



Vital Aging Network  
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## April 2006 Bulletin

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### VAN FORUM APRIL 11

#### Kiki Smith: A Gathering, 1980 - 2005

*Presenter:* Members of the MN Creative Arts and Aging Network

*Time and Place:* Tuesday, April 11: 10 a.m. – noon; Walker Art Center, Skyline Room and Galleries 4, 5, and 6; 1750 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis

Best known for provocative depictions of the female body, Kiki Smith has explored subjects such as religion, folklore, mythology, natural science, and feminism. As the Walker Art Center catalog for her 25-year mid-life retrospective says, "Her work offers us the opportunity to reexamine ourselves, our history, and our place in the world."

The VAN Forum will begin with introductions in the Skyline Room at the peak of the new Walker Art Center. Then tour guides will lead groups of Forum participants through the Kiki Smith exhibit, introducing them to her more than 100 works in materials that range from bronze sculpture to papier-mache to hand-blown glass. After the participants have had a chance to pick out the most provocative items, the group will reassemble in the Skyline Room for small and large group discussion stimulated by Kiki Smith's artwork. Members of the Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network, MnCAAN, will bring the audience up-to-date on network activities and introduce the new MnCAAN website for review and comment.

**Directions:** The Walker Art Center is located across from the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, where Lyndale and Hennepin Avenues merge. Pay parking is available in the City of Minneapolis garage on the Walker site (entrance on Vineland Place just west of the Guthrie Theatre). Enter the Walker from the interior of the garage (accessible entrance). Take the elevator directly to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor Skyline 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.

# ELDERSHIRE: TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE OF AGING

## Follow-Up to February VAN Forum

Time ran out before Bill Thomas could answer all of the audience questions that were turned in at the end of the February VAN Forum. Dr. Thomas has sent us the following responses to the remaining questions:

- *Have you run into any zoning regulations and how have you dealt with them?* Zoning and subdivision regulations can certainly be roadblocks and even roadside bombs. Thorough investigation and navigation of these areas is a key element to success. Luckily we have had an experienced captain at the helm of our initial efforts.
- *How can you help build community if you are not a member of that community?* The experience of those who have succeeded in building communities indicates that outside help and expertise is often key to success. Involving “experts” with the proper experience and mindset can shave off years and dollars, and make a significant difference in building a successful community.
- *Our greatest need for your housing concept is in the city. How do we find a place/land to build on?* There are “infill” sites in many places within cities. There are also many buildings that could lend themselves to retrofitting. This approach has proven successful in a number of places.
- *Do you see Eldershire as the model we should all live in? Should we give up our own, already-existing communities?* The key element relates to developing community and the benefits that devolve therefrom. For some, building a new community is the way to go. For others, it may be bringing into existing neighborhoods the way of living that we are espousing.
- *Can you make an intentional community in an existing old city neighborhood with existing housing?* Yes. Although the physical elements contribute greatly to having a true community, we know that such communities exist – more or less – in a number of urban settings. Many elements we have been discussing can be incorporated into existing neighborhoods.
- *What are the barriers to starting and completing a Green House?* First is the existing mental set of nursing home providers and regulators. Once this is overcome, the logic and economics of a Green House program can be seen. The work under the recent Robert Wood Foundation grant will see 50 Green Houses spring up over the next several years.
- *How do the 70 and 80 year olds get involved?* Give us a call or send an e-mail. Our website is [www.eldershire.net](http://www.eldershire.net). You can call Arthur Rashap, our project director at 607-674-2650. His e-mail is: [arashap@eldershire.net](mailto:arashap@eldershire.net).
- *How do we harvest social capital intergenerationally?* By doing what comes naturally – sharing stories, caring, knowing the other person.
- *How do we involve people outside of the mainstream?* This movement will grow from a small group of early adopters – pioneers, if you will – to a larger group of adapters fitting the concept to their particular needs and desires. Then these successes will spread to the larger community as a whole, when the benefits become apparent.
- *How do we teach older adults that receiving help is OK?* There could be

no giving if there were no receiving. Being a gracious and thankful recipient of another's kindness, love, and generosity is an important experience.

