press Room is also home to the Assistant Secretary's speeches and town hall listening sessions.

*Elders and Families* is the pathway that contains information for consumers about services provided by funding from the Older Americans Act, AoA, and partner agencies.

*Professionals* is meant to be a pathway where researchers, providers, and students can learn more about aging initiatives from a policy angle. It is also a repository of information about U.S. demographics, international aging, Internet sources.

Finally the *AoA Grant Programs* pathway describes funding priorities and opportunities at the Department of Health and Human Services and other federal agencies. It is also a source of information on reporting requirements for current grantees of AoA.

The Administration on Aging affects millions of people's lives everyday from older Americans and caregivers to professionals that work in the aging network. Learn more about AoA at their website [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov).

Minnesota has a unique opportunity to provide input into development of AoA programs by attending a session with Assistant Secretary for Aging Josephina Carbonell at this year's Age Odyssey Conference. Learn more at [www.mnaging.org/ageodyssey](http://www.mnaging.org/ageodyssey).



## DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

### July 16 **Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging Certificate Program Applications Due**

More information is available on applying to be a participant of the 2004-2005 cohort at [www.van.umn.edu](http://www.van.umn.edu)

### August 10 **VAN Monthly Forum**

Topic: HOSTING CONVERSATION CIRCLES

Presenters: Dawn Lindblom, Volunteers of America; Jan Hively UM College of Continuing Education

Location: 10 a.m. to noon, Board Room – Luther Seminary

Whether we call them conversation circles or learning circles, this process of getting people together for deep, rich conversation fits the need of older adults to share the learning that they've acquired through life experiences. Plan to come and join the circle!



### August 24 & 25 **The Age Odyssey** St. Cloud Civic Center

Minnesota Board on Aging and Department of Human Service conference on aging for those working in the health and human services fields throughout Minnesota. Visit [www.mnaging.org/ageodyssey](http://www.mnaging.org/ageodyssey) for more information.

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](http://www.van.umn.edu)



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