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Grant To Support Journalists’ Meeting Coverage

The MetLife Foundation has awarded GSA a $75,000 grant to establish a fellowship program that will bring a group of aging-focused reporters to the Society’s Annual Scientific Meeting this November in New Orleans, LA. Half of the invited participants will be chosen from ethnic media outlets.

The newly created MetLife Journalists in Aging Fellows Program will accept up to 14 individuals, who will be expected to deliver a story from the conference and a major piece or series in the following three months.

“This is a terrific opportunity to provide momentum for a stronger media focus on aging issues,” said GSA Deputy Executive Director Linda Harootyan, MSW. “It’s important to spread the word about research from our meeting even if the current economy has resulted in cuts to reporters’ travel budgets.”

Harootyan will co-direct the project with Paul Kleyman, the senior editor of New America Media’s ethnic elders newsbeat. He is the former editor of the American Society on Aging’s “Aging Today” newspaper and most recently worked with GSA as a consultant on the media program during the 2009 Annual Scientific Meeting in Atlanta, GA.

Applications for the new fellowship program will be reviewed by a selection committee of representatives from GSA and New America Media. The criteria will include clarity and originality of proposed longer-term projects; quality of samples of published or produced work; high-impact potential of proposals geographically and across different ethnic or racial populations; and a signed form of consent from the participating journalist’s principal editor or producer.

Upon arrival in New Orleans, the fellows will participate in a day-long pre-conference session. GSA will showcase research highlights from the meeting, provide a program overview with individual attention to the interests of attending reporters, and host discussions with veteran journalists.

Public Television Seeks GSA’s Expertise in New Venture

Twin Cities Public Television, working in collaboration with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and American Public Television, has recruited GSA for a major role in a new project called Next Avenue, an unprecedented media initiative designed to reach and engage the senior audience.

In addition to feature programming, innovative social media, and community-based events, Next Avenue will offer a vast online resource center — located at nextavenue.org — that adults age 50 and older can visit for information on numerous topics.

Director Greg O’Neill, PhD, and Program Manager Sarah Frey of GSA’s public policy institute, the National Academy on an Aging Society, will be working with Next Avenue to build relationships with public, private, and non-profit organizations who would like to disseminate their valuable content through nextavenue.org.

“The concept is very compelling,” said O’Neill. “Just as ‘Sesame Street’ has helped generations of children to flourish with its unique combination of information and entertainment, the goal of Next Avenue will be...”
From the Executive Director

Media Projects Generate New Aging Buzz

By James Appleby, RPh, MPH
jappleby@geron.org

Public awareness of aging issues will soon get a major boost thanks to GSA’s communications efforts. As we continue to develop ties to other professional organizations, the Society is working on a handful of initiatives that involve direct collaboration with the mainstream media. Given the comprehensive health care reform law now being implemented, the timing is perfect!

The front page stories discuss how a generous grant from the MetLife Foundation will allow reporters to participate in our annual meeting in New Orleans, and how GSA has teamed up with public television to help them reach the senior demographic.

As this newsletter is mailed to members, a third partnership is underway. I mentioned in the February issue that GSA would become a stakeholder in the International Longevity Center-USA’s (ILC-USA) annual Age Boom Academy, which is taking place during the second week of June.

Since 2000, this weeklong seminar has welcomed journalists from around the country for a crash course in all things aging-related. The sessions have proved invaluable to the participants, many of whom do not regularly report on issues of concern to older people.

Long-time GSA member and ILC-USA President Dr. Robert Butler is the event’s show runner. The list of presenters contains many other prominent names from the GSA membership roster, too. And Greg O’Neill, director of our public policy branch, is slated to speak about civic engagement on the first day.

A session with U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee is also on the Age Boom agenda.

Using a carefully managed database of nearly 1,000 reporters, GSA shares news about its members’ research with journalists on the age beat. EurekAlert, our press release distribution service, puts us in touch with thousands more. The projects discussed above, however, allow us to interact with media outlets in a closer and more meaningful way.

For example, as the new public television coalition develops the online resources for its Next Avenue series, GSA will play the lead role in guiding decisions for content that will reach millions. The journalists selected to attend our annual meeting through the MetLife Foundation grant will remain in contact with us for months as they develop their in-depth articles.

At the Age Boom Academy, GSA Communications Manager Todd Kluss will meet the participants in person to share the many resources the Society can provide for them.

These relationships that GSA has cultivated will allow us to expand critical awareness about aging issues and bring further attention to the work of our members.

The support of well-established names such as PBS and the MetLife Foundation demonstrates that GSA is increasingly seen as the most comprehensive and credible source for information that can improve the lives of older people.

Sincerely,

James

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Washington, DC 20005-4018
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Binstock Earns UCLA’s Distinguished Professorship

Former GSA President Robert Binstock, PhD, has been named the 21st UCLA Academic Geriatric Resource Center Distinguished Professor for his extensive and enduring contributions to geriatrics and gerontology. Upon receiving this award on May 20, he delivered an address titled “Anti-Aging Medicine and Science: An Arena of Conflict and Profound Societal Implications.” Binstock is a professor of aging, health, and society at Case Western Reserve University. He holds primary tenured appointments in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Medicine and in the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, and secondary appointments in the Departments of Bioethics, Medicine, Political Science, and Sociology.

Berkman Achieves AASWSW Fellow Status

GSA Fellow Barbara J. Berkman, DSW, has been named a fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (AASWSW). She and 23 others were recognized in Washington, DC, in late April for their distinguished accomplishments as scholars and practitioners dedicated to achieving excellence in high-impact work that advances social good. Berkman is currently the Helen Rehr/Ruth Fizard Professor of Health and Mental Health at the Columbia University School of Social Work and an adjunct professor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. She is also the principal investigator and national director of the Hartford Faculty Scholars Program, which GSA administers.