- *How do you change the thinking of a society that has developed institutional communities so that it can focus on building social capital in intentional communities?* By doing exactly what we are now doing – researching, discussing, creating models and then getting the word out. You are part of the solution.
- *How can seniors who need help dressing and thinking, have \$5,000 in savings, and collect minimum Social Security as their only source of monthly income, afford to live in an Eldershire community?* For some, there needs to be a proper long-term care place – that is why we developed the Green House concept. We are working on ways to enable people with smaller incomes to be able to be a part of an Eldershire community – perhaps by renting accessory units or sharing a home.

At the ASA (American Society on Aging)/NCOA (National Council on Aging) joint annual conference held in Anaheim March 15-19, a group of organizations, including the Vital Aging Network, hosted a reception where Bill Thomas spoke again about changing the paradigm from “aging in place” (support services provided to older adults living alone in their residences) to “aging in community” (residents self-organized to assure services for themselves and each other). Several workshops, including VAN workshops on “Vital Communities” and “Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging,” emphasized the value of building on senior assets, encouraging elder-friendly communities, cultivating multi-generational civic engagement, developing universal access – numerous approaches to vital aging in community.

One result of this surge of interest at the conference has been the initiation of an Aging in Community Network to connect everyone interested in creating intentional communities that are elder rich, build social capital, and are environmentally sustainable. Individuals interested in participating in the network and/or who have some ideas that they want to express about this mission, send an e-mail to the Denver-based network facilitator, Janice Blanchard: [janicesa@comcast.net](mailto:janicesa@comcast.net).

## **COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES**

### **Administration on Aging Awards Communities**

In the Spring of 2005, the Administration on Aging (AoA) sponsored a competition to identify and showcase cities and counties that exemplify a “livable community” and to highlight promising practices. Livable communities are places where people of all ages can live comfortably. For the competition, they were defined as cities and counties that have taken specific, collaborative actions and made significant, measurable improvements in six key areas. Livable communities:

1. Provide affordable, appropriate, accessible housing
2. Adjust the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility
3. Ensure access to key health and supportive services
4. Ensure accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation

5. Provide work, volunteer, and education opportunities
6. Encourage participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

The "Livable Communities for All Ages" winning communities are:

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Broome County, New York
- Central, Virginia
- Dunedin, Florida
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- New York City, New York
- Tamarac, Florida

The competition was administered by the Center for Home Care and Policy Research, Visiting Nurse Service of New York, with the participation of the American Planning Association and the International City/County Management Association. For more information and to download the Livable Communities for All Ages Booklet go to <http://www.vnsny.org/research/aoacompetition/>.

## **A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER**

### **The MN Creativity and Aging Get-Together**

An exciting mix of speakers, performers, and presenters did a stellar job of sharing their talents and knowledge with the 82 attendees on Friday, March 3 and the 110 on Saturday, March 4.

#### ***A Grand Beginning***

On Friday night, the Walker Art Center hosted MnCAAN's pre-conference celebration of artistic expression by older Minnesota adults. Sandra Menafee Taylor's multi-media installation performance/exhibit used stunning memory collages of "Tending and Mending" from frail and healthy elders. It also included readings from the writings of elders and a series of video elements to highlight these and other reflections on tending and mending. Gene Cohen's comments set the stage for understanding creativity and for appreciating the wealth of artistic contributions by older people.

#### ***Creating Art, Creating Conversation***

Saturday was a collage of performances and presentations. After participants made creative nametags (reflecting their life purpose), the presentations began with Walker Methodist drummers, followed by Kairos dancers with saxophonist Irv Williams illustrating the mix of music, dance, and memory. Gene Cohen gave an exciting and well-received report on his research verifying the health benefits for arts involvement. Twelve other groups and individuals gave presentations, talking about and/or demonstrating their approaches to generating artistic expression among older adults. Prominently displayed throughout the day were large art/writing/photo panels created at four Minnesota sites under MnCAAN sponsorship. The climax of the day was the small-group discussions in the afternoon, followed by each group's highly creative artistic report back to the whole group.

### ***Becoming a National Model***

The MnCAAN conference has drawn the attention of the National Center for Creative Aging, which plans to draw on our success as a model for their first national conference in November. Top officials at the National Endowment for the Arts are also showing interest in what we accomplished. We are helping to foster opportunities for artistic expression among older adults, not only in Minnesota, but as part of a national movement. Thanks to all of you who contributed your expertise, interest, and participation!

