



CONSORTIUM CONNECTIONS

In this issue

Back in 1994, Family Re-Union did something remarkable. It brought fathers and other men fully into our vision of family and helped launch a national private and public movement to engage men in the lives of children. This year's conference may have done something equally remarkable. *Family Re-Union 9: Families and Seniors Across Generations* worked hard to place seniors in the midst of families and communities, and make certain that seniors are neither overlooked nor pitted against younger

generations in a battle over finite resources. Family Re-Union 9 and the ongoing work inspired by the conference will help to ensure that generations are brought together in new ways, for the benefit of all.

This is the seventh year in a row that the Consortium has helped plan and sponsor Family Re-Union. Many of the articles in this issue have been contributed by conference participants; others highlight intergenerational programs in Minnesota.

Seniors and Families Together

Martha Farrell Erickson, Ph.D., Director, CYFC

Anyone who attended Family Re-Union 9 expecting a sad and somber conference about caring for frail elders was in for a big and wonderful surprise. This inspiring and energizing gathering overflowed with examples of seniors as resources to their families and communities. And the seniors themselves were there in droves to tell – and celebrate – their stories.

We caught the infectious energy of Dr. Jack McConnell, a physician who retired to Hilton Head, South Carolina, but didn't have the heart to just play golf when families around him lacked health care. So, beginning with a clinic in his own community, he founded Volunteers in Medicine, launching 42 free clinics around the country, all staffed by retired healthcare professionals. (And yes, Jack still finds time for golf.)

We were amazed by the stories of Bill and Jeanne Hoyt, energetic seniors who don uniforms and carry out community policing as part of the Citizens Volunteer Patrol, an official unit of the Redlands, California Police Department. We were touched by the words of "Miss Irene," who has helped transform the lives of children in a revolutionary housing development that unites seniors and foster families. Even more, we were touched by the words of one of the children in her life (see article, page 4).

In another moving example of seniors making a difference in their communities, retired educator Charles Gray, with his voice breaking, spoke about the very high-risk youth he serves in his south Florida community. "Regardless of what they've done, somebody loves 'em, somebody cares. We do...as senior citizens."

Certainly Family Re-Union 9 was not only about healthy, active seniors. As we age, many of us experience increasingly serious health problems, and eldercare is indeed a pressing issue. By and large, our society has done a lousy job of figuring out how to care for seniors who no longer can care for themselves. We have not kept up with recent changes: people living longer, even in the face of serious health challenges; men and women both in the workplace, leaving few fulltime caregivers at home; and a youth-worshipping society that turns the old invisible.

But as Family Re-Union participants demonstrated, there are better ways of caring. Even non-ambulatory seniors long to be connected to their communities, so creative folks have found ways to bring the community to the seniors. Music and theatre are being incorporated into state-of-the-art eldercare facilities. And, in other centers, physically frail but mentally alert seniors find satisfaction in contributing to their community by using the phone to reach out and check in with young buddies during after-school hours.

Mission Statement

The Children, Youth & Family Consortium was established in fall 1991 in an effort to bring together the varied competencies of the University of Minnesota and the vital resources of Minnesota's communities to enhance the ability of individuals and organizations to address critical health, education, and social policy concerns in ways that improve the well-being of Minnesota children, youth, and families.

Technology Brings Generations Together



Angie Groh is a 4-Her from Thornton, Iowa who maintains a whirlwind schedule of volunteer activities. She may come from a small town—just 400 people—but she has made a big impact on her community, especially on the lives of seniors.

As a panelist at Family Re-Union 9, Angie told how she helped recruit teens in her school for an intergenerational computer project. Ten young people and ten seniors gathered at the computer classroom to share information about everything from locating the on button of the computer to searching for detailed information about available health services. Her program is part of *Teens Teaching Internet Skills*, a collaborative effort of the Health Care Financing Administration of The Department of Health and Human Services and Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of USDA.



Friendships are forged between young and old in this Thornton, Iowa computer lab.

“This program is a great way to get to know older adults in your community,” advised Angie, “and it’s a lot of fun.” “But remember to be patient. For some people this may be the first time using a computer, and just like anything else, it takes a while to get familiar, especially with the mouse!”

Teens Teaching Internet Skills is only one example of how 4-H is helping youth and seniors come together with the help of technology. Check out these programs at www.4-h.org/tech. Minnesota teens and older adults have additional opportunities through the University of Minnesota Extension Service’s home-grown *Master Internet Volunteer* program (www.extension.umn.edu/miv), that trains and supports community volunteers who are helping others bridge the digital divide.

What’s New About Getting Old?

America is getting older:

The U.S. population is aging at an unprecedented rate, increasing ten-fold in the last century. Today, there are 65 million Americans over the age of 65, 13% of the total population. By 2030, one in five Americans will be over 65, a population of 70 million.

(Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-being, Federal Inter-Agency Forum on Aging-related Statistics, August 2000)

Find other statistics on aging printed in the margins of this newsletter.

CONSORTIUM CONNECTIONS

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Editor: Jenny Keyser
Design: Brett Olson



Children, Youth & Family Consortium
McNamara Alumni Center, Suite 270A
200 Oak St. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612/625-7849 Fax 612/625-7815
email: cyfc@tc.umn.edu
www: <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu>

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CONSORTIUM STAFF

Madge Alberts Program Coordinator
Connie Blasing Executive Secretary
Michael Brott Community Partnership and Information Coordinator
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Seniors Share Their Strengths

Jan Hively, College of Continuing Education, University of Minnesota

Sharing Strengths

In rural America, where the overall population is both declining and aging, elders are being counted on to share their strengths. The Mid-Minnesota 2000 Productive Aging Survey results show that most of the older residents in rural areas and farm communities are doing just that — sharing their strengths and stepping in to help others.

A sample of 55 to 84-year-olds were interviewed last spring in the four-county Mid-Minnesota area—where Willmar, Hutchinson and Litchfield are rural population centers. More than half of the seniors have been feeling increased responsibility for helping others in the community over the last few years. One reason they offer for this change is that they see more people who need help. Another is that they have more free time to do something about it. Three-quarters of those interviewed report they are in good or excellent health, which allows them to follow through on work, family and community commitments.

