

HEALTHWORD
Putting Health Promotion in Motion

July 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 U.S. 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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FEATURE:

BECOMING A HEALTH MOTIVATOR FOR OLDER ADULTS

Motivation for healthy living comes from more than making a personal commitment to improving your health. Think about the wide range of motivators in your life -- a friend, a mentor, an event, your beliefs, your culture, your environment.

We as professionals in aging can become motivators by redefining our work as facilitators, not just teachers or care providers. Our work includes advocating for environments that provide access, developing key partnerships that inspire, using culturally relevant practices that invite participation, and identifying self-empowerment strategies that fit into the lifestyle and daily routine of older adults.

“Blueprint for Health Promotion,” the first health promotion Web module developed by ASA’s Live Long, Live Well project in conjunction with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, outlines ways for professionals in aging to create environments that support healthy behavior.

How do we become motivators? Phase I of “Blueprints for Health Promotion” identifies a three-step model for empowering elders to incorporate healthy activities in everyday life:

1. Look for the pleasures that can be found in change.
2. Realign your view of older adults -- seeing them not as “patients” but as self-healers -- and help elders adopt that view as well.
3. Teach elders skills to attain the confidence to self-heal.

Here are a few examples of how to use these three steps:

STEP ONE. Dr. David Sobel from Northern California Kaiser Permanente identifies healthy pleasures that reduce a heart health crisis:

- * Partnerships and marriage
- * Pet ownership
- * Education and learning
- * Humor
- * Siestas
- * Sexual activity
- * Happiness that buffers from depression

STEP TWO. Language is often a potent signifier of attitudes, beliefs, and moods. Kate Lorig of Stanford University has spent years developing self-help groups for older adults. She helps elders redefine themselves by adopting more self-confident language:

- * I can do this
- * I have the skills to do this
- * This fits into my daily life
- * I choose to do this
- * I feel pleasure and am satisfied
- * I feel support and connectedness to my friends, partner, and care provider

STEP THREE. Professionals working in health promotion education and counseling have successfully used this eight-step process to teach elders how to undertake the process of change:

- * Identify a problem (relevant to the older adult’s daily life, not to his or her health chart)
- * Decide what to accomplish
- * Look for alternatives to unhealthy behaviors
- * Make short-term plans -- a contract for change
- * Carry out the contract
- * Check the results

- * Make adjustments to the contract as needed
- * Reward success

But health education doesn't just stop at motivating individuals. The field of health education has expanded from counseling to the "heavy lifting" tasks needed to motivate communities. Addressing barriers to healthy living by creating safe areas for walking and exercise, making fresh foods affordable and easily obtainable, and providing health services at low cost go hand in hand with one-on-one advocacy.

Most of all, health promotion is about building relationships with people -- with the individuals you motivate, with the people who care about them, and with community leaders, business owners, and local healthcare providers.

To read the full "Blueprint for Health Promotion" module, visit the Live Long, Live Well project website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc>.

BEST PRACTICES:

ASA PRESENTS HEALTHCARE AND AGING AWARDS TO SEVEN INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

In April 2004, the American Society on Aging's Healthcare and Aging Network, sponsored by Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative, presented its annual Healthcare and Aging Awards. The awards recognize innovative programs aimed at improving the health of elders. Congratulations to the following winners of the 2004 awards:

SENIOR EXTENSION NUTRITION PROGRAM

Aging and Adult Services of North Idaho
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Aging and Adult Services of North Idaho works with the University of Idaho Extension to provide nutrition, money management, and food safety education to elders living in their homes. Trained nutrition advisors travel to clients' homes to provide educational lessons in the importance of a healthy diet for long-term health.

CAREGIVER ACCESS PROJECT

Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

Caregiver Access Project staff conduct extensive outreach to identify caregivers in their region who have poor access to information and services. Identified caregivers receive home visits from program staff, individualized needs assessments, referral services, telephone or online support, and access to educational workshops on Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

LEAP: LEARN, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE, PRODUCE

Mather LifeWays
Evanston, Ill.