Award Recognizes Moody’s Career Efforts

Masterpiece Living, a successful aging initiative, recently awarded the Robert L. Kahn Award to Harry R. “Rick” Moody, PhD, director of academic affairs for AARP. This distinction was given for his outstanding achievements at AARP and throughout his career. The award, established in 2008, recognizes contributions to the propagation and application of principles of successful aging. At AARP, Moody has led the Office of Academic Affairs in sponsoring a series of national conferences on positive aging. Under his leadership, the organization created a nationally disseminated course, “Making Age an Asset,” which is available in more than 1,600 community colleges across the country.

Binstock

GSA Fellow Bob Knight, PhD, was quoted in the “It’s All Relative” column of the Los Angeles Times on April 17. He discussed the importance of recognizing clinical depression in older adults. Furthermore, he said that younger people, including younger medical personnel, often do not notice depression in older adults or think of it as a normal part of aging.

Member Spotlight

GSA’s website features monthly Q&A sessions with distinguished members. March’s spotlight shines on: Guifang Guo, PhD
Visit www.geron.org/Membership/member-spotlight to ask questions and read previous interviews.

Chin Hansen Named New AGS Chief

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) has named outgoing AARP President Jennie Chin Hansen, RN, MSN, FAAN, as its new chief executive officer. Prior to joining AARP, she spent nearly 25 years — over 11 of them as CEO — with On Lok, the San Francisco-based program that provides coordinated, comprehensive, interdisciplinary, community-based medical, nursing, allied health and social services, and housing for frail older adults. Hansen played a leading role in both expanding On Lok’s offerings and replicating the program nationwide. She began her career as a community and public health nurse in California and Idaho. Hansen was the 2002 winner of GSA’s Maxwell A. Pollack Award for Productive Aging.

New Publication by Members

Aging Advocacy Grows on Capitol Hill

An Interview with Congressional Chief of Staff Cathy Hurwit

Following a recent Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) briefing for congressional staff on Older Americans Act program appropriations needs, I had the pleasure to sit down with Cathy Hurwit, who serves as chief of staff for U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL).

We got together primarily to discuss the new Democratic Seniors Task Force, which was launched on May 14, but covered a range of issues relevant to aging advocates across the country, including the upcoming reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and President Obama's Fiscal Commission.

Cathy and her boss played key roles in drafting the new health care reform law. Schakowsky is a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, one of the committees with jurisdiction over the new law. Her support for the Elder Justice Act (as the lead co-sponsor of the bill) and her work on care coordination provisions for those with multiple chronic conditions are just two examples of her impact on the law.

Schakowsky’s advocacy has led to the creation of the new Democratic Seniors Task Force, which could end up being a stepping stone for a full, bipartisan select aging committee down the road.

The following excerpt highlights part of our discussion:

Brian W. Lindberg: Please tell me about your short and long-term goals for the Seniors Task Force.

Cathy Hurwit: First, let me say that we are looking forward to working with both Democrats and Republicans on programs and services for older adults. Every district has boomers and older adults with needs, so these should not be partisan issues.

Having said that, as a starting point, we have been able to create this new task force to bring our colleagues in the Democratic Party together on the many issues facing this population.

Our objectives are straightforward. We want to reach out to America’s seniors and address the issues that matter most to them. The Seniors Task Force is co-chaired by Congresswomen Jan Schakowsky and Doris Matsui (D-CA). We believe that there is a need for a concerted effort to protect the rights of seniors and raise awareness of policies and legislation that will improve their well-being.

As a first step, we have worked with advocates to create a Seniors Bill of Rights, which identifies areas that we can agree are critical for the future security of older adults. They include financial and economic security; quality, affordable health care; protection from scams and fraud; and safe and livable communities.

Of course we have already been working on many of these issues during health care reform, the recovery act, and in financial reform, but bringing our leaders together in this task force will improve our ability to make the case for seniors on all our committees, and to the public, as well. We already have more than 30 members and the Seniors Bill of Rights has 40 original co-sponsors.

BWL: We have spent a good bit of time communicating with our members about what health care reform means to older adults and those with disabilities. Will the task force play a role in reaching out to the public to explain health care reform?

CH: Absolutely. Reforming the health care system is extremely challenging, but there has been a lot of misinformation out there about the bill. We are working with members of Congress to give them the tools to explain to their constituents in understandable terms the value of the new law for seniors, who will benefit in many ways from its passage.

I hope your readers will take a look at our website, www.dems.gov/seniors, and the Seniors Bill of Rights, and ask their member of Congress to join the Seniors Task Force.

BWL: I know of your strong support for the Older Americans Act and the aging network. Next year, the OAA is scheduled for reauthorization. What do you see as our challenges and opportunities for this law that serves so many?

CH: We have heard from advocates that this reauthorization should be transformational, that big ideas are in order, and we think that makes sense. Yet at the same time, others have urged us to step back and look at the Act in terms of its evolution and examine whether it is serving those who need services the most.

Are we reaching the targeting goals that the law mandates? Are those with the greatest social and economic need, particularly low-income minority seniors, receiving the support they need in the community, in nursing homes, and in their own homes? So we know this is a great law that has successfully served tens of millions of older adults; now, our challenge is making it better.

BWL: Do we have the data to inform us on those questions you raise?

CH: It is not clear yet if the data is sufficient, but we really do need adequate information to know how we can do this better, so we are looking at ways to evaluate and then ensure that the poorest seniors are getting what they need: quality care, nutritious meals, the jobs, and the protection from abuse.

BWL: A new coalition called the Age4Action Network has been working on service, older worker, and life-long learning issues for boomers and older adults. Do you see an OAA role in those areas?
CH: It seems to me that the aging network is in a great position to build on its community presence and make sure boomers and seniors can easily link up with volunteer, work, and learning opportunities.

Seniors already do a great deal in their communities as volunteers, caregivers, as parents and grandparents, and somehow we need to let people know this and create more opportunities for them to do more.

