



Vital Aging Network
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October 2004 Bulletin

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OCTOBER 12 VAN FORUM...

Affordable Housing Alternatives For Older Adults in City Neighborhoods

Presenters:

Missie Staples Thompson, Fannie Mae Minnesota Partnership
Cynthia Lee, Minneapolis Community Planning – Housing Development
Diane Sprague, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency

Facilitator:

Jacquelyn Stewart, Minnesota Senior Federation

Time and Place: Tuesday, October 12, 2004 from 10 AM to Noon, at the St. Paul Area Council of Churches, 1671 Summit Avenue, St. Paul

The senior population is declining in Minneapolis and St. Paul, even though both cities are rich in public transportation and community services important to the quality of life. Older adults are finding affordable and attractive housing alternatives encouraged by community planning in first and second ring suburbs. Seniors with modest incomes who prefer to remain in city neighborhoods are having difficulty finding affordable housing and/or rehabbing units to assure accessibility. For immigrants and people of color, the need to find housing away from their communities can be particularly stressful.

VAN promises a vibrant discussion at the October forum about ways to assure affordable and accessible housing in center city neighborhoods. Missie Staples Thompson, the director of Fannie Mae, Cynthia Lee, the manager of multi-family housing development for the City of Minneapolis, and Diane Sprague, the accessibility consultant for MHFA, will talk about what is going on with the development of affordable, accessible, intergenerational urban housing, and what ideas for new approaches are being discussed. Jackie Stewart, an Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging Certificate Program graduate who is working on affordable housing through the Minnesota Senior Federation will facilitate the discussion.

Directions: The St. Paul Area Council of Churches is located at 1671 Summit

Avenue in St. Paul, on the northwest corner of the intersection with Pierce, two blocks west of Snelling.

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.

SPOTLIGHT ON... "AS WE ARE NOW" by May Sarton

May Sarton wrote an eloquent novel published in 1973 by W.W. Norton & Company that symbolizes the life story of a vital ager that fiercely and poetically grasps to her autonomy in "As We Are Now."

"I am not mad, only old. I am in a concentration camp for the old." Caroline "Caro" Spencer scribed the words in her journal as she reflected upon her life surviving in the Twin Elms Nursing Home.

Caro was a non-traditional older woman in 1970, a vibrant traveler who never married nor had any children. A series of events in her later life radically changed her world. In her old age physical disability caused her to move in with her brother and his second wife. Her brother's own frailty caused her to move into a nursing home.

In the nursing home, more a modified house than what is thought of as a nursing home today, Caro found friends in unlikely places and was seemingly transformed through a process that surprised even her. Through the harsh realities of Caro's world she finds pleasure in a simple sunrise or the gentle touch of a warm breeze.

The novel could easily be viewed as a depressing portrayal of aging – to lose oneself not only literally, but also figuratively. After digging underneath the depiction of frailty a theme resonates. The theme of a creative and powerful woman fighting to remain in a world collapsing around her lifts Caro to the role of a true protagonist causing the reader to fight along side through the trials and tribulations she faces.

Living with Caro Spencer, the reader experiences a loss of freedom, dignity, and independence...the ironies of human frailty. More importantly one experiences the emotion, passion, creativity, and drive of older adults – even when up against unbreakable barriers. May Sarton's critical metaphor links physical frailty and the drive of the human spirit.

May Sarton wrote 53 books, many of which captured her own aging, including: *Journal of a Solitude*, *At Eighty-Two: A Journal*, and *Selected Poems of May Sarton*.

Book: May Sarton, *As We Are Now*, 1973, W.W. Norton & Company, \$11.00.

WELCOME TO THE NEW COHORT

Advocacy Leadership in Vital Aging Certificate Program

VAN would like to extend a welcome and congratulations to the 2004-2005 Advocacy Leadership in Vital Aging Certificate Program participants.

Welcome to:

Sara Aeikens (Albert Lea in Freeborn County)
Karen Alvstad (Barrett in Grant County)
Brendan Ashby (Hibbing in St. Louis County)
Connie Ball (Hastings in Dakota County)
Bonnie Betts (Madison Lake in Blue Earth County)
Mia Bremer (St. Louis Park in Hennepin County)
Jayne Hager Dee (Northfield in Rice County)
Erin Delaney (Rosemount in Dakota County)
Susan Erickson Dobbelstein (Bemidji in Beltrami County)
Martha Feda (Burnsville in Dakota County)
Dawn Frericks (Atwater in Kandiyohi County)
Lenore Fries (Albert Lea in Freeborn County)
Jeff Fromm (Holdingford in Stearns County)
Lara Homa (Columbia Heights in Hennepin County)
Rita Kach (Bloomington in Hennepin County)
Kristine Kayser (Backus in Cass County)
Mary Kowalski (St. Paul in Ramsey County)
Sandra Krohn (Burnsville in Dakota County)
Nancy Larson (Virginia in St. Louis County)
Susan Lasoff (Minneapolis in Hennepin County)
Michelle Lichtig (Roseville in Ramsey County)
LaVonne Lutz (Marshall in Lyon County)
Jill Marquardt (Cottage Grove in Washington County)
Robert McMahon (Falcon Heights in Ramsey County)
Sue Meyers (St. Paul in Ramsey County)
Allen Miller (Edina in Hennepin County)
Maggie Rose Muldoon (Minneapolis in Hennepin County)
Jo Musich (Virginia in St. Louis County)
Sharon Notch (Eagle Bend in Todd County)
Janis Nowak (Round Lake, Illinois)
Grace Petri (Virginia in St. Louis County)
Laural Rieckman (Willmar in Kandiyohi County)
Sandra Runnigen Bensen (Bemidji in Beltrami County)
Susan Scarborough (Alexandria in Douglas County)
Stacey Schmidt (Minneapolis in Hennepin County)
Shirley Schwartz (Cottage Grove in Washington County)
Reena Shetty (St. Cloud in Stearns County)
Kathy Siegling (South Saint Paul in Dakota County)
Jeanette Sommerhauser (St. Paul in Ramsey County)
Evelyn Staus (Brooklyn Park in Hennepin County)
Maura Sullivan (St. Louis Park in Hennepin County)
Janet Triplett (Minneapolis in Hennepin County)
Sue Votel (Eagan in Dakota County)

