



K-STATE CENTER ON AGING

December 2008 Gerontology Update
www.ksu.edu/gerontology



CALENDAR:

- 12/15-12/19 Finals Week
- 12/29 Intersession Begins
- 1/14 Intersession Ends
- 1/15 Spring Term Begins
- 1/19 University Holiday

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Part-time job Opportunity:
see page 3 for more details

Center on Aging in the News:
See page 2 for the full story

NEW RESOURCES:

MOVIES:

Do Not Go Gently: The Power of Imagination in Aging

Life: Adapting to Change

Life: Aging and Fear

Remember: Movies can be checked out for class projects.

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hi from Gayle: Laci does all the work for these newsletters. She carefully considers information that might be of interest to you and then lets me know what she's planning so I can say a few words that might go along with her theme. I find myself really looking forward to these stories. It's been a very active semester for us at the Center and you'll learn a lot more about that within these pages. I've just come back from the Gerontological Society of America conference. I go every year to learn as much as I can in one setting about the latest advances in our understanding of aging. One of the things that I like the most about that conference is the number of students there. This association does a good job of keeping costs reasonable for students as well as providing appropriate activities and content for the beginning researcher. In the future I would like to start seeing KSU student faces in that crowd so if you think you have any interest in going to a conference please contact our office and we'll see if we can't help you make that happen. In the meantime, just let me say that this is the time of the year that we like to let you know how much we care about all of you. We've long known that it takes a very special person to want to jump ahead a generation or two in their understanding of the life span. We hope you have a very enjoyable and safe holiday season.

Gayle

ADVISING NOTES

This time of year everyone is busy finishing up semester projects and papers, taking tests, and putting off that Christmas shopping until you are done with classes. Remember to plan ahead and be sure to make an appointment with me if you will be graduating in May (if you have not already done so). It is your responsibility to contact me when you are preparing to graduate. Failure to do so will mean that gerontology is not listed on your transcript and you will not receive anything certifying your completion of our programs. Also please note that we have eliminated the portfolio requirement for our graduates. Good luck with the end of the semester, be safe, and have fun on your break.

Pam

FEATURING: THE NEW CENTER ON AGING LOGO



Making a mark is the goal of the Center on Aging's new logo. The Center challenged students in a graphic design class to create a logo. The student selected, Sarah Poinsett, stood out among her peers. The class has designed logos for many different organizations, but this is the first time for Sarah's design to be selected as the winner. Sarah found this project to be one of the most challenging because, "It was hard thinking of a way to represent aging that is not negative."

Sarah's design evolved throughout the process. She says, "The tree logo came to me as a representation of growth and life. It is meant to be simple, showing aging at its finest." Initially, Sarah designed a more intricate version of the tree, but she decided to simplify it. She went with a slightly curved tree to symbolize a feeling of grace and movement which represents successful aging. Sarah will graduate in May and plans to seek a job in the Kansas City area.

Selection of the logo was a collaborative effort, involving members of the Center on Aging faculty, students in Introduction to Gerontology, and other stakeholders. A special note of thanks to all those that participated. Watch for the logo on things to come.

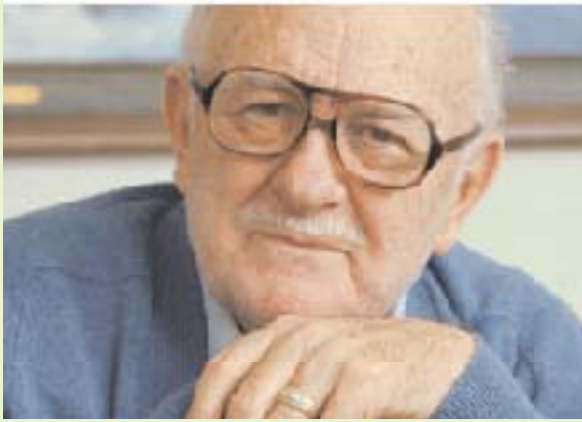
Center on Aging in the News: Sexuality in Nursing Homes: The Fire Still Burns

Most of you know our office for the work we do here on campus with students. Recently, a KSU news release featured the Center's research related to sexuality in the nursing home. Majka Jankowiak and Laci Cornelison, research assistants at the Center, studied nursing home staff attitudes about sexuality in three Kansas nursing homes. Majka and Laci surveyed the staff before and after a workshop they presented. The surveys, as well as anecdotal feedback from the participants, showed a marked change in attitudes.