Community Service. Sixty-one percent of the Mid-Minnesota 55 to 84 year-olds are currently volunteering. Typically, they are providing direct service to help those who are older or less self-sufficient than themselves — e.g., providing meals, visiting nursing homes, making home repairs, or providing transportation. More of them are actively engaged through their church than through all of the other volunteer organizations combined.

The survey results suggest that current volunteers may be willing to expand their now generally minimal (fewer than five hours a week) commitment to service. Community connectors are needed to recruit both current employees and retirees — mixing and matching skills, schedules, and program needs. Churches and service agencies should collaborate on applying the best practices for service learning, including guidance for reflection on the service experience.

Working. The labor shortage is pervasive in most of rural Minnesota, encouraging employees to recruit and retain older workers. Forty percent of the 55+ Mid-Minnesota residents are currently employed. Half of the employees would like to continue employment past the traditional retirement age. They don't want to be penalized in their pension benefits for doing so, however. They wish for more updating of their skills and greater flexibility in work hours.

Caregivers. Over 1/2 of the Mid-Minnesota interviewees spend some time taking care of grandchildren and great grandchildren. Thirty-nine percent provide care for sick and disabled relatives, friends and/or neighbors. Education and support services are needed to expand caregiving services that will help seniors to remain independent.

Education. Education feeds productivity, and vice-versa. Forty percent of those surveyed would like to participate in an educational program now, if it were provided short term for a reasonable cost. The University's new Vital Aging Initiative is designed to connect age 55+ adults across the state with educational programs that support their self-sufficiency, community participation, and personal enrichment. The programs may be addressed to employers, service providers, and policy makers as well as to older adults themselves

What's Next?

Healthy, active, mobile, young-old adults, ages 55 to 80+ constitute a new generation in the world. Social conventions and attitudes about aging, however, run counter to a realistic assessment of the capacities of older adults. Information about the productivity of older Americans, such as that produced by the Mid-Minnesota survey, helps older adults see opportunities for creative, stimulating activities that match their interests and skills and meet community needs.

The baby boomers are known for wanting it all – a productive life that is both meaningful and balanced. As they cross the age 55 boundary this year, there is no reason why they shouldn't find flexible workplaces and community institutions eager to welcome their strengths.

For further information about the Mid-Minnesota 2000 Productive Aging Survey or the University's Vital Aging Initiative, contact Jan Hively at 612-379-4124, hivel001@umn.edu.



Photo by: Doug Beasley

The ROCORI Senior Center in Cold Spring, MN is a nurturing environment, connecting community members of all ages, backgrounds, and interests, where experiences are developed, shared and enjoyed.

Minnesota is getting older, especially in rural areas:

Minnesota's median age is expected to rise from 33.8 years in 1995 to 41.3 years in 2025, largely due to the growing number of people age 65 and older.

While 30% of the state's population lives in rural Minnesota, 41% of those age 65 and older live there.

Exodus of young adults. 5 times as many college graduates moved to the Twin Cities region from elsewhere in Minnesota in 1990 as moved in the opposite direction—a trend that continues today.

*(Implications of rural Minnesota's changing demographic
Tom Gillaspay, Minnesota State
Demographer, 2000)*

Lifelong Learning and Meaningful Work

Jenny Keyser, Ph.D., Associate Director, CYFC

“There is only so much rest and leisure a person can take,” confesses an energetic retiree taking her seat for a roundtable discussion on lifelong learning and meaningful work.

One of ten break out options at the recent Family Re-Union conference, this roundtable highlighted two programs that clearly depict retirement as a radically new beginning, not just a way to fill up time. Duluth’s University for Seniors has created a community of learners actively leading inter-generational work, and in South Carolina, Hilton Head’s Volunteers in Medicine Clinic, staffed entirely by retired medical and lay people, has galvanized the community around a culture of caring.

At first glance, the University of Minnesota-Duluth’s University for Seniors (US) looks like any other well-run, campus-based program offering lectures and study groups tailored for seniors. But, this peer-driven organization is not just about providing intellectual stimulation for its members, although it does that very well. It is rooted, as well, in service to others, especially service to the University, surrounding K-12 schools, and the greater community. What starts with social interaction and intellectual curiosity, leads naturally into informed action and public work.

Jory Peterson, executive director of University for Seniors, is most proud of the intergenerational learning that drives this active group of older volunteers. Projects range from senior-led discussion groups with middle school youth using National Issues Forum materials, to a partnership with the Medical School that aims to help future physicians understand the lives of older adults and overcome false stereotypes about seniors. “The exchange of ideas is what’s so exciting,” Peterson says, “because seniors gain a new understanding of young people while they are modeling civic vitality.”

Vitality and passion radiate from Dr. Jack McConnell, founder of Volunteers in Medicine Clinic and Institute. When he retired to Hilton Head in 1992, he discovered that a third of the island’s population had no access to health care. He saw poverty and wealth side by side, and could not accept that it was simply, “the way things are.” Without a moment’s hesitation, he and other retired medical professionals went to work to establish a free clinic for uninsured families that welcomes them, not as patients, but as “neighbors and friends.”

Today, 200 retired health professionals and 200 retired lay volunteers staff the clinic that offers everything from gynecology and urology to immunization and dental care. Many hurdles had to be crossed, not the least of which was obtaining malpractice insurance and re-licensing for volunteer professionals. But one thing Dr. McConnell has never worried about is finding volunteers—there are 150,000 retired physicians in the U.S. and more are retiring every year and at a young age. Moreover, he believes older people are eager to find meaningful work, and they know a good thing when they see it. “I have learned and relearned,” McConnell says, “that it is only in service to others that we find and begin to understand ourselves.”

Best of all, McConnell concludes, “What we have done can be done anywhere!”

Find out more about University for Seniors at www.d.umn.edu/uc-d/seniors/us. Read about Volunteers in Medicine and how to order a Start Up Guide for your community at www.vimi.org.