I know that my generation is going to demand meaningful service opportunities, particularly those where we can help youth have brighter futures and help frail seniors. And I know there are some great intergenerational programs now that use seniors to tutor kids or help entrepreneurs create small businesses, for example.

BWL: So what do you think will be the schedule for the OAA reauthorization?

CH: This year we have seen some good listening sessions sponsored by the Administration on Aging. They are already developing their ideas for the act and I know that they will work with others in the administration over the next months, like the secretary of health and human services and the Office of Management and Budget.

Congress will also use this year to begin its thinking on reauthorization, but it will probably be next year that you’ll see hearings both in Washington and in the congressional districts.

We hope that the Seniors Task Force will play a role in that process and work with the Education and Labor Committee as they move forward with this important work.

BWL: On another topic, Congresswoman Schakowsky has been named by the speaker to serve on the president’s 18 member Fiscal Commission, and many advocates are concerned that this commission will focus too heavily on cutting health care, including Medicare and Medicaid, which Congress just finished working on, and Social Security, which many believe is not the cause of the financial crisis we face.

CH: These are huge questions that we face on the commission. We view our job on the commission is to ensure that all the information about these programs is fairly presented and discussed. In addition, we believe that the tax code and expenditures in other areas of the budget must be considered as well.

The commission is a very long way from coming up with recommendations that 14 of the 18 members of the bipartisan commission will support.

Representative Schakowsky is committed to working with the other members toward strengthening our economy and righting our fiscal course. She is also committed to making sure that seniors, children, individuals with disabilities, and low- and middle-income Americans are not harmed by this effort.

She is also committed to ensuring that everyone on the commission understands the importance of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid — as well as efforts like the Older Americans Act — to seniors and their families, and the economic realities that they face, particularly in today’s economy.

Granted, dealing with our fiscal problems is a big challenge, but balancing the budget on the backs of those with the biggest needs and the least resources is not the direction we should take.

As the work of the commission moves forward we will look to your members and other researchers, policy developers, and advocates to help us make the best case for older adults.

BWL: We look forward to helping in whatever way we can. Thank you, Cathy, for your time and the work you do.

For more information about the Seniors Task Force, including its mission, the Seniors Bill of Rights, and its members, go to www.dems.gov/seniors.

Continued from page 1 - Public Television Seeks GSA’s Expertise in New Venture

to hyper-serve baby boomers and beyond, helping them to navigate a new life stage and to unleash their full potential as they age.”

Next Avenue, the result of three years of planning supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies, will include sustained, targeted programming across multiple high-profile shows; the aforementioned nextavenue.org, a major new online destination that will combine relevant content from both PBS and third-party providers with the power of social media; and quarterly community events coordinated by public television stations nationwide. The initiative will launch in 2011.

“With an established national monthly audience of 45 million people over age 50, public television is exceptionally positioned to deliver the life stage content people need and want in later life,” said Judy Diaz, president of Next Avenue. “We’re excited to be working with GSA to identify the best research and resources around health, finances, work and careers, volunteerism, leisure, and learning.”

Diaz added that Next Avenue can greatly extend the reach of public and non-profit organizations that serve older people in America. Furthermore, she said it will leverage the power of public media — online, on-air, and in-person — to serve millions of older Americans, their families, and their communities.

Twin Cities Public Television President and CEO Jim Pagliarini agreed.

“There is no comparable media resource for aging Americans that even comes close to the scope, reach, and impact of Next Avenue,” he said. “By the third year of implementation, we expect Next Avenue to draw at least three million television viewers per week, 750,000 unique web visitors per month, and 15,000 event attendees per year.”
Hartford Grants Increase Support for Geriatric Social Work Training

The prestigious Hartford Doctoral Fellows and Hartford Faculty Scholars programs have awarded $800,000 in combined new grants to ten researchers in the field of geriatric social work. Both programs — funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation and administered by The Gerontological Society of America — are components of the nationwide Geriatric Social Work Initiative (GSWI), which seeks to expand the training of social workers in order to improve the health and well being of older people and their families. Over 194 individuals have received grants to date.

The 2010 fellows and scholars are examining such topics as advance care planning, Chinese American Alzheimer’s family caregivers, and gender and racial disparities in cost-related medication non-adherence.

The GSWI collaborates with social work programs, organizations, and other funders around the country to meet the demand for social workers with training in geriatrics. These professionals help people understand and choose from an array of available health and social services.

Six outstanding individuals have been chosen as the newest inductees into the Hartford Faculty Scholars Program. They will be provided with opportunities for professional development and $100,000 in funding over the next two years.

Now in its eleventh year, the award aims to improve the lives of older adults by increasing the number of adequately trained geriatric social workers. Barbara Berkman, DSW, PhD, of Columbia University directs the national program committee that selects the recipients.

The Hartford Doctoral Fellows Program welcomes four new distinguished doctoral students. Each recipient receives a $50,000 dissertation grant plus $20,000 in matching support from their home institutions, which enables the awardees to concentrate fully on their dissertation research projects over the next two years.

Fellows also receive supplemental academic career guidance and mentoring, as well as professional development to help them successfully launch an academic career in gerontology and social work. James Lubben, DSW, MPH, of Boston College directs the national program committee that selects the fellows.