Vicki Weber (Brooklyn Park in Hennepin County)
Kelly Werner (Bloomington in Hennepin County)

Congratulations to all participants and good luck on your projects!

For more information on the ALVA program visit www.van.umn.edu.

EDUCATING LEARNERS IN MID-LIFE AND BEYOND

The University of Minnesota is offering a new course entitled "Educating Learners in Mid-Life and Beyond" during the spring semester of 2005. The course is being offered through the College of Education and Human Development and is open to non-degree and degree seeking students. Harlon Copeland, Jan Hively, and Janet Jacobson are the faculty for this how-to course on older adult education. Classes begin on Saturday, January 29, 2005 and run through the end of April.

Please contact Janet Jacobson at janet.jacobson@usa.net or (651) 772-4268 for more information.

DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

Let us know if you have events in your community for vital agers...email van@umn.edu



October 7 @ 5:00 – 9:00 PM & October 9 1:30 – 6:00 PM

Wisdom Art Event

Catholic Eldercare is offering opportunities to experience art created by professional elder artists at the *First Thursday Art Crawl* in Northeast Minneapolis. Through painting, dance, photography, video, writing and rich conversation artists will lift your spirits, expand your horizons, strengthen community and strengthen a sense of hope in the aging process. Kairos, an intergenerational dance group, will perform at 6:00 PM on October 7. Ann Marie Thompson, a professional dancer, will perform at 2:00 PM on October 9. Intergenerational small group conversations will be facilitated from 3:00 to 5:00 on October 9. Many items from the exhibit will be available for purchase. For more information please call Mary Robinson at (612) 362-2424.

Location: Northrup King Art Studios, 1500 Jackson Street, Studio 332, Minneapolis

October 12 @ 10:00 AM – Noon

VAN Monthly Forum: Affordable Housing Alternatives for Older Adults in Center City Neighborhoods

Presenters: Jacquelyn Stewart, MN Senior Federation; Cynthia Lee, City of Minneapolis; Diane Sprague, MHFA, and Missy Staples Thompson, Fannie Mae
See page 1 for more information.

Location: St. Paul Area Council of Churches

October 14 @ 8:00 – 10:30 AM

Serving Seniors As They Would Like To Be Served

(An honest look at what older adults really want & need)

This free continuing education program for senior service providers will use

information gained through VAN to create effective senior service delivery models. VAN members leading the discussion include Jan Hively, lead presenter; Hal Freshley, Pam Zimmerman, and Annette Sandler, panelists; and Sue Ferguson, meeting facilitator. Call Sharon @ (952) 939-1601 to register. Location: Knollwood Place Apartments, St. Louis Park

October 18 @ 10:00 – 11:30

Preventing the Blues or Mitigating Depression

Depression is prevalent in our society. Catherine Johnson from ElderZest will discuss the signs and symptoms of depression, risk factors, and methods of prevention.

Cost: \$9 – Call (763) 504-6980 to register

Location: Winnetka Learning Center Room 117/118

October 28 @ 10:00 – 11:30

I'm Just Cocooning

Life is full of transitions and cyclical themes. Join Jim Lenarz from ElderZest as he discusses Hudson's Renewal Cycles Theory of life stages and transitions. Learn how to view your own transitions and current stage.

Cost: \$9 – Call (763) 537-3452 to register

Location: Winnetka Learning Center Room 117/118

November 9 @ 10:00 – 12:00 Noon

VAN Monthly Forum: Creating Aging Through the Arts: Developing a Network

Pat Samples and other members of the design team developing a Vital Aging: Minnesota Creative Aging Network will do a show-and-tell about the exciting activities planned during 2004-2005 for the intentional, active engagement of older adults in the creative arts. The meeting will be held in the midst of an art exhibit on aging. The artists, Lucy Rose Fischer and Betty Golub Weisman, will talk about their work.

Location: Jewish Community Center, Minneapolis

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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