For more information on MnCAAN and the National Center for Creative Aging, go to: [http://www.creativeaging.org/ncca\\_network\\_mn.html](http://www.creativeaging.org/ncca_network_mn.html).

## **ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS**

### **Save the Date for the 1<sup>ST</sup> Annual Celebration of Older Americans Month**

Elder abuse is one of the most underreported crimes in our nation. It is estimated that for every one case of elder abuse that is reported, at least five remain unreported. In Minnesota that means every year over 25,000 vulnerable elders suffer abuse in silence. In order for services to be provided to elder abuse victims, victims need to know that what happened to them is abuse. Law enforcement, health care professionals, attorneys, and our communities as a whole, need to know that violence does not discriminate based on age.

To increase elder abuse awareness, ElderCare Rights Alliance in collaboration with the Minnesota State Arts Board, asked Minnesotans – professional and aspiring artists, community members, individuals, or groups – to create a piece of artwork with a theme of elder abuse awareness. The goal of the “Awareness Through Art” campaign is to combine the silence of elder abuse with the expressive voice of art to start a dialogue with communities, families, service providers, and elders. The winning artwork will be reproduced as a poster and distributed throughout Minnesota. This poster will be unveiled at an event on May 11<sup>th</sup> for the first annual celebration of Older Americans Month by the ElderCare Rights Alliance.

The May 11<sup>th</sup> event will include educational sessions in the afternoon featuring “Awareness of Ageism” by Jan Hively, PhD., Vital Aging Network and, “Anticipate: A Skill Building Activity”; identifying victim strengths and planning for safety concerns, facilitated by Nadine Lujan, JD and Adine Stokes, LSW. In the evening, in addition to the unveiling of the winning poster from the “Awareness Through Art” campaign, there will be speakers to raise awareness on elder abuse prevention and a silent auction. The silent auction is a benefit for the ElderCare Rights Alliance. Participants may bid on items throughout the evening. There will be many items to bid on, including a free weeks stay at an international resort and memorabilia from the Twins and Vikings. There will be refreshments and entertainment.

As the event get closer, visit [www.eldercarerights.org](http://www.eldercarerights.org) for more details of the

day and to register for educational sessions and the event. Call (952) 854-7304 or email [info@eldercarerights.org](mailto:info@eldercarerights.org) with questions.

## **\$10,000 BOOMER BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION Early-Stage Ventures are Sought**

The baby boomer market represents over \$2 trillion in annual spending power. The aging of the baby boom generation means new opportunities for growth, service and profit. From early-stage ventures in medicine to media, fashion to financial services and beyond, entrepreneurs are invited to enter the competition. The third annual international \$10,000 Boomer Business Plan Competition aims to stimulate the best ideas from the best universities and tap into the business expertise and creativity of today's entrepreneurs who are addressing the 45+ market.

The \$10,000 Boomer Business Plan Competition provides contestants with the opportunity to meet investors and partners, secure resources and get media exposure to help turn dreams into realities. All entrants will receive feedback on their submissions. The Top 20 semifinalists will have their plans reviewed by venture capitalists and industry experts. The Top Five finalists, including the Grand Prize Winner, will have the opportunity to:

1. present to an esteemed panel of judges at the 2006 Silicon Valley Boomer Venture Summit, an event designed to uncover new opportunities for business and investment in the Boomer marketplace;
2. gain potential media exposure and special invitations from sponsoring companies and the venture community; and
3. receive extensive materials on the size and demographics of the market, online and offline sales strategies, and access to the top organizations touching the 45+ market.

The competition is open to individuals and teams of students, alumni, faculty or staff at accredited four-year colleges and universities; entrepreneurs from early-stage companies with annual revenues of \$0 to \$1 million; and independent business professionals.

Contestant registration deadline is April 21, 2006. For more information go to: [www.boomerventuresummit.com/competition/](http://www.boomerventuresummit.com/competition/).

## **WWW.CAREGIVERMN.ORG A Resource for Family Caregivers**

The CaregiverMN website is a service of DARTS (Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors) that offers multiple resources for family caregivers, including one-to-one support and workplace resources for Twin Cities area caregivers and some culturally specific information for Spanish-speaking and

Among family caregivers. Resources include:

- Education and resources on topics ranging from caregiver basics to medical and housing issues to legal and financial considerations.
- Online advisor for confidential one-to-one help with your specific need.
- Selected links to other websites.



## DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

Let VAN know if you have events in your community for vital agers. Visit [www.van.umn.edu](http://www.van.umn.edu) and click on "Send Us a Calendar Event."

**Saturday, April 1, 2 p.m.**

### **Composing a Life that Excites Your Spirit**

The Twin Cities Gray Panthers, a member of Community Solutions Fund, is sponsoring an intergenerational discussion with Rita Golden Gelman, author of *Tales of a Female Nomad*. At 48, Rita sold her possessions and took off. She's been wandering the world ever since, singing with kings and cannibals, living with orangutans and blue-footed boobies, handing out with Sandinista soldiers in Nicaragua and warrior dancers in Bali. This conversation is about living your life boldly, independently and passionately across the world and the years.

Location: Wilder Foundation Auditorium, 919 Lafond Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104 (go to north parking lot behind Building A for free parking)

Cost: free

Contact: Sally Brown at 651-642-4091

**Wednesday, April 5, 12:30 – 2 p.m.**

**(and subsequent Wednesdays through May 10)**

### **Ecology of Minneapolis Parklands**

Join leaders from the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board on walking tours of several park sites to discover the exciting diversity of ecology and nature. Park sites include Minnehaha Park, St. Anthony Falls, Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary, Mississippi River Gorge, Lyndale Park Gardens at Lake Harriet, and Lake Nokomis.

Cost: \$10 (includes all six sessions)

Registration and questions: call Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at 612-624-7847

**Saturday, April 8, 9 a.m. – noon**

### **Anoka County Senior Expo 2006 – "Celebrate Healthy Living"**

The Anoka County Senior Expo is a free event open to seniors and their families. There will be information booths, a free pancake breakfast, entertainment, blood pressure checks and mini-massages. There is ample parking and the event is handicapped accessible.

Location: Horizon Community Church, 1503 157<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ham Lake, MN 55304

Questions: call Mary at 763-323-6042 or Cindy at 763-422-6972

**Thursday, April 13, 5 – 7 p.m.**

### **"Gifts That Keep On Giving"**

Oak Meadows Senior Living is hosting a soup and bread dinner program. After

dinner, Rev. Richard Stenholtz, Chaplain/Community Outreach with Heartland Home Health Care and Hospice will lead a discussion on the gift of time (the value of being present), the gift of affirmation (words that can be both healing and life changing), and the gift of five wishes (the value of advanced care planning).

Location: Oak Meadows Senior Living in Oakdale

Registration: Dinner is \$5.00 and payable that evening. Registration is required by April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Contact: 651-578-0676 or [info@oak-meadows.org](mailto:info@oak-meadows.org).

### **Thursday, April 13**

#### **“Aging with Indignity” Art Exhibit Opens**

Works by artists Bette Globus-Goodman and Lucy Rose Fischer will open on April 13 at the Larson Art Gallery, University of Minnesota, St. Paul Student Center. The exhibition features photographic and glass works by two artists specializing in the process and experience of aging. The exhibition runs through June 1. A panel discussion and brown-bag lunch with the artists and special guest speakers from the MN Gerontological Society (MGS) will be held on April 26, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the St. Paul Student Center.

Location: St. Paul Student Center, U of M St. Paul campus, 2017 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108

Cost for exhibition: free

Cost for panel discussion: students and MGS members – free, non-MGS members - \$10

Registration for panel discussion: email [mngs2@aol.com](mailto:mngs2@aol.com) to RSVP

### **Tuesday, April 25, 8 – 9:30 a.m.**

#### **“Managing Life’s Transitions”**

Oak Meadows Senior Living is hosting a Breakfast for a Buck session.

Participants will learn timely tips for helping those facing a serious illness, the *Four Pillars of Truth*, and the place Hope plays in coping with loss.

Location: Oak Meadows Senior Living in Oakdale

Registration: Breakfast is \$1.00 and payable that morning. Registration is required by Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Contact: 651-578-0676 or [info@oak-meadows.org](mailto:info@oak-meadows.org).

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. Visit the VAN Web site at [www.van.umn.edu](http://www.van.umn.edu)