**Doctoral Fellows**

**Louanne Bakk**  
Michigan State University  
**Dissertation Topic:** Gender and Racial Disparities in Cost-Related Medication Non-adherence: The Effect of Medicare Part-D and Factors Impacting Compliance Among Older Women and Blacks

**Melissa Brown**  
Boston College  
**Dissertation Topic:** The Work-Eldercare Interface: Workplace Flexibility and Well-Being Among Family Caregivers of Older Adults

**Tina Maschi**  
Fordham University  
**Research Topic:** Exploring the Relationship between Trauma, Coping Resources, and Physical and Mental Well-Being among Older Adults in Prison

**Noell Rowan**  
University of Louisville  
**Research Topic:** Resiliency and Quality of Life of Older Adult Lesbians with Alcoholism

**Fei Sun**  
Arizona State University  
**Research Topic:** Coping with Behavioral Problems: A Longitudinal Qualitative Study of Chinese American Alzheimer’s Family Caregivers

**Faculty Scholars**

**Leslie Hasche**  
University of Kansas  
**Research Topic:** Measuring and Understanding Organizational Readiness to Adopt Health IDEAS

**Eunjeong Ko**  
San Diego State University  
**Research Topic:** Advance Care Planning and Low-Income Older Adults: Consideration of Socio-Cultural Factors Among Racially Diverse Groups

**Jung Kwak**  
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
**Research Topic:** Decisional Conflicts at the End of Life: The Needs of Surrogates for Persons with Dementia

**Tina Maschi**  
Fordham University  
**Research Topic:** Exploring the Relationship between Trauma, Coping Resources, and Physical and Mental Well-Being among Older Adults in Prison

**Noell Rowan**  
University of Louisville  
**Research Topic:** Resiliency and Quality of Life of Older Adult Lesbians with Alcoholism

**Fei Sun**  
Arizona State University  
**Research Topic:** Coping with Behavioral Problems: A Longitudinal Qualitative Study of Chinese American Alzheimer’s Family Caregivers
One of GSA's earliest efforts to bring minority aging research into the mainstream was a workshop held prior to the 1972 Annual Scientific Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Author Harry Golden addressed the opening session of this workshop with a presentation on "Black Aged in the Future."

In 1984, a task force on minority issues in aging began under the auspices of GSAs Social Research, Planning, and Practice (SRPP) Section. Within a few years, SRPP members Theodora Jackson and E. Percil Stanford, PhD, realized the need for an organization-wide body to focus on these topics. Former GSA Presidents Marjorie Cantor, MA, and Barbara Silverstone, DSW, LMSW, were also instrumental in this new group's development.

In 1987, the GSA Council authorized the creation of the ten-person Task Force on Minority Issues in Gerontology (TFMIG). Its long-range goals are to increase the quantity and quality of research related to minority aging issues, and to attract minority members in GSA activities and governance. The TFMIG has adopted three primary objectives: to encourage more quality research on minority aging; to increase the number of minority researchers; and to expand the participation of minority researchers in GSA leadership.

Further attention to minority aging issues came in 1989 when TFMIG members wrote editorials on the subject in GSA's peer-reviewed journals — bringing awareness to the vast readership of these publications. In the same year, GSA received a two-year grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging to help carry out its minority aging agenda. A 1991 publication produced as a result of this funding, "Minority Elders: Longevity, Economics, and Health," became instrumental in identifying critical areas of research needed to build a public policy base. Three years later, the book was republished as an extended edition, which included an annotated bibliography of GSA journal articles pertaining to minority issues. An updated bibliography was also included in 1999's "Full Color Aging: Facts, Goals, and Recommendations for America's Diverse Elders" and 2004's "Closing the Gap: Improving the Health of Minority Elders in the New Millennium."

The TFMIG has also been active beyond GSA. In 1991, TFMIG representatives conducted a congressional briefing that coincided with the release of a General Accounting Office report on underserved minorities. Later that year, they also developed recommendations for a reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

Throughout the years, GSA has been awarded many other grants that allowed the TFMIG to reach its objectives. With funding from the AARP Andrus Foundation and the National Institute on Aging (NIA), the Society's Minority Doctoral Student Leadership Development Program helped dozens of individuals transition to successful research careers — by providing them with financial support, mentors, and a strong professional network. The NIA also helped GSA launch the Minority Master's Level Scholars Program, which fostered the career development of approximately 30 students pursuing graduate degrees in gerontology.

In 2007, the TFMIG celebrated its 20th anniversary with special program events, including a retrospective symposium. A distinguished panel of speakers revisited each of the areas addressed in the 1989 editorials, examined what has happened since they were originally written, and explored opportunities and challenges for the future.

The TFMIG also sponsors a symposium at the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting. Recent topics in this series have included “Current Issues in Minority Aging — Genetic Research, Family Change, and Promoting Resilience” and “Creative Strategies for Healthy Aging in Minority and Underserved Populations.”

The TFMIG's Outstanding Mentorship Award, given annually, recognizes individuals who have exemplified outstanding commitment and dedication to mentoring minority researchers in the field of aging. The presentations are followed by innovative research forums where experts in the field address the theme of “Emerging Research on Minority Issues in Aging.”

The success of the TFMIG’s efforts can be seen in the increasing numbers of Annual Scientific Meeting presentations that address minority issues — jumping from a mere 23 in 1987 to almost 300 in 2009. Valerie Levy of the International Federation on Ageing carefully examines the program schedule each year to compile a comprehensive list of presentations having minority aging content. This information is published in the Schedule of Sessions on Minority Aging Topics, which has been funded by the Research Centers for Minority Aging Research, National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, and the Atlantic Philanthropies.
Careers in Aging Week exists to increase the awareness and visibility of gerontology-related vocational opportunities. It is sponsored every April by GSA and its educational branch, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). Universities and colleges participate by hosting events at their schools or in their communities. These activities may include guest speakers, career fairs, poster sessions, video presentations, panel discussions, and receptions.

GSA and AGHE would like to thank all the participating organizations and commend the imaginative ways they promoted gerontology on their campuses. The examples below highlight just some of the events held across the country.

**George Mason University** announced the launch of the nation’s first degree for executives seeking to manage the country’s nearly 50,000 active adult, assisted living, continuing care retirement, and related senior housing communities. As approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the new Master of Science in Senior Housing Administration will begin in the fall 2010 semester. Furthermore, the school organized a Careers in Aging Fair to showcase its Certificate of Gerontology available to students.

