

HEALTHWORD

Putting Health Promotion in Motion

** INAUGURAL ISSUE **

June 2004

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HEALTHWORD is a monthly e-mail newsletter produced by the American Society on Aging's Live Well, Live Long project, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Live Well, Live Long provides education and resources to professionals in the field of aging to help them improve health promotion and disease prevention efforts aimed at older adults. Current and past issues of this newsletter are available on the Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/CDC>.

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INTRODUCING HEALTHWORD

This issue inaugurates HEALTHWORD, a monthly e-mail newsletter published by the American Society on Aging's Live Well, Live Long program (<http://www.asaging.org/cdc>).

Supported through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Live Well, Live Long is an online resource offering informational materials and resources to help professionals design effective health promotion education, outreach and advocacy programs for older adults. The Live Long, Live Well website is organized into educational modules on specific topics such as medication management and cognitive vitality.

With HEALTHWORD, we hope to help you achieve the following:

- * Save time when organizing and developing effective health promotion activities
- * Increase the number of health promotion programs your organization provides to older adults
- * Develop convincing, evidence-based cases in your search for funding for health promotion programs
- * Learn about additions to the Live Well, Live Long website as we post new educational modules and update resources

If you are interested in joining the discussion on these issues, log on to the Live Well, Live Long website and click on "Forum." Or contact Director of Special Projects, Nancy Ceridwyn at nancyc@asaging.org with your comments and questions.

Feel free to forward this free e-newsletter to colleagues who might find it of interest. You can find instructions on how to subscribe or unsubscribe to HEALTHWORD at the end of this e-mail.

FEATURE:

COGNITIVE VITALITY: WHAT'S NEW

As demand grows for dynamic tools to help elders maintain and enhance their mental fitness, professionals in the field are creating a wealth of new materials.

Sandra Cusack, a research fellow in educational gerontology at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, and Wendy Thompson, an educational gerontologist, recently published their contribution to this growing field, taking a new approach in preparing the learner for mental fitness.

Their new book, "Mental Fitness for Life: Seven Steps to Healthy Aging" (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 2003; 252 pages; \$24.95), starts by addressing barriers to expanded thinking:

- * Stereotypes about elders' mental capacities
- * The belief that the time to maintain and even hone mental capacity has passed
- * Fears of failing to reaching personal goals or of having others downplay the importance of mental growth

Cusack and Thompson also give readers more empowering language to use in mental fitness and creativity training programs. By building on the authors' new perspective, older learners can open themselves to the freedom that memory enhancement and learning can bring.

Cusack and Thompson identify a number of memory-enhancing exercises that highlight two key elements: attention and interest. The authors recommend selecting topics that interest participants to maintain good attention and focus during the exercises. Clear, critical and creative expression engages the world and fosters understanding. The

newfound confidence that these exercises instill encourages a lifelong endeavor of questioning, valuing and learning each day.

For more information on crafting cognitive vitality promotion programs, as well as a curriculum for you to use to guide presentations, visit <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module2/phase4/index.cfm>. Here are a few additional resources:

--> AARP Cognitive Vitality Resources. A great collection of daily games and puzzles can be found on the AARP website (<http://www.aarp.org/games>). In addition, use the website search function to look for an engaging article by AARP staff writer Sandy Berger titled "Amused and Confused by Internet Puzzles?"

--> "Aging Creativity and Art: A Positive Perspective on Late Life Development" by M. S. Lindauer (New York City: Plenum Press, 2003); 312 pages; \$69.95.

--> "Brain-Building Games With Words and Numbers (Mostly)" by A. D. Bragdon and D. Gamon (Cape Cod, Mass., and San Francisco: Brainwaves Books, 2001); 223 pages; \$14.95.

--> "Don't Lose Your Mind: Four Components of Superior Mental Fitness" by C. Lynch (Kensington, Calif.: Bridge Learning Systems, 2001); 51 pages; \$10.

--> "Legacy Works: Transforming Memory Into Visual Art: A Program for Older Adults" by S. Perlstein and S. Golden (New York City: National Center for Creative Aging, 2002); \$18.