Seniors and Families Together

—continued from cover

As in the past, Family Re-Union covered a wide range of issues related to its broad framing topic. With masterful facilitation by Bill Moyers, we dared to address what some call “the last taboo” – talking about death and dying. And participants from varied ethnic backgrounds reminded us how critical it is to recognize and honor the culture and language of elders as we embrace them in our communities and care for them in the last stages of life.

Most of all, this conference was a vibrant reminder of the power of bringing generations together; it was a “reunion” indeed! My expectation is that all who participated will have seniors on the brain – that when we envision “family” or “community,” seniors will be a strong, vivid part of that picture. And I am confident we will remind others – foundations, government agencies, schools, businesses, human service organizations – to bring seniors into their own work and vision.



Intergenerational give-and-take: senior volunteers from the University of Minnesota Duluth’s University for Seniors join students at Duluth East High School for a lively discussion of national and local policy issues.

Learning in Retirement

Duluth’s University for Seniors is a member of the Minnesota Humanities Commission’s Learning in Retirement Network (LIRN) – a statewide coalition of 16 community and university-affiliated senior organizations. Together these organizations are working to create an infrastructure for lifelong and intergenerational learning in Minnesota. The network comes together for trainings, grant opportunities, and to share program ideas. For more information, contact Jane Cunningham at the Minnesota Humanities Commission, 651-774-0105, ext 109, or go to www.thinkmhc.org/learn.htm

Older Adults and Mental Health

Madge Alberts, Program Coordinator, CYFC

Older adults and those who care for them may face considerable mental health challenges as they navigate the unfamiliar terrain of aging, according to a panel of experts specializing in senior mental health issues who presented a forum at the recent Family Re-Union conference.

Many mental health concerns were raised by the panel and participants in the forum. They include:

- dementia and related biological issues affecting mental health
- depression in older adults (including secondary effects such as suicide and substance abuse)
- depression in caregivers
- ageism
- lack of adequate human capital to meet the needs of increasing population of older adults needing physical care, much less to care for their mental health needs
- the needs of those who enter their “older years” with existing mental health issues
- the disproportionate number of senior males experiencing depression-related disorders
- the disproportionate number of women caregivers affected by depression
- the needs of older adults from a variety of cultural backgrounds
- the outdated model of Medicare
- the stigma that surrounds talking about and treating mental health

Research and development on the physical causes of dementia and other biological issues related to mental health in older persons is moving at a rapid rate, according to Richard Margolin, M.D., Chief of the Laboratory of Geriatric Neuroscience at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. These advancements are likely to have a positive impact on mental health for seniors down the road.

Depression in caregivers is an area that has been under-recognized and inadequately addressed, and is particularly important because most frail older adults are cared for by their families – some 13 million nationwide. Nancy Emerson Lombardo, Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College, pointed out that caregivers have

a significantly higher level of depression than non-caregivers. In addition, women are particularly at risk for depression because they are less able to distance themselves emotionally from the stress of caregiving than are men in caregiving roles. The National Caregiver Support Program is helping to address these mental health needs of caregivers in some states.

There was clear consensus that the entire family must be supported in order for an invalid person, whether the needs be physical, mental or both, to be best cared for.

The Surgeon General’s recent report on mental health includes a chapter on “Older Adults and Mental Health.” Among its conclusions are two that particularly highlight the importance of addressing mental health issues of older adults in a proactive, preventative manner:

- Continued intellectual, social and physical activity throughout the life cycle are important for the maintenance of mental health in later life;
- Normal aging is not characterized by mental or cognitive disorders. Mental or substance use disorders that present alone or co-occur should be recognized and treated as illnesses.

In considering potential policy implications in the area of mental health and older persons, there was broad agreement that a set of operating principles related to older adults and mental health which focuses on a “system of care” approach, rather than the compartmentalized approach which is the current reality, would be an enormous step forward. Focusing more attention on prevention of mental health disorders was also raised, as was the enormous and obvious need for additional funding in this area.

Clearly, there is much work to do in this emerging field, which continues to grow in scope and importance as the population of adults over age 65 increases.



Caring for older Americans

More than 25 million Americans are caring for an aging or ailing family member.

Informal caregivers provide an average of 17.9 hours of care per week with an estimated economic value of caregiving at \$194 billion per year.

(Everyday Heroes: Family Caregivers Face Increasing Challenges in an Aging Nation, Senate Special Committee on Aging, <http://aging.senate.gov/hr24.htm>)



Many Americans live in multi-generational families.

5,435,000 children, or 7.7% of all children in the United States, were living in homes with a grandparent in 1997, more than twice as many as in 1970.

(Co-resident Grandparents and their Grandchildren, Census Bureau, 1998.)

Research Leads to Intergenerational Community

Madge Alberts, Program Coordinator, CYFC

“From a six year old who could not read, knew no numbers and no colors.....this month (at age 12) I read at a 7th grade level. I am happy and feel good about myself.”

These poignant words from 12-year-old Brandon Laws, panel member at the recent Family Re-Union conference, show clearly that what began as a university research project has resulted in a one-of-a-kind, extraordinary intergenerational community with terrific outcomes for kids and elders, alike.

Brenda Krause Eheart, director of Generations of Hope in Rantoul, Illinois, was a faculty member conducting research on families who were adopting children from the foster care system through the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. What she found discouraged her: there were 1000 children a month coming into the foster care system, and the resulting adoptions were not working. Amid a political call for a return to orphanages, Eheart thought, “Surely we can come up with something better. I have to quit complaining about a system that doesn’t work. I have to DO something.”

And do something she did. The road was long, but Eheart spearheaded an effort that ultimately resulted in legislative and private funding to buy the abandoned Chanute Air Force Base from the Pentagon, with the help of Sen. Paul Simon. The base has been transformed into an intergenerational community of adoptive families and senior citizens who live together, play together, learn together, and provide support for each other. Included are spacious family homes, and smaller apartments and/or duplexes for seniors. An intergenerational community center is the “hub” of social life in Hope Meadows, housing a library, computer room, private tutoring rooms, a kitchen and a large multi-purpose room. Events occur regularly there, ranging from senior coffees to community potlucks, and special events such as a tea party for young women and their grandmas, complete with hats and gloves!