**Indiana University**, through its School of Social Work’s Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education, sponsored a Careers in Aging Week luncheon panel discussion. Four community agency social workers and one Hartford student scholar shared their experiences in working with older adults; how and why they came to work with older adults; and what they like about their work.

**Mercer Community College** welcomed the assistant commissioner for the division of health and community services at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

**Minnesota State University Moorhead** sponsored its 10th annual Gerontology Colloquium, which welcomed a recent graduate who now works as the activities and volunteer event director at a senior living facility. She shared her experiences working in the field of aging, job search tips for students, and the rewards and challenges of her career.

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**Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2010 Careers in Aging Week Grants!**

- California State University, Long Beach
- Columbia University
- Indiana University School of Social Work
- Michigan State University
- Saint Cloud State University
- Utica College
- University of North Texas
- Upper Peninsula Health Education Corporation
- University of South Florida

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Save the date for next year’s Careers in Aging Week!

Visit [www.careersinaging.com](http://www.careersinaging.com) for more information!
Portland State University held a panel discussion titled “Careers Promoting Healthy Aging”. The panelists included a landscape architect who specialized in aging-in-place design, an expert who focuses on therapeutic horticulture and senior living, a program associate with Experience Corps, an an exercise consultant.

San Jose State University sponsored three panel presentations featuring local professionals who work with older people. Among the thirteen total speakers were a retired social worker and the executive director an adult day services center. They spoke about the challenges and opportunities facing students who are seeking careers in gerontology. The events drew a combined audience of over 275 students.

The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) welcomed acclaimed wellness expert Marge Coalman of Touchmark lifestyle communities. In her keynote address, titled “Imagine the Possibilities,” she discussed life enrichment in retirement living, brain building tips and exercises, and Touchmark’s nationally recognized fall reduction and awareness program. Coalman’s presentation was followed by a panel discussion of former UCO students who discussed careers in geriatrics.

The University of Georgia held its second annual Careers in Aging Week Networking and Roundtable Discussion to educate students on opportunities in the field of aging. During the event, participants rotated among a multidisciplinary group of professionals.

The University of Utah screened the Sundance Film Festival award winning documentary “Young at Heart.” A panel presentation from leaders in private, governmental, and non-profit organizations serving older adults also took place on campus. Additionally, the school sponsored a career fair that welcomed representatives 20 different agencies.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison, under the auspices of its Student Geriatric Interest Group, hosted the school’s first annual Careers in Aging Day. The event featured exhibits from health professionals and organizations in the field of aging.

Save the date for next year’s Careers in Aging Week: April 10 to 16, 2011. Visit www.careersinaging.com for more information!
Australia Welcomes Americans for Policy Research

The Australian-American Health Policy Fellowship offers a unique opportunity for outstanding, mid-career U.S. professionals — academics, government officials, clinical leaders, decision makers in managed care and other private health care organizations, and journalists — to spend up to 10 months in Australia conducting research and working with leading Australian health policy experts on issues relevant to both countries. The Australian Department of Health and Ageing, in partnership with the Commonwealth Fund, hopes to enrich health policy thinking as fellows study how Australia approaches health policy issues, share lessons learned from the United States, and develop an international perspective and network of contacts to facilitate exchange and collaboration that extends beyond the fellowship experience. The fellowship is structured around mutual areas of interest, such as health care quality and safety, the private/public mix of insurance and providers, fiscal sustainability of health systems, management and efficiency of health care delivery, health care workforce, and investment in preventive care strategies. Applicants’ proposals should address one of the program’s areas of interest and clearly demonstrate the intention to combine research and practical experience; the relevance to both the U.S. and Australia; achievable outcomes given the duration of the placement; and the potential to advance policy in Australia and the U.S. For further information and to obtain an application, visit www.commonwealthfund.org/ fellowships. Please direct questions to Robin Osborn of The Commonwealth Fund at (212) 606-3809 or ro@cmwf.org. The deadline for receipt of applications is August 15.

State Agencies Needed To Further Nutrition Program’s Goals

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will invest in pilot projects to increase access to and participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, among low-income seniors. Award grants, totaling approximately $8 million, will allow state agencies to pursue innovative outreach and delivery pilot projects. Interested state agencies may obtain grant applications at www.grants.gov or www.fns.usda.gov/snap. USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is encouraging state agencies to submit grant applications for programs designed to boost SNAP participation among Medicare’s Extra Help population. (Extra Help, also called Low Income Subsidy, is a program to help low-income individuals or couples with limited resources pay for their Medicare prescription drug plans.) Under a new law, data from these applications is sent to state Medicaid agencies to enroll people in Medicare Savings Programs. FNS will provide funding to encourage the Extra Help population to participate in SNAP by using state Medicaid agency data from Medicare Savings Programs. FNS invites state agencies to submit applications that will implement outreach efforts, simplify eligibility, or standardize benefits for this population. The deadline to submit grant proposal applications is June 30.

NIA Seeks To Address Clinical Questions

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) invites applications to support short-term projects — involving secondary analysis of existing data sets or stored biospecimens — to address clinically related issues on aging changes influencing health across the life span and/or on diseases and disabilities in older persons. This funding opportunity announcement will support activities addressing specific hypotheses in clinical aging research and/or informing the design and implementation of future epidemiologic or human intervention studies or current geriatric practice in maintenance of health, management of disease, and prevention of disability. Existing data sets also may be used to develop and test new statistical analytical approaches. The application deadline is July 5. See grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-09-265.html for further information.

NIMH Developing Centers for Intervention, Services Research

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) invites research grant applications related to the missions of the Division of Services and Intervention Research and the NIMH Geriatrics Research Branch. The latter supports intervention research relevant to older adults. The purpose of the grants is to provide infrastructure support for groups of investigators that will allow expansion of their intervention and/or services research. The scope of this offering is broad and meant to support investigators who are involved in treatment, prevention and/or services research. Applications are due by June 24. See grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-087.html for more details.

