



Vital Aging Network
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August 2004 Bulletin

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AUGUST 10, 2004 VAN FORUM...

Hosting Conversation Circles

Presenters: Dawn Lindblom, Volunteers of America of Minnesota and Jan Hively, U of M College of Continuing Education

Time and Place: Tuesday August 10th from 10 a.m. to noon at the Board Room at Luther Seminary in St. Paul

Rich, meaningful conversations are more rare than we'd like. Circles provide a way to structure conversations that encourage people to share their stories and insights, learn new things, and even change attitudes. Frameworks for conversation circles have been developed to help hosts stimulate and guide open exchange. This will be an interactive session where we can try out different approaches and consider where in our lives these methods and tools might be useful.

The forum presenter, Dawn Lindblom, has been examining new ways for developing community leadership and participation for the past eight years. In 2003, she served as an intern with Dr. Margaret Wheatley at the Berkana Institute, exploring new strategies for supporting community leaders worldwide and connecting them with one another. As Dr. Wheatley says in her book called, *Turning to Each Other*, "We can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well."

The forum facilitator, Jan Hively, has recently hosted conversation circles in an intergenerational folk school, an assisted living facility, and a lifework planning course.

Directions: The Luther Seminary Board Room is on the second floor of Olson Center, at the N.E. corner of Hendon and Fulham, one block east of the intersection of Como Avenue and Highway 280, and one block north from Como (at the top of the hill), in St. Paul. Allow enough time to find parking in the lots and on the streets surrounding the center.

Lunch: If you wish to continue the conversation at lunch after the meeting, there is a cafeteria on the main floor of Olson Student Center

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.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING SET FOR WEEK OF OCT. 23, 2005

The White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) Policy Committee met for the first time on July 14 and agreed on dates for next year's event in Washington, DC—the week of October 23, 2005. Chaired by former Social Security Commissioner Dorcas Hardy, the group discussed a range of possible agenda items with the goal of developing a draft agenda by this October.

The deliberations focused on the challenges we face over the next 10 years as our nation ages. There was some discussion, for example, about the future and changing nature of senior centers. Interested people may file written comments with the Policy Committee by forwarding a statement to Mame Templeton at Mame.Templeton@aoa.gov. The statement should include the name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and business or professional affiliation of the interested person. More information will be forthcoming shortly on the delegate selection process.

SPOTLIGHT ON...St. Louis Park NORC Nurturing Our Retired Citizens

Thanks to the efforts of Minnesota's congressional delegation, St. Louis Park has received one of the 30 grants awarded nationally by the U.S. Administration on Aging for **N**aturally **O**ccurring **R**etirement **C**ommunities -- called NORCs ("norks"). Minnesota's only NORC grant will focus on the 6600 seniors who live in the first-ring suburb of St. Louis Park.

Annette Sandler, a graduate from the 2003 - 2004 Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging program, is the Project Coordinator for the St. Louis Park NORC. Annette says, "Our vision is to create a community that nurtures healthy aging and inspires residents of all ages to work toward that goal. Our Mission is to enable older adults to remain in their homes and communities for as long as they can with the support structure they need to be safe, healthy and engaged citizens."

The NORC staff worked closely with the Mayor of St. Louis Park and the St. Louis Park Senior Program to host a Senior Summit in June. They hoped to have 200 people attend and over 220 were there. The task

was to provide an open forum for seniors to talk about their needs, concerns and ideas that would lead to better community. To stimulate discussion, the “Vital Aging in Vital Communities” video from the Vital Aging Network was shown. Prepared for the VAN Summit last May, the video features St. Louis Park and five other communities around the state supporting lifelong community participation and personal enrichment. **

In addition to preparing a resource directory for seniors in St. Louis Park, the NORC staff has been working on several other initiatives. A series of health care lectures and informational seminars has been created to educate seniors about important issues to help them remain independent. The lectures are free and open to the public. They are broadcast on the local cable TV station, to allow broader access to the information. The NORC has also created a lending library of videos showing the lectures.

Working with the faith communities in St. Louis Park, the NORC has established an interfaith council with 23 synagogues and churches. The mission is to create a “Best Practices” guidebook. This book will examine the creative ways that synagogues and churches meet the needs of the seniors in their congregations. The NORC staff will share this information across denominations and host a conference in the spring. The faith-based institutions can teach each other about what has worked best to reach seniors.

If you have any questions about this program please call Annette Malinsky Sandler, the NORC Project Coordinator at 952-542-4866 or email at asandler@jfcsmpls.org.

*** To obtain your free copy of the “Vital Aging in Vital Communities” video, please contact van@umn.edu or call 612-626-5555 and give your name and address so that the 30-minute video can be mailed to you.*

VITAL AGING NETWORK LISTSERV

The Vital Aging Network listserv gives VAN a virtual platform to disseminate the Monthly Bulletin (this publication) and the Forum Notes from the monthly VAN Forum.

According to webopedia (www.webopedia.com) the first listserv was developed in 1986 as a way to send information to one email address that would be broadcast to a mailing list of a number of email addresses. Listservs are similar to newsgroups (also called blogs, forums, and discussions boards) in that they share information with a number of individuals. Newsgroups differ in that messages are posted to a website not via email.

The VAN listserv is an open listserv. Open refers to the fact that anyone can freely join or leave at any time. The VAN listserv is also moderated. Moderated refers to the fact that any messages sent to the listserv are

not posted, but rather sent to the VAN email address and responded to by members of VAN.

VAN recognizes that in a virtual world of the World Wide Web and email, it is easy to get bogged down with information. Moderating the listserv and using it as a dissemination tool should not significantly add to the emails received each day.

To sign up for the VAN listserv visit www.van.umn.edu.

Contact VAN if you have questions at van@umn.edu.

SECOND JOURNEY UPDATE

In the July 2004 Bulletin an article was published on Regional Visioning Councils and an interest to host one in Minnesota in 2005 or 2006. More information about the Regional Visioning Councils can be found at The Second Journey website – www.secondjourney.org.



DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

September 14 **VAN Monthly Forum**

Topic: Embracing the Cultural Wisdom of our Elders

Presenter: Maricarmen Cortes, Wilder Foundation

Location: 10 a.m. to noon, Hamline/Midway Library

This forum will be a discussion with older adults who are members of Minnesota's culturally diverse communities as they examine the topic of vital aging.



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 for more information.

June 26 – July 1, 2005 **Creative Problem Solving Institute**

University of St. Thomas

If you want to learn to risk, to question, to collaborate and to celebrate the creative spirit, you won't want to miss CPSI's 2005 conference. Whether you are a businessperson looking for ways to improve innovation, educators looking for ways to inspire creative thinking in your students and staff, or an individual on your own personal imagination quest – CPSI is the place for you. More information can be found at <http://www.cpsiconference.com>.

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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