The families at Hope Meadows, Generations of Hope’s first community, are licensed foster care families who are willing to adopt their foster children. Families may be married or single, with or without other children, and of any race. For their long-term commitment to raise up to four Hope children, families receive a salary and rent-free housing. They also receive weekly training, onsite professional counselors and other staff services. In the case of two-parent families, one is required to be at home full-time. Single parents are strongly encouraged to be home full-time, but if that is not possible, they are encouraged to work only when their children are in school. Several single parents have developed home businesses, including one who has a thriving and growing internet business.

Senior residents are selected based on their willingness to volunteer time in the Hope Meadows community in exchange for reduced rent. They do everything from helping families with housework, to tutoring children in the community, to just being there, serving as role models and grandparents for kids who have often had none, or who have come from situations of abuse and neglect. Every year, seniors volunteer 15,000 at Hope; those include 2,400 hours helping parents with childcare and housework, and 9,700 hours working directly with children. In addition, seniors provide 20% of Hope’s operating expenses through their rent.

Brandon Laws came to Hope at age 6 after having been bounced around in “the system” since he was two, most recently in an abusive foster home. Brandon and his sister Shannon were placed on an emergency basis with their now adoptive mom, Jeannette Laws. Irene Bohn soon joined the family as Jeannette’s “mom,” and grandmother for Brandon and Shannon.

“Miss Irene,” as she is fondly called at Hope Meadows, had been a nun for 27 years, and left the convent in an effort to reach out to the community through teaching. She eventually married, then later found herself a widow and lonely. While at the local mall attempting to escape her loneliness, Irene found an article about Generations of Hope in a newspaper at a newsstand. She read it, and said, “This is it!” She checked it out, and prepared to move in. Her sisters cautioned her to slow down, but she knew this was the purpose she needed in her life, and she had a teaching and spiritual background to bring to it. Two months later she moved into her home at Hope Meadows.

Brandon’s background put him at great risk for violence, drug use, and other negative outcomes. Instead, with the help and support of his new family, Brandon has now been moved out of the special education program in which he began, is getting all As and Bs in school, and participates in cross country and a school news broadcasting program.

Eheart says there are three major reasons that the community of Hope Meadows has been so successful:

What does the future hold?

76 million Baby Boomers are now approaching retirement age.

Eight out of ten Baby Boomers say they plan to work at least part time when they retire;

49% plan to spend more time in community service and voluntary activity;

Only 21% plan to move to a new community; and

57% expect to live near at least one of their children.

(Baby Boomers Envision their Retirement, AARP, 2000)

1. Seniors, parents and children are all living next door to each other.
2. Everyone in the community of 150 people is there for a purpose: to help the children.
3. Staff, some of whom live there, and all of whom work there on-site every day, think about the children as if they were their own in all decisions and policy development. "What a difference that makes." Eheart said.

The Generations of Hope model is still evolving, through a continuous process of evaluation and reflection supported in large part by a university-based research program. Under consideration right now is how they can extend the work they do on behalf of children into some additional, broader programs for seniors.

Their funding to date has been largely foster care funds, income from senior rentals, and capital improvement grants. They are involved in a \$10 million endowment campaign to garner ongoing financial support for the program. Hope has an admirably low 8.7% overhead cost, which means that 91.3% of their funding goes directly to programs.

"Some say Hope is a revolutionary idea. I say it is common sense and a whole lot of caring and compassion," says Eheart.

Revolutionary or common sense, Generations of Hope is an example of the best in applied research, and model for intergenerational living which will lead the way for others.

For more details about Generations of Hope, check out their website at www.generationsofhope.org

Why Can't We Talk?

Marlene S. Stum, Ph.D., Family Social Science, University of Minnesota

Everyone seems to agree that family members need to talk about potential changes in health, end-of-life care, and financial security issues *before* there is a crisis or someone is not able to communicate. But more often than not, spouses, aging parents/in-laws, siblings, and adult children fail to initiate these life-and-death conversations. Communicating can reduce feelings of burden, guilt, and confusion that family members often experience when they are put in the position of making decisions for others.

So why don't we talk?

Denial of our own mortality or the mortality of those we love is often what makes these conversations so difficult. Talking about human losses or changes in health and independence can be both emotional and filled with legal and financial complexities many find overwhelming. In some cases, a family history of conflict among parents, in-laws, and siblings will influence how family members address later life transitions of aging parents.

Helping family members talk about issues they normally do not want to address—or even acknowledge—is the focus of my research on financing long-term care, life and death health care, and inheritance issues. As a member of the University of Minnesota Extension faculty, I have taken this research a step further and developed tools to help family members begin talking.

Helpful worksheets for conversations about end-of-life can be found at <http://fsos.che.umn.edu/stum>, or call 612-625-4270 for additional resources.

Talking About Choices

- Be clear about your motives for raising the issue. What are your concerns, what do you want to have happen, and why?
- Respect that others may not be ready to face their own or another's changes in health or death. Share your feelings and concerns but don't force others to.
- Consider others who should be involved in the conversations, especially family members who may be responsible for carrying out wishes or decisions.
- Ask "what if" questions. For example, "Dad, what would you want to have happen if you and Mom were no longer able to live here?"
- Look for natural opportunities to talk. Ask, "What would we do if we were in the same situation Ruth's family is now facing?"
- Be willing to listen and talk when another family member raises the issue. Adult children are just as likely to refuse to talk as parents or in-laws.
- Recognize that family members will have different perceptions, assumptions, and solutions. Conversations should focus on discovering where those involved agree and disagree.
- Decide what is most important to accomplish for the family members involved. Knowing someone's goals can help guide future decisions about specific solutions and choices.

Older Americans are living longer and benefiting from Social Security.

Americans born at the beginning of the 21st century can expect to live nearly 30 years longer than those born in 1900. People over 85 is the fastest growing segment of the older population;

Eleven percent of older Americans lived below the poverty line in 1998, compared to 35% in 1959. Social Security is critical for the lowest income elderly, accounting for 80% of the income of the poorest 40% of older Americans.

(Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-being, Federal Inter-Agency Forum on Aging-related Statistics, August 2000)

MARCH

- March 1
Practical, hands-on workshop on *Growing Absolutely Fantastic Youth* offered by U of MN's Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health. Held in Brooklyn Center. More information at www.konopka.umn.edu.
- March 2
Don't Look Away, MN Council on Family Relations Spring Conference, 8:30 am-4:00 pm, North Como Presbyterian Church, Roseville. Keynote speaker is UM Professor Bill Doherty. Call Linda Vukelich 651-407-0950.
- March 7
Practical, hands-on workshop on *Growing Absolutely Fantastic Youth* offered by U of MN's Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health. Held in Mankato. More information at www.konopka.umn.edu.
- March 7
Creating Positive School Climate: Building Connections, offered by The Initiative for Violence Free Families. Dr. Michael Resnick will give keynote for this workshop designed for school teams that may include administrators, teachers, school staff, community members, parents and students. Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, Minneapolis. 9:30 am-3:30 pm. Contact Jeannette Raymond at jeannette@ivff.org or 612/341-1604.
- March 8
The Minneapolis Foundation presents *Troubled Waters: Growing Up Homeless in Minnesota*, a conference to explore the links between housing, academic achievement, and the healthy development of children. Invited speakers Senator Paul Wellstone, Governor Jesse Ventura, and UM Professor Ann Masten. Ukrainian Event Center, 301 Main St NE, Minneapolis, MN. Contact Rachel Hughes 612/672-3847 or rhughes@mplsfoundation.org.
- March 13
Ramsey County Extension Service's *Working With Hmong Family Series* will host the second session, "Parenting Practices" at the Ramsey County Extension Office. 9:00am – 11:30am. Krystal Vujongyia will be the presenter. For registration, contact Shirley at 651/704-2056.
- March 20
Harris ITV Seminars, presented by the Irving B. Harris Center for Infant and Toddler Development, in collaboration with MN Department of Health and MN Department of Children, Families and Learning. Specifically designed for supervisors and practitioners using videotaping in their work with families. Conducted across the state via interactive television, on March 20 and May 8, 2001, from 1:00 – 3:00pm. Contact Amy Susman-Stillman, 612/624-4510 or ibharris@tc.umn.edu.

Care-giving Grandmothers Speak Out

Priscilla Gibson, School of Social Work professor at the University of Minnesota, has made the focus of her research a rarely-studied group—African American grandmothers who assume sole responsibility for their young grandchildren. African American grandparents head more than 2.5 million families according to recent estimates, but the numbers don't explain what grandparents experience when they become parents again.

In exploring the experiences of grandmothers who are full-time moms to their grandchildren, Professor Gibson has also given them a chance to speak out in their own voices. Many of the women in the study found new resources within themselves through the difficult process of deciding to seek outside help and navigating through the social service systems.

The grandmothers had this to say about what they had learned:

Find an advocate. Grandmothers in the study emphasized the importance of finding a good service worker who understands the needs of relatives providing care and "explains without talking down."

Speak up for yourself. Grandmothers are often reluctant to ask for help or share concerns. Be emotionally

prepared to interact with social service systems.

Keep good records. Grandmothers can feel overwhelmed by "too much paperwork," and don't always have the documentation required for services.

Give and command respect.

Grandmothers in the study discovered the importance of being patient but persistent in finding services and working with various systems. They cautioned not to "carry a chip on your shoulder" but to stay focused on your family's needs.



Robinette Davis and her granddaughter Monique take a moment out of their busy day to share their love of reading.

Photo by: Sed Stog

"No Wrong Door" Approach Coordinates Services for Seniors

Minnesota county commissioners and human services directors learned about a unique program to integrate services for seniors and disabled adults at the recent Association of Minnesota Counties annual conference in Rochester.

"Senior HelpLink," a program begun in Riverside County, California, offers a single entry point for information and services for seniors and disabled adults through the use of a centralized data bank to which all staff have access. This means customers make just one phone call. Whoever answers the phone will have access to the services and information the caller needs. So, there is no wrong door, and all doors lead to help.

In addition, this county has developed one application form that qualifies for all needed services, so older adults are spared the inconvenience, and often difficulty, of giving the same information to many different people.

In planning the program, staff surveyed community members about what they wanted to see in long term care services. Among the findings were the following:

- A single point of entry
- A competent person to help
- A full array of services
- Full accessibility, including all handicaps and language
- A case worker to help
- Connection with the Area Agency on Aging
- One application for all services

The Riverside program has made inroads on many of the issues raised. The next step is integrating the program and funding streams into a new administrative structure. Read about this model program at www.rcaging.org

Respite Care for Families

Jill Kagan, Chair, National Respite Coalition, Annandale, VA

Respite care provides temporary relief for caregivers caring for an individual of any age with special needs. It is first and foremost a preventive strategy that strengthens families and allows them to continue providing loving care at home. The goal of respite is to alleviate caregiver stress and prevent more costly out-of-home placements and keep all family members safe and stable.

Need for Respite

Survey after survey of family caregivers has shown respite care to be the most often requested family support service, and yet it remains in critically short supply.

The sheer numbers of families in which a caregiver is providing continuous care—often in stressful, unsupported situations—is enough to justify concern. Current estimates suggest that there are between 24 million and 28 million family caregivers in America. About 60 to 65% of the individuals requiring care are the elderly. About half of these family caregivers are full-time and part-time workers who are balancing caregiving and job responsibilities. By 2020, the number of adults requiring assistance with daily living will increase to almost 40 million and the number of elderly requiring long-term care will double.

New family arrangements that bring their own set of stressors add to the growing need. The increasingly large number of families who face double duty, caring for young children as well as aging parents, present special concerns about excessive stress due to caregiving responsibilities. It is estimated that between 20 and 40 percent of caregivers have children under the age of 18 to care for in addition to a parent or other relative with a disability.

Elderly grandparents are increasingly acting as primary caregivers of their grandchildren, with and without disabilities. Currently, there are more than 2.5 million grandparent-headed households raising 3.9 million children in the U.S. The number of these families without either parent present increased 53% between 1990 and 1998. Over 1.3 million children are being raised solely by their grandparents. Despite these statistics, most states and counties do not fund respite for these elderly caregivers.

