

HEALTHWORD

Putting Health Promotion Back in Motion

May 2005

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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/HealthWord.cfm>.

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FEATURE:

DESIGNING COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS

By Chaya Gordon

The U.S. population is becoming more culturally diverse as it ages. By 2050, elders of color will number approximately 30 million -- more than one third of the projected older adult population. How can health promotion programs reach such varied audiences?

Every community from rural Oregon to the Florida Keys has its own culture, and every community member has a unique cultural identity based on ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, disability, and other factors. Cultural characteristics give a community a "personality." We identify culture through music, food, celebrations, or languages, but it is also present in history, ideas, feelings, behavior, and institutions.

When planning or refining a health promotion program for a specific community, work with the community's elders to explore its culture and personality. Ask questions such as the following:

- * What is the community like?
- * What are its unique characteristics?
- * Are the characteristics of the community different for different groups of residents? (For example, is there a well-off side of town with parks and recreation facilities, and a less well-off side with vacant lots and few facilities?)
- * Is the community one big, inclusive group or are there subgroups?
- * Does the community have celebrations that bring everyone together?
- * Where do elders from the community congregate and what do they do there? What facilities and programs do they use? Why or why not?
- * What barriers prevent participation in health promotion activities?

No two communities are exactly alike; no solution or model can fit every community. Your challenge is to infuse your program with characteristics that elders find important in their community. Use the community's language and link to their arts, rituals, and philosophies. For example, in a community that holds regular fiestas or block parties, add dancing to your program as a healthy activity. In a community with faith-based values, hold programs in a church and enlist the congregation's support. And in a community of elders with family caregiving responsibilities, plan intergenerational activities.

Connect with the community's assets and resources by developing ties to local organizations, events, and issues, and hire older adults as peer leaders. Help build community capacity and empowerment while you provide opportunities for better health.

By asking for feedback and staying open to change, you can work toward the goal of making sure all elders have access to a variety of healthy options so they can lead active lives -- in their communities.

For more ideas on promoting health in your community, visit ASA's Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc>. For the new module on promoting physical activity, visit <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module6/phase3/index.cfm>.

PROGRAM EXCHANGE

HOSPITAL COMPARE

<http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov>

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has launched this new website to provide consumers with information on how well hospitals care for adult patients. Hospital Compare uses voluntary, self-reported information that hospitals have submitted to the department regarding three major causes of morbidity and mortality -- heart attack, heart failure, and pneumonia -- to show how often the hospitals provide the recommended care for adults with

one of those three conditions. Consumers can search for hospitals by state, county, city, zip code, or name.

Thanks to Les Plooster of the National Alliance for Caregiving for sending HEALTHWORD the link to this new tool. We welcome information from the electronic HEALTHWORD community about health promotion programs around North America. Send us a description of a program that you think other readers will be interested in learning about. Please keep in mind that this venue is not a commercial forum to purchase products but an interactive community of professionals. Send all submissions to Nancy Ceridwyn at nancyc@asaging.org.

WHCoA EVENTS

Throughout the year, HEALTHWORD will post websites listing White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) events and draft resolutions affecting health promotion. The conference will be held October 23-26, 2005, in Washington, D.C. To read more about the importance of participating in the planning process, read the December 2004 issue of HEALTHWORD (posted at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/HealthWord.cfm>).

Event: American Library Association Pre-WHCoA Forum: "Libraries, Lifelong Learning, Information, and Older Adults"

Date: Friday, June 24, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Location: Chicago

Forum participants will develop recommendations on how libraries can serve older adults, looking at the WHCOA's six major subject categories. Registration for the forum is free, but attendance is limited to 150 participants, and all participants must register before June 1. For more information, visit

<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusabucket/prewhcoaforum/whcoa2005forum.htm>.

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WHCOA At-Large Delegate Applications

Members of the public may apply for consideration as at-large delegates to the 2005 WHCoA. The at-large delegates will be chosen by the WHCoA Policy Committee, a bipartisan committee appointed by the President and Congress to implement the conference. At-large delegates will represent national aging organizations, baby boomers, academic institutions, business and industry, disability groups, nonprofit organizations, and others with a stake in the aging of America.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: Effects of Air Pollution on the Health of Older Adults
Sponsor: The Mickey Leland National Urban Air Toxics Research Center (NUATRC)
Dates: June 14-15, 2005
Location: Arlington, Va.

This symposium will examine whether older adults have a greater likelihood of developing adverse health outcomes as a result of exposure to toxic air pollutants in their daily environments. Presenters and participants together will examine trends in environmental exposures to toxic air pollutants that may affect older adults. They will determine potential health risks as a result of these exposures and measures that can be taken to prevent or reduce exposures. Then they will formulate a new research agenda for NUATRC, focusing on older adults. For more information, visit http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/mleland/Pages/what.htm#Upcoming_Symposium.

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Event: Summer Series on Aging
Sponsor: University of Kentucky Sanders-Brown Center on Aging
Dates: June 27-29, 2005
Location: Lexington, Ky.

Health promotion sessions at this annual professional-education series include the following:

- * Osteoporosis: Prevention, Intervention and Model Promotions
- * Health Promotion for Vital Aging: Community-Based Practices From Across the Nation
- * Patterns of Alcohol Abuse in Older Adults and Their Implications

Early registration ends on June 3. For more information, visit <http://www.research.uky.edu/aging/summerseries>.

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Event: National Association of Area Agencies on Aging's 30th Annual Conference
Dates: July 9-13, 2005
Location: Bellevue, Wash.

This year's theme, "Boomers in Transition: Coming of Age in 2006," is a countdown to the boomers' "coming of age." The conference is geared to area agency on aging and Title VI directors and staff, aging-commission members, aging-services providers, academic researchers, and other federal, state, and local agency staff. Sessions on promoting healthy aging across the lifespan include the following:

- * Evidenced-Based Health Programs
- * Asian American Baby Boomers: New Perspectives on Aging
- * Lesbian and Gay Seniors: Cultural Competency Training for Providers
- * Diabetes Prevention . . . Proven, Possible, and Powerful!

For more information, visit <http://www.n4a.org/2005conf/bellevue2005.cfm>.

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Event: National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) Joint Conference

Dates: July 12-15, 2005

Location: Boston

This year's conference, whose theme is "Reversing the Tide: Promoting Policies and Programs to Advance the Nation's Health," will examine ways to strengthen and expand public health initiatives. The conference also will equip attendees with tools to strengthen their programmatic initiatives and to influence local, state, and national policy more effectively. Particular attention will be focused on the prevention of obesity and related chronic diseases. For more information, visit http://www.naccho.org/conferences/annual_conference.cfm.

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Event: Issues in Aging Medical Congress

Dates: July 14-17, 2005

Location: New Orleans

The Issues in Aging Medical Congress is a collaborative summit designed to benefit healthcare clinicians who want to enhance their knowledge and their practice skills to respond more effectively to the growing older adult population. The congress will address socioeconomic and healthcare issues facing Americans as they age, clinical skills related to preventive healthcare for elders, and diagnosis and treatment of the variety of healthcare concerns found among older adults. To obtain more information or register, visit <http://www.issuesinaging.com>.

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For more educational offerings in the field of aging, visit the searchable "Events in Aging" calendar on the ASA website: <http://www.asaging.org/calendar>.

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.

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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.

EDITOR

Nancy Ceridwyn

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jonathan Kauffman

CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Bui, Chaya Gordon, Sandra Maldague

LIVE WELL, LIVE LONG

American Society on Aging

833 Market Street, Suite 511

San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 974-9613

Website: <http://www.asaging.org/CDC>

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