Continued from page 1 - Grant to Support Journalists

journalists on how to position aging stories in the current media environment.

U.S. government statistics predict that over the next 40 years, the older population of the country will double. Those from ethnic and racial minorities are expected to reach 40 percent of America’s population age 65 and over by 2050.

Harootyan said that these demographic trends prompted GSA and New America Media to seek support from funders to provide assistance for reporters.

“Ethnic media outlets now reach more than 57 million Americans, according to New America Media’s market research,” she noted. “GSA’s meeting is one of the few places where journalists can turn to experts to better understand scientific discoveries, social and policy debates, and solutions to the issues facing our aging population.”

The MetLife Foundation, the funder for this project, was created in 1976 by MetLife to continue its longstanding tradition of contributions and community involvement. Its goal is to empower people to lead healthy, productive lives and strengthen communities. The foundation typically makes grants related to the areas of health, education, civic affairs, and culture.
Recruitment for Careers in Aging: Where Do We Succeed and Where Do We Fail?

As emerging scholars and professionals of The Gerontological Society of America, we are passionate about conducting research and working with aging populations worldwide. Some ESPO members may have always known this was what they wanted to do, whereas others recently may have discovered this area of research, practice, and/or policy.

While the aging population continues to grow in size, there has been a developing concern about whether or not there are enough scholars and professionals to conduct research and provide resources for aging individuals and their diverse needs.

Emerging scholars and professionals sooner or later will be in positions that will allow them to promote careers in aging. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide a brief overview of successful recruitment practices, barriers to recruitment success, and strategies for improving recruitment into aging-related careers with the primary goal of encouraging emerging scholars and professionals to share their passion for careers in aging with others.

There are several examples of successful recruitment practices that introduce and engage students in aging-related careers. The Aging Means Business forum sponsored by GSA at its annual meetings has brought attention to the importance of promoting aging-related careers and has highlighted the vast array of different careers that fit into this category. Careers in Aging Week and AgeWork.com also have been successful at promoting aging-related careers.

Specific marketing tactics also may help increase participation in events affiliated with Careers in Aging Week. For example, advertisements for free things (e.g., food) seem to attract students to career events and introduce them to the concept of aging-related careers. Another successful marketing strategy is when universities hold panel discussions of professionals in aging careers and advertise for the event as a general career fair event.

Scholars and professionals have sought to understand barriers to recruiting students into aging-related careers. One of the major barriers to recruitment is the lack of effective marketing in our industry. Professionals suggest that we need to help others see that aging is happening and that careers in aging are lucrative. Basically, we need to get out there and tell people about the plethora of gerontological careers.

As indicated by Deborah Koder and Edward Helms in a 2006 issue of Australian Psychologist, a second barrier to recruitment success is a lack of training programs in both academic and work settings. Susan Wesley, in a 2005 issue of Gerontology and Geriatrics Education, found that even when aging-related training programs are offered for students and professionals, course content can be limiting and focused primarily on the negative aspects of aging.

A third barrier to successful recruitment involves students’ attitudes toward working with older adults. Students may find age differences between themselves and older adults intimidating. Generational differences may be contributing to students’ attitudes regarding older adults and unfounded stereotypes may be affecting their decision to choose an aging-related career.

Strategies for improving recruitment into aging-related careers vary and may differ by discipline. The first strategy involves learning effective tools to market our industry, and making time in our busy schedules to promote career opportunities in gerontology purposefully.

A second strategy may be to expose more graduate students to gerontology courses and clinical training opportunities. Gregory Henrichsen, in a 2000 issue of Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, found that students may have little knowledge about aging but have interest in expanding their knowledge regarding older adults and their needs. Thus, curricula throughout higher education may be needed.

As cited by Helen DeVries in a 2005 issue of Gerontology and Geriatrics Education, and supported by Nicole MacFarland in a 2010 issue of Aging Times, it seems that it may be most beneficial to expose students to aging-related careers, help students obtain experience with these careers, and train students to be experts in this work. Scholars also may want to consider how their research findings are getting to the public. Are we communicating with our communities and being responsive to their needs?

Overall, we must share our passion for working with older adults with those around us, especially the future generations of workers. If we fail to improve our recruitment strategies, we may risk allowing those who do not understand aging to provide inadequate care to our elders as well as teach and inform future generations.

*The author would like to thank members of the ESPO Newsletter Task Force for their significant contributions to this article. Candace Brown, Jason Danely, Nicole MacFarland, Kori Novak, and Stacy Ogbeide shared their ideas, personal experiences, and scholarly references regarding this important and timely topic.*
Greg O’Neill, PhD, is the director of GSA’s public policy institute, the National Academy on an Aging Society. He was born in Appenzell, Switzerland, and grew up in Toronto, Canada, where he graduated with a bachelor’s degree from the University of Toronto. O’Neill went on to receive a doctorate in sociology with a concentration in population studies from Duke University. There, he studied under prominent gerontologists such as former GSA President Linda K. George, PhD, former GSA President George Maddox, PhD, DSc, and GSA Fellow Deborah T. Gold, PhD.

O’Neill began his tenure at GSA in 1998 as a research analyst working on the Academy’s popular “Chronic and Disabling Conditions” and “Young Retirees and Older Workers” series of data reports. His publications include “The State of Aging and Health in America,” a national and state-by-state report card on healthy aging. O’Neill’s most recent article, “The Baby Boom Age Wave: Success or Tsunami?” appears in the new book, “Boomer Healthy Aging.”

He also is the managing editor of the Public Policy & Aging Report, the Academy’s signature publication, edited by Boston University policy expert and GSA Fellow Robert B. Hudson, PhD.