Grandparent caregivers report facing enormous financial stress, as well as poor health status. In 1997, grandparent caregivers were 60% more likely to live in poverty than grandparents not raising grandchildren. In addition, one-third of grandparents in all grandparent-maintained families report their general state of health as fair or poor.

In fact, we cannot afford to lose any family caregivers to stress or illness.

According to the National Long-Term Care Survey, if the work of family caregivers had to be replaced by paid home care staff, the cost to our nation would be \$45 to \$75 billion per year. Other studies have suggested that caregivers now provide nearly \$200 billion per year in unpaid services.

Fragmentation and Unmet Needs

The current supply of individuals available to provide respite care is woefully inadequate in many communities, especially respite care for individuals with certain disabilities such as mental illness or severe medical conditions. Expanding the capacity of the current supply of respite providers should be a priority so that families have real choices.

However, an equally difficult problem is the identification and coordination of existing resources that would aid caregivers and help state agencies improve access to respite programs. Passage of the National Family Caregiver Support Act, if funded, will help develop statewide infrastructures and single points of entry through Area Agencies on Aging to help caregivers find the respite and support they need.

Currently, there is no single, coordinated, family friendly federal program to support the development of respite care infrastructures that would serve all families. Families are now forced to search for services in a complicated bureaucratic maze. Development of a statewide coordinated approach that will improve the quality, capacity and accessibility of respite services should be a goal.

Lifespan Respite

As of April 2000, three states had passed Lifespan Respite Acts (Oregon, Nebraska, Wisconsin), which establish state and local infrastructures for developing, providing, coordinating and improving access for respite to residents of the state. Oklahoma has implemented a Lifespan Respite Program without legislation. Several other states (Maryland, Nevada, Montana and Florida) are actively piloting similar programs or legislation.

Each program has been adapted to meet the individual state's needs, but the defining characteristic of each is the statewide, coordinated approach to ensure respite services for all who need it.

To find out more about the National Respite Coalition, and to read the complete text of this article presented at Family Re-Union 9, please go to www.chtop.com/NRC.htm

March 20

Near Full Employment: Does it Spell Universal Pre-K? an audio conference hosted by the U of MN's Center for Law and Social Policy. This lunchtime talk show includes policy makers, researchers, practitioners and other experts. 12:30 PM-1:30 PM. Visit www.clasp.org/audioconference/brochure.html or contact Janellen Duffy at jduffy@clasp.org.

March 29

Workshop on *Growing Absolutely Fantastic Youth* offered by U of MN's Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health. Held in Moorhead. More information at www.konopka.umn.edu.

APRIL

April 3

The Children's Defense Fund - MN hosts its biggest event of the year, *Beat the Odds*, at the downtown Minneapolis Hilton and Towers. Five high school seniors who have succeeded despite tremendous obstacles will be honored and presented with scholarships. Call Sybil Axner at 651-227-6121 to volunteer, contribute items to an auction, or reserve tickets.

April 4

Practice Challenges in Implementing Concurrent Permanency Planning: A Case Consultation Seminar; a satellite videoconference sponsored by the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, U of MN. 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Local download site at Earl Brown Continuing Education Center, St Paul campus. Call Renee Albert at 612/625-8121 or email at ralbert@che.umn.edu. See: <http://umrtv.umn.edu/ssw/streaming.html>

April 4-6

The Other Curriculum: Skills Kids Need to be Successful is the theme of the Special Education Conference sponsored by MN Department of Children, Families and Learning, Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd, MN. Contact Kristin Ludwig, Conference Connections, 612/481-8441 or ekristin@aol.com.

April 10

Ramsey County Extension Service's *Working With Hmong Family Series* hosts the third session, "Bicultural Reality for Hmong Youth" at the Ramsey County Extension Office. 9:00am - 11:30am. Krystal Vujongyia is the presenter. For registration, contact Shirley at 651/704-2056.

April 18

Food Stamps: New Rules and Strategies for Working Families, an audio Conference hosted by U of MN's Center for Law and Social Policy. Guest speakers include policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and other experts. 12:30pm to 1:30pm. Visit www.clasp.org/audioconference/brochure.html or contact Janellen Duffy at jduffy@clasp.org.

April 18-21

Leave No Child Behind: Transforming the World for Children, Children's Defense Fund's national conference, Hilton Towers Hotel in Washington D.C. Call 1-800-CDF-1200 for more information or visit the web site at www.childrensdefense.org.

April 23-24

2001, An AT Odyssey, 11th Annual Charting the C's Assistive Technology Conference, Kahler Grand Hotel in Rochester, MN. Contact Kristin Ludwig at 612/481-8441.

April 25

Workshop on *Growing Absolutely Fantastic Youth* offered by U of MN's Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health. Held in Bemidji, MN. More information at www.konopka.umn.edu.

April 26

Self-Determination: What is it and Why Should I Care? A workshop for people with disabilities and their family members. 6:30-8:30 pm at Chanhassen Community Recreation Center, 2310 Coulter Blvd, Chanhassen. Call Arc Hennepin-Carver at 952/920-0855.

April 27

Work/Welfare Requirements: What's the Payoff for Families?, an audio Conference hosted by U of MN's Center for Law and Social Policy. Guest speakers include policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and other experts. 12:30pm to 1:30pm Visit www.clasp.org/audioconference/brochure.html or contact Janelle Duffy at jduffy@clasp.org.

April 28-29

Minnesota PTA's annual convention at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center in Plymouth, MN. Contact Theresa Wilson of the MN PTA, 763-767-8181.

MAY

May 3-4

The Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) convenes the 10th Annual MOAPPP Conference at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center, MN. Featured keynote speaker is Michael Resnick, Director, National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Research Center at the U of MN. Call 651/644-1447 or 1-800-657-3697 for registration brochure.

May 4

Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach, workshop for parents, child care providers, educators, counselors, case managers and probation officers who deal with children who have ADHD. Presenter is Howard Glasser, author of "Transforming the Difficult Child". Minneapolis Convention Center, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm. Call 952/906-0300 or email nurturedheart@hotmail.com.

