

HEALTHWORD  
Putting Health Promotion Back in Motion

September 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:

INFUSING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INTO THE FIELD OF AGING

By Patrick Cullinane

Director of special projects, American Society on Aging

This summer, the Atlantic Philanthropies awarded the American Society on Aging (ASA) a grant for a three-year project to infuse the practice of civic engagement throughout all of ASA's activities. The project defines "civic engagement" as activities that enrich our communities and ourselves by improving quality of life. These activities can include volunteering, paid work, and community service.

Why focus on civic engagement and older adults? Although demographic changes and increases in longevity and health have changed the experience of aging in the United States, social institutions designed to serve the older population remain, to a large extent, focused on an image of aging as a period of declining function and withdrawal from social engagement. At the same

time, many of these same organizations have growing, unmet needs that could be addressed by engaging the social capital of the nation's healthy, active older adult population -- a group that is rapidly expanding in size.

ASA has both the responsibility and the potential to spread awareness of civic engagement among a broad audience of aging-services professionals who may not yet be involved in this movement. In a recent survey of ASA members, many members expressed a high level of interest in civic engagement; however, integrating civic-engagement activities into their organizations was a much lower priority.

The goal of this project is to magnify the image of older people as a social, economic, and spirited force whose potential benefit must be maximized if our aging society is to thrive in the 21st century. Specifically, the project will allow ASA to do the following;

- \* Develop a strategic focus on civic engagement within ASA's leadership and our membership
- \* Strengthen the bridge between research and practice in the area of civic engagement through educational sessions at ASA's conferences and in ASA publications
- \* Unite the practice of civic engagement with issues of diversity and cultural competence through ASA's New Ventures in Leadership program, a leadership mentoring program for aging-services professionals from ethnic- and racial-minority communities
- \* Link journalists covering the "age beat" with important stories on civic engagement

The Atlantic Philanthropies are a group of Bermuda-based charitable foundations whose grant investments are focused internationally in four program fields: aging, disadvantaged children and youth, population health, and reconciliation and human rights.

### Share Your Expertise!

Contact ASA to share your experiences with civic engagement or activities that your organization has undertaken. Alert us to successful programs that we can highlight on the new civic engagement website, which will be launched soon. For more information about the project, contact Patrick Cullinane, project director, at [pcullinane@asaging.org](mailto:pcullinane@asaging.org) or (415) 974-9642.

ASA hopes to inspire many more creative applications of the ideas of civic engagement throughout the field of aging. Once the seeds of civic engagement have been planted in our field, we hope to see them grow and be nurtured within society at large.

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TOOLS YOU CAN USE:  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT LINKS

The following resources were gathered from the website of ASA's civic engagement program, which will be launched soon.

#### RESPECTABILITY

<http://www.RespectAbility.org/>

The National Council on the Aging's RespectAbility initiative helps community organizations find ways to empower older Americans to address community problems. RespectAbility has recently released the findings of a survey that shows nonprofits are largely unequipped to use older Americans as volunteers. The initiative is also promoting a public-television documentary on retirement and developing a public-policy framework to increase civic engagement among elders.

#### CIVIC VENTURES

<http://www.civicventures.org>

Civic Ventures is a national nonprofit organization, based in San Francisco, that conducts research with older volunteers and helps people nearing retirement to discern how they can continue to contribute to society. The program's 1,800 Experience Corps members tutor and mentor thousands of children in 14 cities nationwide.

#### 'GENERATIONS' JOURNAL

<http://www.generationsjournal.org/generations/index.cfm?page=gen26-2/toc.html>

The theme of the Summer 2002 issue of "Generations," ASA's quarterly journal, is "Retirement: New Chapters in American Life." The issue contains more than a dozen articles, including "Ability Is Ageless" by Andrea Wooten and "Civic Windfall? Realizing the Promise in an Aging America" by Marc Freedman. The website provides a table of contents, the full text of several articles, and instructions on how to purchase copies of the issue.

#### ADDITIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT REPORTS

\* "Reinventing Aging: Baby Boomers and Civic Engagement" (Harvard School of Public Health and MetLife Foundation, 2004)

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/reinventingaging/Report.pdf>

\* "Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations" (The Urban Institute, 2004)

<http://www.urban.org/template.cfm?Template=/TaggedContent/ViewPublication.cfm&PublicationID=8794&NavMenuID=95>

\* "Baby Boomers Envision Their Retirement II: Survey of Baby Boomers' Expectations for Retirement" (AARP, 2004)

<http://www.aarp.org/research/work/retirement/aresearch-import-865.html>

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## WHCoA ANNOUNCEMENTS

\* As part of its “Civic Engagement in an Older America” initiative, the Gerontological Society of America sponsored a series of public forums and focus groups in February 2005 to develop recommendations to be submitted to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA). To read the recommendations, visit <http://www.agingsociety.org/agingsociety/Pages%20from%20Geron-NLSept05.pdf>.

\* ASA is pleased to announce that its president, Gloria Cavanaugh, has been selected as a WHCoA delegate. Along with the other 1,200 at-large delegates, Cavanaugh will vote on resolutions and help develop implementation strategies to help guide national aging policy for the next decade and beyond. Find more information about the conference, including the full list of at-large delegates, at <http://www.whcoa.gov>.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Correction: Please note that the August 2005 issue of HEALTHWORD incorrectly listed the location of “Enhancing Quality of Life in Late Life: The Role of Complementary and Alternative Therapies.” The correct location of the Sept. 23 event is the University of Pittsburgh, School of Nursing. (For more information on the event, contact the Office of Continuing Education at 412-624-3156.)

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Event: 7th Annual Allies in Aging Conference  
Date: October 20, 2005  
Location: Kitchener, Ont., Canada

Organized by the Alzheimer Societies of Guelph-Wellington, Cambridge, and Kitchener-Waterloo, this annual conference offers numerous sessions designed to help caregivers enhance their skills in caring for people with dementia. Topics will include research, medications, nutrition, and dementia care for trauma survivors. For more information, call 519-742-1422 or e-mail [askw@alzheimerkw.com](mailto:askw@alzheimerkw.com).

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Event: Third National Prevention Summit  
Dates: October 24-25, 2005  
Location: Washington, D.C.

This year’s summit, whose theme is “Innovations in Community Prevention,” will feature innovative chronic-disease prevention programs that are making a difference in communities across the country. There will be a special emphasis this year on health promotion and disease

prevention for older Americans and on the use of health literacy and information technology to promote disease prevention. For more information, visit <http://www.healthierus.gov/steps/summit.html>.

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Event: 2005 Canadian Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Conference  
Dates: November 6-8, 2005  
Location: Halifax, N.S., Canada

Join community practitioners, researchers, and policymakers at this year's conference, whose theme is "Evidence to Action: Injury, Violence, and Suicide Prevention." Sessions focusing on older adults include the following:

- \* Older Adults Falls Prevention Strategies
  - \* Seniors Falls Prevention: Addressing Falls in Health Care Institution
  - \* Suicide: Multiplying Efforts Through Institutional Capacity
  - \* Violence and Vulnerable Populations: Collaborative Action in the Prevention of Elder Abuse
- For more information, visit <http://207.35.157.99/natconf>.

\* \* \*

Event: American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Exposition  
New Date: December 10-14, 2005  
New Location: Philadelphia

Due to the devastating effect of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans, APHA has moved its annual meeting to Philadelphia. APHA will continue to address this year's theme, "Evidence-Based Policy and Practice," but will revise some of its programs to address the public health emergency across the Gulf Coast. Sessions with aging-related content include the following:

- \* Environmental Influences on Aging Well: Enhancing Healthy Living Through Better Design and Access
- \* Evidence-Based Practices and Aging
- \* Health Services Use and Adherence Behaviors Among Older Adults

For more information, visit <http://www.apha.org/meetings>.

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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](mailto:nbui@asaging.org). Include the title, organization, date and time, location, contact information, and a short description of the event.

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HEALTHWORD (ISSN 1554-5997) is published monthly by the American Society on Aging through a grant provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Subscription is free of charge, and you are welcome to forward this newsletter to interested colleagues.

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SUGGESTIONS AND QUESTIONS. For more information or comments about the newsletter, please contact Sandra Maldague, manager of health promotion at ASA, at [sandram@asaging.org](mailto:sandram@asaging.org).

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