



Vital Aging Network
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December 2004 Bulletin

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DECEMBER 14 VAN FORUM...

Family Connections Across the Ages

Presenter:

Sue Meyers, University of Minnesota Professor Emeritus

Time and Place: Tuesday, December 14 from 10 AM to Noon, at the Saint Anthony Park Library, Lower Library.

What we believe and how we act toward others is shaped during our early years growing up in our families. As we mature and lead independent lives from our family of origin, we often bring our “backpack” of attitudes, beliefs, and expectations into our new relationships. Since our family histories are different, we may not be aware of these differences until others challenge our assumptions.

Many families share meals and activities during November and December holiday gatherings. Different generations are pleased yet surprised by the beliefs and attitudes expressed during these gatherings. Sometimes quarrels erupt. Sometimes there is a tacit understanding not to discuss certain topics. No matter how close or distant the family members (emotionally or physically), they share some common values that could be celebrated!

Sue Meyers was affiliated with the U as a Family Sociologist for 33 years. Sue's focus on families in their later years has continued into Sue's next phase of life. Her research in family genealogy and adult development has demonstrated the endurance of values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors across generations. Come to share, learn and celebrate your own family history and connections!

Directions: St. Anthony Park Library is on the corner of Como Ave and Commonwealth Ave in St. Paul. Take Highway 280 to Como Ave heading east. Commonwealth is the second stoplight from the intersection with Hwy. 280 – a bit over a mile. Parking is available on the streets surrounding the library.

Questions? Need a ride? Call VAN at 612-626-5555. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge for VAN's monthly forums.

SPOTLIGHT ON...ANNUAL STATE OF AGING AND HEALTH IN AMERICA REPORT

The Merck Institute of Aging & Health and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention jointly released the third annual State of Aging and Health in America Report which focuses on promoting healthy behaviors among Americans 65 and older. These behaviors include eating a healthy diet, controlling weight and, most important, physical activity.

The new report, which also features input from the Gerontological Society of America, says that despite the proven health benefits of physical activity, one third of older adults are not taking part in any leisure-time physical activities. Additionally, two-thirds of older adults are not eating the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. And nearly one-fifth of older adults are obese, which is defined as at least 30 pounds above the recommended weight.

The report also notes that promoting a healthier lifestyle among older Americans is the single most important factor in maintaining both physical and mental wellness.

Based on the number of federal targets met, Hawaii was the healthiest state for older Americans while Kentucky was the least healthy. Only two states, Hawaii and Minnesota, met the federal target for leisure-time physical activity. Minnesota is close to the top ranked as the best state for flu vaccinations, sigmoidoscopies and colonoscopies, and up to date on preventive services for both males and females.

The State of Aging & Health is the signature publication of the Merck Institute of Aging & Health, a non-profit organization funded by the Merck Company Foundation. The publication presents a snapshot of the entire health and aging landscape in the United States.

The report is available online at www.cdc.gov/aging and www.miahonline.org. The www.miahonline.org website also contains interactive maps where one can click on and view individual state reports for the indicators presented in the State of Aging and Health in American 2004 Report.

GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA Annual Conference

Rajeane Moone, VAN Web Coordinator and Special Projects Coordinator at the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging attended the annual conference of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) in Washington D.C. on November 18 – November 23.

The theme of the 57th annual scientific meeting was “Promoting the Health of an Aging Population.” With over 500 presentations and posters, there were several sessions relating to vital aging including:

- Public Policies to Assure a Healthy Aging Population – This presentation rested on the fact that the health of future cohorts of older people will be influenced by environment, lifestyles, and health services and tied to that

public investments in initiatives aimed at addressing these areas.

- Posters on Beliefs and Attitudes About Aging – This consisted of four posters on a variety of topics relating to attitudes including attitudes towards retirement, scales to measure attitudes, and predictors of knowledge and anxiety about aging.
- Creativity and Aging: Towards a Gerontology of Creativity – This session focused on several papers one of which stressed that creativity is woven into older adults' lives regardless of community or institutional setting; another described the impact of illness on creative geniuses in later life.

