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Vital Aging Network

e-Bulletin

DECEMBER 2013

VAN FORUM

Make It OK

Understanding the touchy subject of mental illnesses and how to stop the silence

Thursday, January 21, 12:00 to 2:00 PM

Wilder Center

451 Lexington Parkway North

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104

Free and easy parking!

Make It  .org

One in four Americans experience a mental illness each year. Yet, most people live with the symptoms for 10 years before seeking treatment, largely due to the stigma.

HealthPartners and Regions Hospital have launched a new campaign to target the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. Developed in collaboration with community partners and the Minnesota chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the "Make It OK" campaign is designed to encourage people to talk more openly about mental illnesses and ask for help.



[Click to listen to Ken Barlow's story.](#)

Mental illness is a touchy subject, creating voids in conversation. In this forum,

participants will hear stories of heroes, engage in a discussion about the stigma surrounding mental illnesses and learn how to reduce the stigma. It's time stop the silence and Make It OK.

[Register now](#)

Co-sponsored by:



FROM THE CHAIR

Experiencing the Season

by Pam Hayle, Chair, Vital Aging Network

The holiday season is all about traditions, experiences, memories and celebration--similar to the reflections we embrace as growing older. Doctors, clergy, even talk show hosts often talk about the increased depression and loneliness experienced by older adults during this time of year.

As I engage in the activity of the season, I see a different face of older adults--manning the Salvation Army kettles, serving meals at a mission, wrapping gifts to send to soldiers overseas, all while creating wonderful new traditions and memories for their own families.



The inevitable fact of growing old does not translate to depression or sadness. For people aging vitally, changing roles bring new opportunities to engage, regardless of faith traditions or the year on their driver's licenses. Older adults are discovering new ways to celebrate and experience the joy of the season while adding meaning and capacity to their lives.

Have a wonderful holiday season and Happy New Year!

Let us know what you are thinking about this holiday season.

[Add your comments.](#)

Vital Aging Network is Awarded Community Innovation Grant

The Bush Foundation announced this week that it has granted the Vital Aging Network a **Community Innovation Grant** to further its community-based [Wellness 50+](#) program.



BUSH FOUNDATION

The Community Innovation Grant program supports organizations working to create or implement an innovative solution to address a community need or opportunity. The innovation must be developed through community problem-solving-inclusive, collaborative processes focused on making the most of community assets-and be more effective, equitable or sustainable than existing approaches. The program is part of the Bush Foundation's effort to enable, inspire and reward community innovation.

"Community innovation occurs when people come together to think bigger and think differently about what is possible for their communities," said Molly Matheson Gruen, the Bush Foundation's community innovation manager. "Our inaugural Community Innovation Grant recipients are tackling a range of issues impacting quality of life in their communities. And they are doing it in a way that ensures all voices are heard and that the solutions will endure."

The Bush Foundation will awarded more than \$4 million to 34 organizations in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography, through its Community Innovation Grant program. The Foundation received 618 Community Innovation Grant applications requesting more than \$76 million.

The full list of Community Innovation Grant recipients can be found on the [Bush Foundation](#) website.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION

Not Quite Norman Rockwell: Re-imagining the Holidays

We had a lively conversation at the December 7, 2013, EvolvingConnections Salon on

Re-imagining the Holidays. Thanks to Kathy Ramundt, Evolve grad and Vital Aging Network Leadership Group member, for leading the salon discussion.

Salon participants shared their experiences of past holidays and ideas for making holidays more fulfilling. Here is some of what they said:

- One individual spoke about **wanting to change her experience of family gatherings** that lack authentic connection and feel soulless. She made a courageous decision this year to forgo a gathering rather than participate in something that is sure to be painful, even though her husband and son will attend.
- Others spoke about the **need to adjust expectations and traditions** as situations change. Two told of a group of friends who for more than a decade have celebrated the Winter Solstice with a gathering of friends, food and homemade gifts. They celebrate nature, fire and the hope of the return of light.