LEAP is a comprehensive workforce initiative that aims to educate, empower, and retain nurses and certified nurse assistants in long-term care facilities. During the past year, LEAP has been successfully implemented in 13 long-term care organizations, reaching more than 1,000 nursing staff in four states. Outcomes include significant reductions in turnover rates, increased staff job satisfaction, and improved resident quality indicators.

KEEP MOVING PROGRAM

Office of Elder Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Boston, Mass.

Keep Moving is a statewide initiative to increase physical activity among people ages 50 or older by creating community-based, member-centered walking clubs. Volunteer leaders enroll their peers, organize club activities, and preview walking routes.

MONTESSORI-BASED PROGRAMMING FOR LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS WITH DEMENTIA

Myers Research Institute, Beachwood, Ohio
and HCR Manor Care, Toledo, Ohio

Myers Research Institute is using Montessori methods, customarily associated with early childhood education, in programming for HCR Manor Care residents with cognitive impairments. The approach has increased residents' participation in activities and gets high marks from staff.

THE SILVERSNEAKERS FITNESS PROGRAM

HealthCare Dimensions
Tempe, Ariz.

The SilverSneakers Fitness Program is offered free through 15 health plans to more than 600,000 Medicare-eligible members across the United States. The fitness programming, conducted at a network of contracted fitness centers, appeals to all levels of readiness and focuses on improving older adults' strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination.

COMFORT AND JOY—CELEBRATING INTERGENERATIONAL ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT

NewCourtland Elder Services
Philadelphia, Pa.

This exhibit represented the culmination of five years of artwork from the Comfort and Joy program, an arts and entertainment-based initiative that brought residents of nursing homes together with students to create new works of art.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: The World Congress on Aging and Physical Activity: Research to Action for an Aging Society

Dates: August 3-7, 2004

Location: London, Ont.

Held every four years, the International Society for Aging and Physical Activity's World Congress on Aging and Physical Activity provides an opportunity for the world community to share the latest research findings in the area of aging and physical activity. This year, the congress will introduce leading-edge methods on developing, implementing, and evaluating physical activity programs for older adults. For more information, visit <http://www.uwo.ca/actage/wcapa/en/index.htm>.

Event: The Age Odyssey 2004: A Timeless Journey

Sponsors: Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Board on Aging

Dates: August 24-25, 2004

Location: St. Cloud, Minn.

The Age Odyssey is Minnesota's largest multidisciplinary aging education and networking event dedicated to aging services and community long-term care. The conference focuses on strategies to help older adults remain independent and ways for communities to develop the infrastructure and services needed to best serve elders. For more information, visit <http://www.mnaging.org/ageodyssey/>.

Event: Calling All Clans: Health and Wellness

Dates: August 28-30, 2004

Location: Milwaukee, Wisc.

This year, the biannual National Indian Aging conference will focus on healthy living for Indian people, especially on living with diabetes and diabetes prevention for Indian youth and elders. Download the conference brochure from <http://www.nicoa.org/conference-2004.pdf>.

Call for Abstracts: First International Conference on Creative Expression, Communication, and Dementia

Event dates: May 6-7, 2005

Location: Vancouver, B.C.

Sponsored by the Institute for Health Promotion Research, University of British Columbia, this conference will be of interest to researchers in gerontology and dementia, creative expression facilitators, medical doctors, and formal and informal caregivers. It will also engage practitioners in the field of dementia care, administrators of care facilities, policymakers, families and the community at large. For more information on the conference and how to submit your abstract, visit <http://www.creativityanddementia2005.com>.

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 title, organization, date and time, location, contact information, and a short description of the event.

SURVEY DRAWING WINNERS

Congratulations to our 2003 winners of the Live Well, Live Long survey drawing!

June 2003: Lori Thyssen
July 2003: Cynthia Abel
August 2003: Deb Roush
September 2003: Laura C. Wilson
October 2003: Deborah Freemel
November 2003: Judy Tupper
December 2003: Katherine Papillo

Winners were picked randomly from the list of people who participated in the Live Well, Live Long online survey. For your chance to win a one-year membership in the American Society on Aging or subscription to one of our nationally renowned publications, 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 -- visit the website for the list of prizes. 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.

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