CONNECTION CORNER

CUPES: A partnership for better health.

The Community-University Partnership in Education and Service (CUPES) is strengthening health care for Minneapolis residents and enriching the education of health science students. Students in nursing, public health, pharmacy, dentistry and medicine work with individuals and families from a holistic perspective. "It's win-win," says project leader Linda Skogard. Students learn about health within the context of the family, community and cultural practices.

Individuals from the community receive health care and health information that reflects the most current thinking and practice in public health care. CUPES has sites in schools, social service facilities, and health care clinics in the Phillips neighborhood and beyond. CUPES is a shining example of how the University is creating change in the way that students are learning, so that the health professions are strengthened and community members receive better health care.

A Yardstick for Measuring Growth.

The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) announces a new report from the Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, *Early Report*. The report contains information on growth and development indicators for young

children, 0-8 years old and explores ways to improve outcomes for children. You can download the report from the CEED website (<http://ici2.umn.edu/ceed>) or contact Karen Anderson, 612-625-6617, for a printed version.

Professional Ethics

Confronted with ethical dilemmas in your work with parents or families? You're not alone! The Minnesota Council on Family Relations has developed a booklet on "Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Educators," which includes

clear guidelines and strategies. Field-tested over an eight-year period, this resource is now available to you and your staff. Contact MCFR, c/o Linda Vukelich, 2738 Evergreen Circle, St. Paul MN 55110; 651-407-0905.

Elders Through the Eyes of Children

Boston videographer Michael Stevenson produced a 10-minute documentary of children talking about their grandparents and the elders in their lives for Family Re-Union 9. To order a copy of "Elders

Through the Eyes of Children," call 978-374-3917 or email miste65@hotmail.com. Or you can borrow the Consortium's copy; email us at cyfc@umn.edu.

DARTS

Do you know this volunteer organization that supports the full participation of seniors in community life? The Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors (DARTS) has been going strong for 25 years, overcoming barriers that divide the generations and promoting seniors as community resources.

President Dick Graham serves on the Board of the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota, and he attended this year's Family Re-Union conference. Check the web for more about this terrific organization: www.darts1.org

Extension Focuses on Aging

During the past year, the University of Minnesota Extension Service conducted a comprehensive analysis of trends affecting the people of our state. One major trend revealed significant demographic shifts in the Minnesota population over the next 30 years: by 2030 the population over 65 will increase from 12.7% to 23%. Minnesota's population is aging, and its rural areas experience this acutely.

Extension and its partner colleges plan to play an important research and educational role in addressing the implications of this trend:

- We will help individuals, families and communities anticipate, learn about and prepare for major demographic changes;
- We will promote an understanding of older adults as resources and assets to their families and communities;
- We will assist communities to review their physical, social and service infrastructures with an eye toward making them more receptive to the needs of seniors and their families.

If you are interested in learning more about the University of Minnesota Extension Service's focus on Aging, please contact the co-chairs of the committee: Linda Cronk, Extension Educator, Hennepin County (612-374-8462); Diane Damerow, Extension Educator, Waseca County, (507-835-0600); and Dr. Marlene Stum, Family Social Science Department, U of M (612-625-4270).

CONSORTIUM UPDATE

We're 10! 350 people filled the McNamara Alumni Center on January 18 to celebrate CYFC's tenth birthday. A highlight of the celebration was the presentation of CYFC's annual award for outstanding service to Professor Richard A. Weinberg, Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota. Past chair of CYFC's Advisory Council and one of its founders, Rich has been instrumental in expanding the University's efforts to disseminate research to public audiences. Look for other events throughout 2001 commemorating our tenth year under the banner of *Bringing Knowledge Home*.

From Neurons to Neighborhoods. A new, landmark report from the National Academies of Science—*From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*—took center stage at CYFC's January 18 birthday celebration. Three of the report's authors presented key program and policy recommendations and a panel of community members discussed the report's implications for children in Minnesota. Remarks from the forum are at www.cyfc.umn.edu/knowledge. An executive summary of the report is available at www.cyfc.umn.edu/neuronsbriefing.html

Policy Work Group. A policy work group drawn from the Consortium's Advisory Council and interested faculty and community folks have been meeting to address ways to shape the public conversation on public policy that will genuinely improve the lives of Minnesota children and families. While addressing a wide range of topics, the work group is currently focusing on these issues: affordable housing, mental health for children and families, early childhood care and education, and out of home placements. For more information, contact Joan Sykora (612-625-7872) or Madge Alberts (612-625-7899).

Growing with Families. Circle June 8 and 9 on your calendars and plan to attend the Parent Education Institute on *Education for Parents of Children ages 5-18*. This two-day conference presented by the University of Minnesota's Family Education program and co-sponsored by the Consortium is the culmination of a year long partnership between these two organizations to address the needs of parents with school aged children. Keynote speakers Laurence Steinberg of Temple University and W. Andrew Collins of the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development will address parent-child relationships during the adolescent and middle childhood years. For registration materials, contact Mary Maher, 612-624-1294, maher016@umn.edu.

Harris Center Shares New Resources

The world of babies is uniquely inter-generational. It's where parents begin to pass down knowledge, skills and support, necessary for healthy development and life success. And, babies begin to learn about and act upon the world around them. This two-generation transmission runs from parent to child, and child to parent.

Supporting the development of both parents and very young children, particularly those stressed by life circumstances, is a challenge for professionals working with infants, toddlers and their families. The Harris Center has developed two resources geared for these professionals: an innovative intervention technique called *Seeing is Believing (SIB)* and a comprehensive STEEP manual. Both are based on research and evaluation conducted at the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota.

Developed with colleagues from the Minnesota Departments of Health and Children, Families and Learning, *SIB* is a training videotape and companion manual for practitioners that uses the creation and viewing of videotaped parent-child interactions to help parents

build parenting strengths and recognize their baby's unique qualities. The STEEP manual is a comprehensive guide to using a relationship-based perspective in early intervention work with new parents.