BEST PRACTICES:

2004 MINDALERT AWARDS HONOR INNOVATIVE COGNITIVE VITALITY PROGRAMS

Every year, the American Society on Aging and MetLife Foundation present the MindAlert Awards to programs that offer creative mental fitness programming for older adults. The winning programs are recognized for their innovation, their basis in research, demonstration of their effectiveness, their potential for replicability and the extent to which the programs are accessible to diverse populations of elders. Here are the winning programs for 2004:

NORMAL MENTAL FITNESS CATEGORY

Senior Peer Counseling Program
Center for Healthy Aging
Santa Monica, Calif.

Healthy Aging's senior peer counselors offer emotional and practical support to elders who may be too uncomfortable to seek out professional psychiatric services. But the peer counselors also benefit from the program by receiving mentally challenging and meaningful materials. Counselors attend training workshops and weekly supervision with

a licensed mental health professional to increase their skills and expand their relationships with other counselors.

EARLY DEMENTIA PROGRAM CATEGORY

The Buddy Program

Northwestern University Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease Center
Chicago, Ill.

The Buddy Program matches first-year medical students at the Northwestern University School of Medicine with individuals diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. The program allows the students and diagnosed individuals to get to know each other on a personal rather than a clinical level.

INNOVATIVE OLDER ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM CATEGORY

The Illuminated Life

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
University of Hawaii at Manoa

“The Illuminated Life” workshop is a comprehensive, structured life review program designed to help independent older adults enhance their psychological functioning. The 14 two-hour weekly meetings in the workshop each address a “life question.” Participants prepare for each meeting by reading a brief workbook chapter and completing an exercise that helps them arrive at their answer.

For more information on past MindAlert Award winners, including program contact information, visit <http://www.asaging.org/awards/mindalert.cfm>. The website also gives instructions on how your program can apply for the 2005 awards.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: 2004 East Coast Summer Series on Aging

Dates: July 12-15, 2004

Location: Sheraton University City Hotel, Philadelphia

The American Society on Aging’s Summer Series on Aging offers regional training for professionals in many different sectors of society who work with older adults, their caregivers, and their families. The Summer Series offers full- and half-day intensives led by regional and national experts who teach practical skills for participants to take back to the workplace. Continuing education credits are available for certain professions.

Intensives focusing on health promotion:

- * An Alternative Health Sampler
- * Lifelong Wellness Across Generations
- * Too Tired to Care: Recognizing and Responding to “Compassion Fatigue” and Burnout
- * What’s Happening in Cognitive Vitality Programs? Lessons from Four Exceptional Programs

* Where the Science Meets the Real World: Adapting Evidence-Based Health Promotion Programs to Community Aging Service Organizations

To learn more about these sessions and to register online, visit <http://www.asaging.org/summer-series>.

Event: National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) Annual Meeting

Dates: July 14-16, 2004

Location: St. Paul, Minn.

Staff from the American Society on Aging will present two 50-minute roundtable sessions on "Successfully Reaching Older Adults With Your Chronic Disease Prevention Program" on Thursday, July 15, 3:00-4:45 p.m. For more information, visit the conference website at http://www.naccho.org/files/documents/2004_naccho_annual.html.

Have an event related to health promotion and aging that you would like to tell your colleagues about? Please submit your event, call for papers or grant announcements to Nancy Bui at nbui@asaging.org. Include the following information in the body of the e-mail:

- * Event title
- * Organization/sponsor
- * Date(s) and time(s)
- * Location (full address)
- * Contact information (name, phone number and e-mail address)
- * Website address
- * Description of the event (100 words or less)

SURVEY DRAWING WINNERS

Congratulations to recent winners of the Live Well, Live Long survey drawing!

January 2004: Margie Bolton

February 2004: Joy S. Schwartz

March 2004: Yolanda Sanchez-Lovato

Winners were picked randomly from the list of people who participated in the Live Well, Live Long online survey. For your chance to win, sign on to the Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc>. By completing the quick, five-question survey on the site, you will automatically be entered into our monthly drawing. Your answers will help program administrators evaluate the effectiveness of Live Well, Live Long and guide us in improving the health promotion resources we produce.

Drawing prize winners choose one of the following prizes:

* Free one-year subscription to ASA's quarterly journal, Generations
(<http://www.generationsjournal.org>)

* Free one-year subscription to ASA's bimonthly newspaper, Aging Today
(<http://www.agingtoday.org>)

* Free one-year membership in the American Society on Aging (<http://www.asaging.org>)

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SUGGESTIONS AND QUESTIONS. For more information or comments about the newsletter, please contact Nancy Ceridwyn, Director of Special Projects at ASA, at nancyc@asaging.org.

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