Nursing home staff receive little education in this area, and they tend to either ignore or condemn sexual needs. The content of the presentation focused on sexuality as a basic human need and encourages participants to start talking about these issues and to create ways to accommodate sexual needs of residents.

Majka says of the presentation, "The staff really felt this was a topic that they needed to be educated on. Part of it is that American society is not supportive of older people and sex. It has been a taboo, and it's an even bigger taboo in nursing homes. After the presentation, the participants felt more confident talking about it and dealing with sexual expressions of residents."

To see the full story go to: <http://www.k-state.edu/media/newsreleases/nov08/seniorsex111808.html>



Don't Call Me Sweetie...

Article from the *New York Times*, printed 10/07/2008

Professionals call it elderspeak, the sweetly belittling form of address that has always rankled older people: the doctor who talks to their child rather than to them about their health; the store clerk who assumes that an older person does not know how to work a computer, or needs to be addressed slowly or in a loud voice. Then there are those who address an elderly person as “dear”.

“People think they’re being nice,” said Elvira Nagle, 83, of Dublin, CA, “but when I hear it, it raises my hackles.”

Now studies are finding that the insults can have health consequences, especially if people mutely accept the attitudes behind them, said Becca Levy, an associate professor of epidemiology and psychology at Yale University, who studies the health effects of such messages on elderly people.

“Those little insults can lead to more negative images of aging,” says Levy. “And those who have more negative images of aging have worse functional health over time, including lower rates of survival.”

In her forthcoming study, Dr. Levy found that older people exposed to negative images of aging, including words like “forgetful,” “feeble” and “shaky,” performed significantly worse on memory and balance tests; in previous experiments, they also showed higher levels of stress.

Despite such research, the worst offenders are often health care workers, said Kristine Williams, a nurse gerontologist and associate professor at the University of Kansas School of Nursing.

Dr. Williams said health care workers often thought that using words like “dear” or “sweetie” conveyed that they cared and made them easier to understand. “But they don’t realize the implications that it’s also giving messages to older adults that they’re incompetent.”

Looking for a Part-time Job With an Opportunity to Work with Elders...

Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community is hiring companions engage in:

- * conversation
- * companionship
- * respite care
- * light gardening
- * light housekeeping
- * some meal preparation
- * mail assistance
- * letter writing
- * grooming and dressing guidance
- * light laundry
- * overnight supervision
- * errand services
- * grocery shopping

And other tasks as needed

Contact: Jackie Rose at (785) 537-4610

Thinking about your Future... Consider a Master's Degree in Gerontology



As the semester comes to a close, each of you are one step closer to approaching graduation. You may be starting to think about what is next in your life. Did you know that the Center on Aging offers an on-line Master's program?



Working together, the Great Plains IDEA (Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance) has developed an Internet-based gerontology curriculum. The inter-institutional M.S. program draws on the expertise of graduate faculty and graduate courses from six universities, including KSU. The program is taught entirely via the Internet and, upon completion of the curriculum, students at Kansas State will earn an M.S. in Gerontology. The program has been in place at Kansas State University since Fall 2003.

One of our former graduates, Jake Quigley, is an excellent example of students enrolled in the program. After graduation, Jake went to work at Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community, putting his secondary major in gerontology to work. Soon after, he decided to enlist in the Navy enabling him to continue his education and travel the world. On the beaches of Spain, Jake is able to take courses toward his on-line degree in gerontology while the Navy foots the bill!



Not knowing where life would take him once he enlisted, Jake started his work in the Navy as a hospital corpsman. He then received additional training to do his current work as a Psychiatric Specialist. He collaborates with psychiatrists, psychologists, alcohol counselors, social workers, and other specialists native to Spain. His main duties are to assist two doctors with screening patients and completing intake interviews. Other duties include doing deployment and post deployment mental health screenings, as well as leading a Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome support group. When he leaves the Navy he hopes to work in Washington D.C. doing policy development and advocacy for elders.

Who knows what lies ahead for you!! The possibilities are endless. For more information on this program contact Pam Evans in our office.

K-STATE CENTER ON AGING
103 Leisure Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-3501
785-532-5945 www.ksu.edu/gerontology

K-STATE
Kansas State University
gerontology@ksu.edu

Kansas State University is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or other nonmerit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities and employment (including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era), as required by applicable laws and regulations. Responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, has been delegated to Clyde Howard, Director of Affirmative Action, Kansas State University, 214 Anderson Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-0124, (Phone) 785-532-6220; (TTY) 785-532-4807.