Several booths offered publications on vital aging including the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Center for Creative Aging, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and Safe Aging.

GSA was founded in 1945 and is the oldest and largest national multidisciplinary scientific organization devoted to the advancement of gerontological research. Its membership includes some 5,000 researchers, educators, practitioners, and other professionals in the field of aging. The Society's principal missions are to promote research and education in aging, and to encourage the dissemination of research results to other scientists, decision makers, and practitioners.

Information on GSA can be obtained from the organization's website at www.geron.org.

AND THE BEAT GOES ON!

Celebrate the new Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network on January 15

(reprint from Nov.)

The Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network invites you to participate in *Creativity, Arts and Aging: A Town Hall Meeting and Celebration* on Saturday, January 15, 8:15-4:00 at the Bloomington Center for the Arts. This highly interactive event will showcase models, invite ideas, and encourage networking to expand activities, programs, and public policies that foster artistic expression in older adults.

The day long conference is being held in conjunction with *The Art of Aging: Creativity Matters* – a national campaign recently launched by the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA). A keynote speaker from NCCA will describe the campaign plus recent research confirming the benefits of arts activities for older adults. Among other presenters and performers on January 15 will be the Kairos Intergenerational Dance Theatre, Larry Long (Elders' Wisdom, Children's Song), and the Bloominstones choral group.

The cost for the day is \$40, or \$24 (limited means), and includes lunch and snacks. Free parking is available at the Center for the Arts which is part of the new Bloomington Civic Center on 98th Street just west of 35W. To receive a brochure contact patsamples@agingandcaregiving.com. To register, make out a check to "Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network" and send it to Sharon Anderson, 6544 Promontory Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55346. You will receive a confirmation and more information about the program.

The new Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network has grown out of a VAN interest group focused on encouraging the active, intentional engagement of older adults in the creative arts. It has been accepted at NCCA's Minnesota affiliate. For further information about the national effort, see www.creativeaging.org...and come to the January 15th event!

DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

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



December 14 @ 10:00 – 12:00 Noon

VAN Monthly Forum: Family Connections Across Ages

What we believe and how we act toward others is shaped during our early years growing up in our families. As we mature and lead independent lives from our family of origin, we often bring our “backpack” of attitudes, beliefs, and expectations into our new relationships. Since our family histories are different, we may not be aware of these differences until others challenge our assumptions. Come to share, learn and celebrate your own family history and connections!

Location: St. Anthony Park Library

December 3 @ 10:00 – 11:30

Reminiscence and Life Review

Join Elderzest during this presentation to learn about the process of reflecting on your life in a structured “story telling” manner. You will learn to identify your purpose in life, and to create an individual sense of legacy from Catherine Johnson, a geropsychologist. As Kierkegaard said, “We live life forward, but understand it backwards.”

Location: Winnetka Learning Center Room 117

Cost: \$9.00

Register: Call (763) 504-6980 or jlenarz@mninter.net

December 10 @ 2:00 – 4:00

Peace Through Volunteerism

Join the Global Volunteers and The UN Association of Minnesota for this international symposium on promoting peace through volunteer efforts. Be part of dialogue on peace in the world, international understanding and tolerance, volunteer initiatives, and grassroots efforts paving the way for foreign relations. Join panelists from Tanzania, Ireland, Mexico, Poland, and China to explore peace internationally. This session is not entirely focused on aging, but captures the essence of VAN's movement.

Cost: Free

Location: St. Paul Radisson Riverfront Hotel

Upcoming Educational Opportunity!

Do not miss the new course at the U of M: Educating Learners in Mid-Life and Beyond. If your work with older adults involves teaching – whether on a formal or informal basis – you may be interested in this course. Course participants will have the opportunity to interview older learners and observe and analyze programs designed for the older adult learner. Classes meet Saturday mornings from 8:30 – 12:30 on the St. Paul campus from January 29 through March 12

and April 16 through April 30. Form information on cost and registration procedures visit the College of Education and Human Development at <http://education.umn.edu> or call Mary Gupta at 612-624-1221.

More information on the course is available from Janet Jacobson at janet.jacobson@usa.net or Jan Hively at hivel001@umn.edu.

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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