Other opportunities at the Harris Center:

- 2001 Harris Visiting Scholar, Dr. Joy Osofsky, from Louisiana State University, will speak about violence and the development of infants and toddlers, May 31, 1:00-3:30 pm at the Minnesota History Center.
- *Harris Summer Institute*, a series of short courses on a range of topics in infant development will be offered this summer for University credit or continuing education units.
- *Questions About Kids*, one-page flyers that answer important questions parents of infants and toddlers have about their very young children's development, available free-of-charge.

For more information on these resources and events, contact the Harris Center at 612-624-4510 or www.harristrainingcenter.org

May 4

The Center for Early Education and Development hosts the CEED roundtable, *The Role of Higher Education in Child Care*, Radisson Metrodome hotel. Contact Christopher Watson at 612/625-2898 or watson012@umn.edu.

May 8

Ramsey County Extension Service's *Working With Hmong Family Series*, the fourth session, "Communicating with Hmong Parents: How Schools can help Hmong Students Achieve" at the Ramsey County Extension Office. 9:00am - 11:30am. Contact Shirley at 651/704-2056.

May 9

23rd Annual Konopka Lectureship presented by U of MN's Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health. Topic will be mentoring youth. McNamara Alumni Center on the east bank of the Minneapolis campus. To register, send an email to konopka@tc.umn.edu or visit the web site www.konopka.umn.edu.

May 30

Work/Welfare Requirements: Do They Increase the Demand for Child Welfare?, an audio conference hosted by U of MN's Center for Law and Social Policy. Guest speakers include policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and other experts. 12:30pm to 1:30pm Visit www.clasp.org/audio-conference/brochure.html or contact Janellen Duffy at jduffy@clasp.org.

May 31

2001 Harris Forum, Dr. Joy Osofsky, Louisiana State University on "Violence and the development of infants and toddlers." 1-3:30 pm, Minnesota History Center. 612-624-4510 or www.harristrainingcenter.org

JUNE

June 8-9

Growing with Families: Education for Parents of Children ages 5-18, Parent Education Institute IV presented by the UM's Family Education program. Contact Mary Maher at 612-624-1294, or check web site (wcf.coled.umn.edu).

June/July

Harris Summer Institute. Six short courses covering a variety of topics within infant development, infant mental health, and early intervention. University credit and continuing education units. 612-624-4510 or www.harristrainingcenter.org

ON LINE AT — WWW.CYFC.UMN.EDU

Michael Brott, Community Partnership and Communication Coordinator

Families and seniors have a wide variety of information available with the click of a mouse. From aging statistics to intergenerational opportunities, the Internet provides useful information about programs and services. Here is a selection of a few key sites to start exploring.

Family Re-Union (www.familyreunion.org)

Look under this year's conference, *Families and Seniors Across Generations*, for Related Links organized by topics that range from mental health to housing, and from financial planning to active aging.

Access America for Seniors (www.seniors.gov)

A one-stop gateway to federal information and services for and about senior citizens. Without having to know which government agency or program provides what, seniors and their families can access health and security information and much more.

AgingStats (www.agingstats.gov)

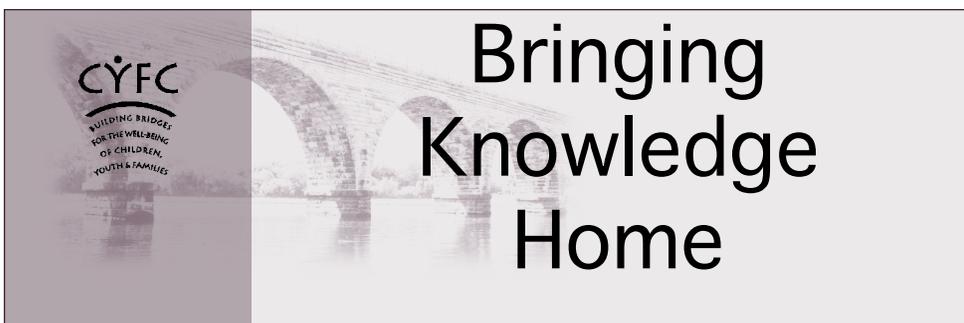
Looking for statistics on America's ever-growing senior population? Aging statistics from nine federal agencies, including "Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being."

Generations United (www.gu.org)

Generations United (GU) focuses exclusively on promoting intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. It represents more than 185 national, state, and local organizations that together reach 70 million Americans. GU is a national resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU provides a forum for those working with children, youth, and the elderly to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

Infoaging.org (www.infoaging.org)

Maintaining health across the life span is an important goal for families today. Infoaging.org from the American Federation for Aging Research provides consumer information on aging and health. It is one of the best sites on the web offering the latest information about groundbreaking aging research tailored for a non-medical audience.



Who's the Consortium?

Misty Heggeness, Ph.D. candidate in Family Social Science and Public Policy, was in residence with the Consortium this fall, researching parenting resources for Latino families. Her research project was commissioned by the community-based organization Unidos Para Los Niños, and supported by a Community grant from CURA.

Ron James is President and CEO of the Center for Ethical Business Cultures, a nonprofit organization that partners with the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management and the University of St Thomas' School of Business. A long-standing business and community leader, he was a panelist at the Consortium's January 18 forum, *Bringing Knowledge Home*.

Nancy Johnson is Executive Director of the MN Child Care Resource & Referral Network and served as staff for the MN Early Care and Education Finance Commission. She's a tireless advocate for children and family issues, and is promoting the recommendations from the Finance Commission's recent report. She served as a panelist at the Consortium's January 18 forum.

Karen Kelly-Ariwoola is Associate Vice President of Programs at the Minneapolis Foundation. She conducts research and provides guidance to the Foundation in the areas of public education, child care, and other children, youth and family issues. She took part in the Consortium's recent forum on early childcare and education.

Charles Nelson and **Megan Gunnar** are faculty members and researchers in the University's Institute of Child Development. They served on the committee of national experts that worked for over two years to produce *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, and are now sharing the report's findings with Minnesota audiences with the help of the Consortium.

And the Consortium is YOU!

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