



VAN FORUM

North Minneapolis: Empowering a Neighborhood

Andre Dukes will share his story about how he became a community leader. He will draw from his experience with the PEACE Foundation and the Northside Achievement Zone to talk about the challenges, opportunities, and traits that leaders need, whether young or old, to be successful in community work.

Taronda Richardson, from Cookie Cart, will talk about how baking cookies changed the north Minneapolis community. She will discuss how the Cookie Cart is allowing youth a place to develop

life, leadership, and employment skills one cookie at a time.

Sister Jean Thuerauf of Mercy Missionaries of Minneapolis works with youth in Minneapolis. She will share stories of her experiences.

Presenters:

- **Andre Dukes**, Engagement Director, PEACE Foundation and Northside Achievement Zone
- **Taronda Richardson**, Bakery and Employment Director of Cookie Cart
- **Sister Jean Thuerauf**, Mercy Missionaries of Minneapolis

Please pre-register for this free forum. To register, go to www.vital-aging-network.org; look under *What's New*. [Register online now!](#)

Questions? Need a ride? Call VAN at 651-917-4652.

A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living.

—Rudolph Steiner



North Minneapolis: Empowering a Neighborhood

10:30 AM to 12:30 PM
Tuesday,
September 14, 2010

Free and Open
to the Public

Urban Research and
Outreach / Engagement
Center, Room 105
2001 Plymouth Ave No.
Minneapolis, MN 55411

[Map to Urban Center](#)

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October FORUM Understanding End-of-Life Options

Tuesday,
October 12, 2010
10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

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A Longer, Healthier Life...How Do I Sign Up?

By Emily Strand, Vital Aging Network

Imagine 94.7 years. The [Blue Zone Vitality Compass](#) has projected that I will live to that age. To me, this number seems a bit ominous. It begs the question: What kind of 94-year-old will I be? If the Vitality Compass is any indicator, it looks like I will be relatively healthy until I am 83 years old. Will I really face 11 years of health issues? If so, what can I do to make these 11 years healthy and vital?

Minnesota-based author Dan Buettner has traveled the world studying areas where people live longer and healthier lives. His book, *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer From the People Who've Lived the Longest*, discusses these areas. These *Blue Zones* include the island of Sardinia; Okinawa, Japan; Loma Linda, California; and the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica.

Buettner summarizes his premise as follows: "If you can optimize your lifestyle, you may gain back an extra decade of life you'd otherwise miss. What's the best way to optimize your lifestyle? Emulate the practices we found in each one of the Blue Zones." ([From excerpt published by National Public Radio.](#))

Buettner believes that genetics determine only 10% of how long we will live. The remaining 90% is related to how we live our lives. In his research, Buettner has discovered the common denominators of these healthy zones. He believes that following



Attendees at the Third Annual Boomers and Civic Engagement Forum

these *rules to live by* could add up to another decade of quality life.

He organizes the rules into four categories:

- **Move naturally.** Find ways to include movement in your daily life with gardening, walking, playing with family, and more.
- **Hold the right outlook.** Express your sense of purpose. Finding time to slow down helps you remain calm.
- **Eat wisely.** Eat 20% less at meals. Avoid meat and processed foods.
- **Belong to the right tribe.** Being surrounded by family and friends who have healthy lifestyles is very important to longevity. Buettner says, "In all *Blue Zones* in the world, people put their loved ones first, and we think that more good years of life are associated with that choice."

Sounds easy. But how can Minnesotans, who are plagued by subarctic temperatures and long, dark winter days, implement these practices? Can communities throughout the United States replicate these findings to create more Blue Zones?

AARP and Blue Zones wanted to answer that question so they implemented the [AARP and Blue Zones Vitality Project](#) in Albert Lea, Minnesota. Due to the size of its population, the

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A Longer, Healthier Life...How Do I Sign Up? (continued)

city's average health conditions, its proximity to the University of Minnesota, and the level of community support, Albert Lea was an ideal location for a pilot project.

The goal of the project was to influence Albert Lea's citizens to adopt healthy habits so easily that they didn't even recognize how much they were changing their lives. With the community fired up to be part of the Vitality Project and with support from the community's leadership, Albert Lea was transformed. According to Buettner, "By the time the Vitality Project ended in October 2009, a total of 3,464 residents of

all ages had participated. The life expectancy of the 786 residents who took the Vitality Compass before and after the project rose by an average of 2.9 years, and all say they feel healthier — physically and emotionally." [AARP The Magazine](#)

The Vitality Project indicates that people can live longer and healthier lives with community support and participants' enthusiasm. Healthful eating, sense of purpose, connection to others, and movement — yes, please! Now 94.7 years don't seem quite so scary!