For the past 5 years, O’Neill has directed GSA’s Civic Engagement in an Older America project, an initiative funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies to advance the issue of older adult civic engagement in the research and public policy arena. One of the project’s first activities was a series of cross-country listening sessions on civic engagement that informed the proceedings of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging — where O’Neill served as the appointed civic engagement track coordinator.

In 2009, his long-standing interest in demographics, business, and aging issues led him to launch the Aging Means Business forum at GSA’s Annual Scientific Meeting. The day-long event drew almost 100 academic experts and business leaders interested in understanding, attracting, and capitalizing on a growing senior market. A second Aging Means Business forum is planned for this year’s GSA meeting in New Orleans, LA.

One of O’Neill’s current projects teams him up with The National Council on Aging and Experience Wave. This partnership has created the Age4Action Network, which will connect organizations and individuals focused on work, civic engagement, lifelong learning, and advocacy to resources, knowledge, and tools they can use to best leverage the talent of older adults. GSA’s primary role in the endeavor will be to create an online research and policy action center.

The front page of this newsletter gives detail about O’Neill’s latest venture, which involves a close collaboration with public television.

Older adults increase their chances of falling by not taking their medications as directed, according to an article in the latest edition of the Journals of Gerontology Series A: Biological and Medical Sciences (Volume 65A, Number 5). This new information comes from a recent study of Boston-area residents over age 70, which found that those who sometimes neglected their medications experienced a 50 percent increased rate of falls compared with those who did not.

“Falls can now be added to the growing list of poor health outcomes associated with non-adherence to medication,” said lead author Sarah D. Berry, MD, MPH, a research scientist with the Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife in Boston. “Because non-adherence is common and easy to screen for, health care providers should discuss this subject with their patients.”

Berry and her co-authors are the first investigators to study the association between falls and medication adherence. The team used data gathered from subjects in the Maintenance of Balance, Independent Living, Intellect, and Zest in the Elderly of Boston (MOBILIZE Boston) Study, a community-based cohort of seniors recruited for the purpose of studying novel risk factors for falls.

They examined responses from a total of 246 men and 408 women with an average age of 78. Between 2005 and 2008, 376 individuals in this group reported a total of 1,052 falls.

A participant was characterized as having low medication adherence if he or she answered yes to any of the following questions: Do you ever forget to take your medications? Are you careless at times about taking your medications? When you feel better do you sometimes stop taking your medications? Sometimes if you feel worse when taking your medication, do you stop taking it? High adherence was defined as a “no” answer to every question. In total, 48 percent of the respondents were classified as having low medication adherence.

Those in the low-adherence group experienced falls at an annual rate of 1.5 times that of the high adherence group. This association persisted after adjusting for other variables, including age, sex, cognitive function, and total number of medications.

The journal article’s authors were supported by the Hartford Geriatrics Health Outcomes Research Scholars Awards Program, the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for the Aged/Harvard Research Nursing Home Program funded by the National Institutes of Health, and an unrestricted grant from Pfizer, Inc.
NIH Issues Alzheimer’s Consensus Statement
A panel convened by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has released a consensus statement on the prevention of Alzheimer’s disease. At a three day meeting, over a dozen experts shared research on the risk factors for both Alzheimer’s and age-related cognitive decline. The panel determined that there is currently no evidence of even moderate scientific quality supporting the association of any modifiable factor — dietary supplement intake, use of prescription or non-prescription drugs, diet, exercise, and social engagement — with reduced risk of Alzheimer’s disease. The evidence surrounding risk reduction for cognitive decline was similarly limited. Low-grade evidence did show weak associations between many lifestyle choices and reduced risk of Alzheimer’s disease and cognitive decline. However, studies have not yet demonstrated that these medical or lifestyle factors actually cause or prevent Alzheimer’s disease or cognitive decline — only that they are related. To view the full text of the consensus statement, as well as a webcast of the panel’s meeting, visit consensus.nih.gov/2010/alzstatement.htm.

Profiles Detail States’ HCBS Programs
The Benjamin Rose Institute, under a cooperative agreement with the Administration on Aging, has worked with state units on aging (SUAs) to create profiles of each state’s home- and community-based service (HCBS) programs. The project report covers the components of HCBS programs under multiple funding streams. It also includes reported progress and barriers to progress experienced by the SUAs in shifting the balance from institutional care to HCBS. Its purpose is to provide a broader understanding of each state’s infrastructure for HCBS programs for two target populations: older adults and adults with physical disabilities. The project’s scope is broader than prior work because it covers the states and the District of Columbia, along with all major HCBS revenue streams for the elderly and adults with disabilities. The report begins with an overview of findings from cross-state comparisons with accompanying tables and charts; individual profiles of 48 states and Washington, DC, also are included. The findings are intended to provide the states with information that can help guide their efforts to expand and improve HCBS programs. The report is now available online at the Benjamin Rose Institute’s website, through the Katz Policy Institute page. It can be accessed using the following link to the Aging Strategic Alignment Project: www.benrose.org/KPI/ASAP111809.cfm.

CDC Addresses Trends in Older Men’s Health Status
“Trends in Health Status and Health Care Use among Older Men,” a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), presents trends in older men’s health status, functional status, mortality, health care utilization, and health care expenditures. It complements a previous CDC publication, “Trends in Health Status and Health Care Use among Older Women.” To read the complete report, go to www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr024.pdf.

NCHS Issues Nursing Home Data Briefs
The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has released two new data briefs that provide valuable information about nursing home resident needs, care quality, and potential opportunities for prevention. “Potentially Preventable Emergency Department Visits by Nursing Home Residents: United States, 2004” finds that in 2004, eight percent of U.S. nursing home residents had an emergency department (ED) visit in the previous 90 days. Among nursing home residents with an ED visit in the previous 90 days, 40 percent had a potentially preventable ED visit. Injuries from falls were the most common conditions accounting for potentially preventable ED visits by nursing home residents. To view this data brief, visit www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db33.htm.