[Read more and add your own experiences and ideas.](#)

Short Takes

Civic Leadership and Minnesota

Citizens League Executive Director, Sean Kershaw, talks with Kevyn Burger about developing civic leaders who govern for the common good. [Click to access the video.](#)



On the Critical List? A MetLife Report on the Health Status

of the 40+ Population

According to this report, "The current health status of the adult 40+ population and the associated healthcare costs are on a rocky road. We have embraced chronic diseases as a part of 'getting older' and have focused on disease management and acute care versus taking steps as we age to prevent us from acquiring disease in the first place."

[Read the report.](#)

New Generations Will Redefine Retirement

Chris Farrell, StarTribune, November 16, 2013

"We're now at the 'get-me-a-rewrite' moment with retirement. Growing up, boomers absorbed a simple model: Attend school. Work hard. Retire. The popular image of old age was dominated by images of retirement communities like Sun City, Ariz., with people living off traditional employer-sponsored pension plans and Social Security, playing golf in the morning and enjoying cocktails on the patio in the evening. Truth is, a majority of retired Americans didn't move to a retirement community and didn't have a pension plan. (They did have Social Security.) It's an unaffordable lifestyle for a majority of aging workers." [Read the article.](#)

The Biggest Mistake Doctors Make

Misdiagnoses are harmful and costly. But they're often preventable.

Laura Landro, The Wall Street Journal, November 17, 2013

Not only are diagnostic problems more common than other medical mistakes--and more likely to harm patients--but they're also the leading cause of malpractice claims... The good news is that diagnostic errors are more likely to be preventable than other medical mistakes. [Read more.](#)

Physical Fitness May Be Tied to Slower Memory Decline

by Kathleen Raven, Reuters.com, November 21, 2013

Being in good physical shape may help preserve people's thinking and memory skills, suggests a new study. [Read the article.](#)

10 Reasons to Become a Renter in Retirement

Retirees often need the help with maintenance and repairs that renting provides

Emily Brandon, U.S. News & World Report, November 11, 2013

In retirement, you don't necessarily need a house with several bedrooms and a big yard. In fact, stairs to climb and a yard that needs mowing can become a significant liability as you age. Renters get to outsource emergency repairs and some home maintenance chores, which can make life easier as a retiree. [Read more.](#)

Gut Bacteria Might Guide the Workings of Our Minds

Rob Stein, National Public Radio, November 18, 2013

Could the microbes that inhabit our guts help explain that old idea of "gut feelings?" There's growing evidence that gut bacteria really might influence our minds. [Read the article and listen to the story.](#)

Pollen and OTA Merge

Pollen, a digital network that connects civic-minded individuals to share stories and

resources and OTA a nonprofit that offers immersive events with the goal of transforming our region through positive connections and creative renewal are joining to form OTA-Pollen. "OTA + Pollen are uniting to create a laboratory for possibility." [Check it out.](#)

Dietary Advice for the Gluttony Season

Mark Bittman, New York Times, December 3, 2013

Now that the gluttony season is upon us, you may be re-re-re-evaluating your diet; or perhaps you'll be stewing on it four weeks from today, making commitments to do better before summer. [Read more.](#)

Volunteer Opportunities

Store To Door

Volunteer Order Taker

Do good from your desktop! Join Store To Door and take grocery orders online. Store To Door is a nonprofit grocery shopping & delivery service for homebound elderly serving the 7-County Twin Cities metro area. As a Volunteer Order Taker you will take a client's order over the phone and enter into Store To Door's online database. Online and group training is available. Time commitment: About one hour a week, or two hours every other week, working with a total of four clients. Please consider this a year commitment. This helps you know the client's grocery interests while providing stability. Store To Door can accommodate vacations and other breaks. For more information or to begin the volunteering process please contact Store To Door's Volunteer Coordinator at 651-642-1892 or email volunteers@storetodoor.org. Learn more at www.storetodoor.org

Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota

GED Tutor at the FATHER Project

The FATHER (Fostering Actions To Help Earnings and Responsibility) Project is a program of Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota. The goal of the FATHER Project is to assist parents in overcoming the barriers that prevent them from supporting their children economically and emotionally. Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota is looking for volunteers to work individually with program participants to help them prepare to take the General Educational Development (GED) exam. The goal of the program is to help participants pass each of the parts of the GED exam so that they can receive their diploma. Review key concepts with adult participants including English, math, social studies and science. Where: The FATHER Project, 2700 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55407. When: Wednesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., two-hour shift preferred. Contact Sara Triplett, Volunteer Coordinator, 651-379-5800 Ext. 5824 or

STriplett@GoodwillEasterSeals.org.

Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute

Telemedicine Volunteer

The Courage Kenny Telemedicine Volunteer team invites you to become a telemedicine volunteer. If you possess a "comfort level" with technology, the "essential" skills of building trustworthy relationships, and the confidence to support clients by facilitating in-home video conferences with their Care Providers at the Courage Kenny Advanced Primary Care Clinic - then this may be the adventure for you! Our clients' limited physical mobility causes extraordinary challenges in the amount of time, energy and transportation expenditures they deal with in order to manage their health and independence. As a telemed volunteer you can help reduce those barriers and empower our clients to better manage their health, reduce hospitalizations, and diminish the unhealthy affects of social isolation. The screening process will close by February 1, 2014 for the 20-hour training session, to be scheduled January- March. Interested individuals may contact Cathleen Godsall, Telemedicine Volunteer Coordinator, 763-520-0241 or Cathleen.Godsall@CourageCenter.org

Minnesota Children's Museum

Sewing Volunteer

Do you have sewing expertise? Minnesota Children's Museum in Saint Paul is looking for an individual to assist our Exhibits department in sewing props for our in-house and traveling exhibits. Volunteer could work from home once the individual has attended an orientation and met with our Exhibit's Manager regarding this project. With your help, the Museum will feature your materials in future exhibits and help spark children's learning through play! If interested, please apply online at www.mcm.org/support-the-museum/volunteer-intern/Adults/ and if you have any questions, please contact Volunteer Services at (651) 225-6046.

Volunteer with Museum Visitors

Minnesota Children's Museum is dedicated to providing children with a fun, hands-on and stimulating environment to explore and discover. There are a variety of ways for you to get involved and volunteer at the Museum. Whether you'd prefer to lead art activities in the classroom, play alongside children in the galleries or assist behind the scenes in the office, we have several great opportunities for you to spark children's learning through play. Flexible commitments range from weekly 3 hour shifts to one-time special events. To learn more, give Volunteer Services a call at (651) 225-6046 or email us at volunteers@mcm.org. Applications to volunteer can be found on our website at www.mcm.org.

[More on Volunteer Opportunities](#)

For Your Calendar

December 12, 2013

Security for All in an Aging Minnesota

10:00 AM to 2:30 PM

Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC), 2001 Plymouth Ave N. (corner of Plymouth and Penn), Minneapolis, MN. How can we work together to ensure security for all as we as a society age? Hear from key experts like Former State Demographer Tom Gillaspay and Iris Freeman of the Center for Elder Justice and Policy at William Mitchell. Join key breakout discussions on Income Security, Health Care, Affordable Housing and Food Security. Lunch will be served. This event is free and open to the public. [Download a flyer](#). Please RSVP: Call 1-877-926-8300 or visit <http://aarp.cvent.com/UROC> to register. This program is sponsored by AARP MN, Jewish Community Action, AFL-CIO Minnesota, Minnesota Mature Voices and others.

March 5, 2014

Strong Women: Change Yourself, Change the World

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM, Location TBD.

Engaging Midlife and Older Women to Budge the Population Needle on Nutrition and Physical Activity. Co-sponsored by The Powell Center for Women's Health. Guest Lecture by Miriam Nelson, PhD, Tufts University. Miriam E. Nelson, PhD is director of the John Hancock Research Center on Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention and Professor of Nutrition at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. She is also a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, an honor reserved for those who have demonstrated leadership and research in the field of exercise. For the past 19 years, Dr. Nelson has been principal investigator of studies on exercise and nutrition, work supported by grants from the government and private foundations.

April 25, 2014

MGS 2014 Conference

Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. **"Recruiting, Retaining, and Retraining - Preparing the Workforce for an Aging Society"**. The Minnesota Gerontological Society (MGS) is uniquely positioned to bridge the continents of thought among academics, researchers, regulators, policy makers, and practitioners in the field of aging. The 2014 Conference will focus on areas of recruitment, generational differences in the workplace, technology, retraining the workforce, new models of service delivery, and caregiver resources. Please visit www.mngero.org for further details.



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