Now is the time to register!

The Vital Aging Network is pleased to offer the ALVA Leadership Development program in six locations in 2010–11. The course will help you:

- (Re) discover your lifework.
- Take advantage of the opportunities and address the barriers to leadership in later life.
- Plan and implement a project to build your capacity as a civic leader.
- Build an ongoing network for sharing ideas, knowledge, and resources.

Classes are held at: [Century College](#) in White Bear Lake, [Inver Hills Community College](#) in Inver Grove Heights, [Minnesota State University](#) in Mankato,

[North Hennepin Community College](#) in Brooklyn Park, [Riverland Community College](#), and [St. Cloud Technical & Community College](#). Classes meet from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm on the second Friday of the month for eight months.

Course fees are \$750 with a late registration fee of \$50 for registration after September 24. Contact the schools directly to register (click links above).

VAN will offer scholarships to a limited number of participants. Scholarship application deadline is September 13. For information, contact Tom Hyder at 651-917-4635, tom@vital-aging-network.org or visit www.vital-aging-network.org.

From the Chair

Thoughts on the Older Americans Act

Much of the *Older Americans Act* (OAA) is about meeting the needs of older Americans. But the OAA also addresses civic engagement which is about older Americans as a resource.

The definition of civic engagement in the *Older Americans Act* is a good one: "An individual or collective action designed to address a public concern or an unmet human, educational, healthcare, environmental, or public-safety need."

Civic engagement is the thread that weaves the fabric of a democratic society. Active citizens can be the catalyst for a strong civic infrastructure that includes citizens, government, businesses, and the whole community working together to solve problems and embrace opportunities.

Civic engagement is crucial in these days of shrinking public budgets. According to the [National Civic League](#), "Successful communities no longer look primarily to Washington for money or program guidance. . . . [Successful] communities recognize the interdependence among sectors and citizens, and they struggle to identify common goals to meet individuals' and communities' needs and aspirations."

We who are involved in the [Vital Aging Network](#) believe that people in their 50s, 60s, 70s, and beyond, who possess experience and wisdom, can be important catalysts for civic engagement in their communities through active participation and leadership in public life.

The Vital Aging Network is working to engage older leaders in a number of ways. The [ALVA](#)

[Leadership Development](#) program and an [AmeriCorps](#) planning project are two programs that exemplify civic engagement and serve as models for other communities.

ALVA Leadership Development

VAN's ALVA Leadership Development program helps experienced leaders learn to use their skills in fresh ways and acquire new skills needed for being effective changemakers in their communities.

Some results of last year's ALVA program include:

- Mary Ellen Kennedy, 71, taught fifth and sixth graders for 31 years in the Robbinsdale School District before she retired in 1996. This year, she is playing a major role in helping children with incarcerated parents to connect with adult mentors and address the fear, confusion, guilt, isolation, and anger they often face.
- Dick Kavaney, 73, a civil engineer and construction attorney for 36 years, is putting his experience to use by helping to remove obstacles to universal design in the Minnesota Building Code.
- Lul Ahmed, a Somali immigrant who now lives in Mankato, is working to empower immigrant women who are the heads of households in southern Minnesota.

AmeriCorps

The Vital Aging Network and the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (MAAA) are collaborating on an AmeriCorps project focused on tapping into

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Volunteering Spotlight

Can we help spread the word about a volunteer opportunity in your organization? Send us information by the 10th of the month for publication in the e-Bulletin for the next month. While we will make every effort to include what you send us, space is limited.

Store To Door

Volunteer Grocery Shopper, Volunteer Order Taker

[Store To Door](#) often receives an increase in elderly clients during the late fall and early winter as the weather gets colder. Store To Door is a nonprofit that provides grocery delivery to homebound elderly clients in the seven-county metro area. The organization is currently looking for Volunteer Grocery Shoppers and Volunteer Order Takers. Volunteer Grocery Shoppers work two to four hours a week at one of five Cub Foods locations. Volunteer Order Takers work with two clients per week, taking their grocery orders over the phone, at home or work, while entering items into the organization's online grocery database. For more information, contact Store To Door at 651-642-1892 or volunteers@storetodoor.org.

Building Blocks

Tutors

[Building Blocks Tutorial](#), a program of Cherokee Park United Church, needs volunteer tutors for the 2010–11 school year.

Tutors work one to one after school with students in the primary grades doing activities that teach reading, math, and writing skills. Tutors volunteer one or two days from 3:45 pm to 5:45 pm



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beginning on October 5 and ending in early May. The positions require training, and Building Blocks will hold sessions on September 28, 29, and 30. For more information, contact Jill Jackson at 651-228-1378 or at buildingblocks@usfamily.net.

Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network (MnCAAN)

Social Media Assistant

[MnCAAN](#) is searching for someone with experience and skill in marketing-oriented social media. The Social Media Assistant will assess MnCAAN's social media needs, assist with developing a strategy for its use of social media, help suggest and develop content, and assist with implementation and updates. Volunteers 55 and over are eligible for free supplemental insurance and other RSVP benefits. For more information, visit www.mncaan.net/tools/contact.html.

Saint Jude Hospice

Various Volunteer Opportunities

Saint Jude Hospice is seeking people who are friendly and empathetic to bring a ray of sunshine to hospice patients in surrounding metro communities. Volunteers enjoy a broad training program and can choose from a variety of areas to volunteer their time.

Saint Jude Hospice specializes in care for adults and the elderly population in the metro area. If you are interested in learning more about Saint Jude Hospice, visit www.saintjudehospice.com or call 651-735-3656.

For Your CALENDAR



OCTOBER VAN FORUM *Understanding End-of-Life Options: Getting to the Heart of the Matter*

Presenter

Michele Fedderly, Executive Director, Minnesota Network of Hospice and Palliative Care

Tuesday, October 12, 2010

10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Lenox Community Center
6715 Minnetonka Blvd.
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

[Map to Lenox Community Center](#)

DEMYSTIFYING HEARING LOSS

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Thursday, September 9, 2010

Everyone is welcome to attend a luncheon and presentation titled *Demystifying Hearing Loss* at [Immanuel Lutheran Church](#) in St. Paul. People will learn the tools that are available to assist with hearing difficulties and make day-to-day functioning easier. Mary Bauer, [Minnesota Department of Human Services – Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services](#), will present. Call 651-699-5560 to make reservations (\$7) and/or to schedule a free hearing screening between 10:00 and noon, before the presentation.

FILM FESTIVAL AND PROGRAM

Elder Care Rights Alliance (ECRA)

Friday, September 10, 2010

Please join [ECRA](#) and the Center on Aging for a full-day program featuring movies and discussions. Movies will focus on creativity and aging, legal issues and aging, caring and dementia, and end-of-life decision making. Opinion leaders in the field of long-term care and aging will join moderator Jim Vanden Bosch from [Terra Nova Films](#). CEUs are available. To

obtain more information or register, call (952) 854-7304 or [register online](#).

FORT SNELLING BY TORCHLIGHT

Saturday, September 11, 2010

Have you ever wondered what [Fort Snelling](#) is like after dark? Come to Fort Snelling for a special evening as its personnel open the gates and let you explore the site by torchlight. Learn about the shadowy side of the fort as you participate in a court martial to help decide the fate of one of Fort Snelling's soldiers. The cost is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors, and \$7 for children. The event is free for members of the [Minnesota Historical Society \(MHS\)](#). The event requires registration and prepayment. Tours are also available on September 18 and October 30. Visit the [events calendar](#) for more information.

JOURNEY INTO THE COUNTRY OF AGING

**Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality
Beginning October 6, 2010**

Join Joyce Eckes and Lucia Leck on Wednesday evenings to learn useful tips and tools for traveling into the *Country of Aging*. Attendees will participate

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For Your CALENDAR (continued)

in a self-awareness inventory, learn self-care, and gain understanding of cross cultural perspectives and practices. Sessions meet through May 11. The cost

is \$25 for each session or \$100 for seven sessions. To obtain more information or register, visit www.wisdomwayscenter.org or call 651-696-2788.

Thoughts on the Older Americans Act (continued)

the tremendous resource of people 55+ to help make communities work for people of all ages.

Wally Wysopal, city manager in North St. Paul, is anxious to get started with AmeriCorps members. "This project is exactly what we need. It used to be that the Lions Clubs and the veteran's clubs played the important role of active citizens in our community (but they no longer do). Older adults can step in to help us rebuild what we have lost. It would be tremendously valuable to our community."

AmeriCorps and older adults are a winning combination for sustainable community development.

The *Older Americans Act* can support the important work of older adults' civic engagement. We urge and support expansion of the act to include the following provisions:

- Provide incentives for communities to engage people 55+ as active citizens in their communities.
- Encourage replication of leadership development programs that focus specifically on developing people 55+ as civic leaders.

We also urge an increase in the percentage of AmeriCorps' membership allocated for people 55+ in the *Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act*.



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You can play a role in getting these policies enacted. Call or write members of your congressional delegation. As a member of the Special Committee on Aging, Minnesota Senator Al Franken is in a particularly good position to influence enactment of these provisions. Let our elected officials know that supporting civic engagement of older adults is important to you.

Nancy Eustis, Chair, Vital Aging Network with Julie Roles