“Prevalence and Management of Pain, by Race and Dementia among Nursing Home Residents: United States, 2004” finds that in 2004, about one-quarter of nursing home residents reported or showed signs of pain. Forty-four percent of nursing home residents with pain received neither standing orders for pain medication nor special services for pain management (i.e., appropriate pain management). Among residents with dementia and pain, non-white residents were more likely than white residents to lack appropriate pain management. To view this data brief, visit www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db30.htm.

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS
FACULTY POSITION IN GERIATRIC MEDICINE
The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) is seeking nominations of physician-scientists with expertise in geriatric clinical trials for an open rank, tenure-track/tenured faculty position in the Division of Geriatrics. The successful candidate will join a very active and well funded faculty position in the Division of Geriatric Medicine.

The position includes a superb startup package, ample office and laboratory space.

Nominations and self-nominations along with curriculum vitae should be sent to the attention of:

Elena Volpi, MD, PhD • Division of Geriatrics
Department of Internal Medicine • University of Texas Medical Branch
301 University Blvd, Galveston, TX 77555-0460
evolpi@utmb.edu

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Iowa School Adds Two Specializations
Ashford University in Clinton, IA, has established a new online long-term care specialization in its health and human services bachelor’s degree program and a long-term care management specialization in its health care administration and health care studies bachelor’s degree program. Students who complete a long-term care specialization may pursue further studies and/or employment in fields such as aging services, gerontology, allied health, public sector and social service programs, adult daycare centers, assisted living facilities, continuing care communities, group care homes, acute care settings, home healthcare, or health education.

New Funds Enable Rush To Address Health Disparities
Rush University Medical Center has been awarded a $10 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to establish the Rush Center for Urban Health Equity. The new facility aims to find ways to promote changes to eliminate the disparities in heart and lung disease affecting inner city residents, in particular those who are low-income persons of color. The Center will be dedicated to preventing health disparities by conducting rigorous behavioral clinical trials and testing interventions across the age spectrum from children to the elderly. It will involve a dynamic multidisciplinary team representing basic and clinical research, cardiology, behavioral sciences, gerontology, endocrinology, epidemiology, and pulmonary medicine to address a variety of levels of risk factors, including the community, family, social network, and individual psychology and behaviors.

Eastern Michigan Pioneers Dementia Study Certificate
Eastern Michigan University has announced that it will offer the first graduate level certificate program in the country that specializes in the study of dementia. The certificate is geared to professionals in hospitals, home health care, research centers, veterans’ services, business settings, and substance abuse centers. The multidisciplinary program will provide a theoretical framework and practical grounding for work with families and persons with dementia in the home, community-based programs, and 24-hour care settings. The program also will emphasize the social psychology of dementia, changes in people and their communication, and ways they compensate during the disease's progression. Students will learn techniques to accommodate changes, learn ongoing assessment of the person and the environment, and will develop supportive interventions to increase the person's well being. For more information, go to www.ep.emich.edu/dementia.

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Nutrition
Obesity
Public Health & Health Policy
Renovascular Diseases
Thromboembolism
Vascular Diseases
New Developments Transform Canadian Employment Demographics

“The Changing Canadian Workplace,” a new report released by TD Economics, examines the upcoming shift in the Canadian workplace due to macroeconomic changes, demographic trends, and new workplace standards. The approaching retirement of the baby boom generation will cause the decline of more than a third of the country's labor force over the next two decades. This will result in new policy incentives for underrepresented groups, such as immigrants, women, and older workers to enter industries with the greatest shortages. Furthermore, the shift will cause changes relating to pension plans, highly skilled labor, educational obtainment, and income gaps. The report can be downloaded from www.td.com/economics/special/ff0310_canlab.pdf.

Britons Experience Low Interaction with Parents

The U.K. newspaper The Telegraph has reported that one in eight British adults have not seen their parents in a year or more because they are either too busy or live too far away, according to a survey by the elderly charity Christie’s Care. The poll also found that one in 10 adults only speaks on the telephone with their mother or father once every four weeks. Despite living on average just 66 miles away, 12 percent of aging parents see their sons, daughters, and grandchildren three times a year. Long office hours, children’s homework, and after-school activities were among reasons to prevent a visit to elderly parents, according to the survey. One-third of people over age 40 blamed their hectic lifestyles for not making time, while 43 percent said they lived too far away to make more of an effort. Over 3,000 Britons were questioned for the survey.

Japanese Exosuit To Aid Farm Workers

According to Agence France-Presse, Japanese scientists have developed a robotic suit designed to aid elderly farmers. The metal-and-plastic exoskeleton boasts eight electric motors that amplify the strength of the wearer’s arms and legs and sensors that can detect movements and respond to commands through a voice-recognition system. The power-enhancing suit was created by a team of researchers at the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology; they plan to establish a company to start producing the futuristic outfit by the end of the year. Two-thirds of the country’s farm-workers already are over 65 years old. The suit should hit the Japanese market in 2012, when it initially will retail for about one million yen ($11,000 USD), a price tag its makers hope to halve if the device is mass produced. There are however no plans so far to sell the suits overseas. The robo-suits can reduce the user’s physical effort by 62 percent on average, the inventors said.

Robert Friedman Ph.D.

Free downloadable articles on widowhood and aging
www.RFriedman.info

Robert Friedman, Ph.D. is a widower, retired from the clinical practice of psychology and facilitates a “moving on” widowhood group at a senior center in Los Angeles.

- Widowhood Part 2: Moving On
- Guilt, Anger, Blame and Regret
- Talking to Widows and Widowers; Do’s and Don’ts
- Aging in Place: Decisions
- Older Widows Relationships with Men

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Global65 YouTube Video Contest

The U.S. Census Bureau and the National Institute on Aging recently issued a report stating the world’s population age 65 and older is growing by an unprecedented amount.

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Submit YOUR video! Learn more at www.geron.org/global

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