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Silverwire Newsletter

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Silverwire

Vol. 7, No. 1 Winter 2009/2010

NEWSLETTER OF THE UMAINE CENTER ON AGING

Encore Leadership Corps is Now Recruiting!

As you may recall from the last newsletter, we'd just shared breaking news about a brand new program the Center on Aging was developing. Several facets of the program have changed since the last edition of Silverwire but the overall purpose of the program remains the same!

The program has a creative new name; Encore Leadership Corps, or ENCorps for short. ENCorps is a free training for Mainers fifty years and older who want to make our communities healthier, more accessible, and preserve Maine's resources for future generations. ENCorps will be offered free to participants thanks to funding and support from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Atlantic Philanthropies, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Development Foundation, Jane's Trust, Davis Conservation Foundation and many local organizations.

The first ENCorps summit is scheduled for April 12 and 13, 2010 at Point Lookout Resort and Conference Center in Northport, Maine. At the summit, as many as 150 volunteers from around the state will receive training focused on increasing their leadership skills and knowledge of ways to improve

our communities and environment. A few examples of topics that are scheduled to be covered at the event include land use and sprawl, grants writing 101, and crafting your personal vision. This training summit not only offers volunteers the latest community planning and development information from experts, but it also offers volunteers a chance to network with people who have similar interests.



After the training summit in April, ENCorps volunteers are encouraged to go back to their communities and organizations and put their new skills to good use on an existing or new project. Some of these projects may include joining a local planning board, advocating for cleaner air, or writing grant proposals for non-profit agencies. The possibilities

are endless. Free support from ENCorps staff will be provided to volunteers when they return to their communities. An online tool called Moodle will allow ENCorps volunteers to stay connected with other members and gives everyone a chance to inform others of all the hard work they've done since the training.

The Encore Leadership Corps is truly a unique program that will benefit Maine and its communities for years to come. Persons over the age of fifty are a diverse and valuable group. Some are still working full-time jobs with children at home, some are in the process of retiring, while others

[Continued on page 5...](#)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE

Maine Kinship Connections.....	3
Kay Lebowitz Lifetime Achievement.....	4
Student Perspective	5
Older Adults and Pain: An Interview with Conan Kornetsky.....	6
Upcoming CoA Events.....	7

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Lenard W. Kaye, Director

Jennifer Crittenden, Editor

The Center on Aging is an interdisciplinary research center reporting to the Vice President for Research and associated with the University of Maine's School of Social Work and the College of Business, Public Policy, and Health. Our mission is to promote and facilitate activities on aging in the areas of education, research and evaluation, and community service, in order to maximize the quality of life of older citizens and their families in Maine and beyond.

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From the Director

I am writing this column on a Thursday morning in mid-December just having come inside from what is estimated to be 20 below zero wind chill. Yes, winter has finally arrived in Maine. While the temperatures may be dropping precipitously here in northern New England, programming at the Center on Aging is rapidly heating up. A number of new and exciting initiatives are either underway or poised to be rolled out in the immediate future. In fact, if the last half of 2009 is any indicator of likely trends when it comes to gerontological programming emerging out of the University of Maine, the sky appears to be clearing. And that bodes well for the Center, the state and older Mainers. Among the new programs and activities that have gotten underway in the last six months that the Center is directly engaged in are the following:



Lenard W. Kaye

- 1) A new Certificate in Leadership in Rural Gerontological Practice for students in the School of Social Work that has already attracted unusually large numbers of individuals preparing for careers in service to older adults in small towns and rural communities;
- 2) Full-scale recruitment for the Encore Leadership Corps (EN-Corps), a unique leadership training program being carried out in partnership with the Maine Community Foundation and funded through the U.S. EPA, Atlantic Philanthropies, Jane's Trust, and the Davis Conservation Foundation for older adult volunteers in Maine committed to smart growth, and community health and revitalization;
- 3) Implementation and evaluation of a Weinberg Foundation-funded rural caregiver network development project being carried out with the Eastern Area Agency on Aging and community partners;
- 4) Implementation and evaluation of the U.S. DHHS-funded Maine Kinship Connections Project being carried out in conjunction with a wide range of collaborating organizations across the state; and
- 5) Planning for the spring 2010 special colloquium on sexuality and aging for health and human service personnel working with older adults in a variety of settings.

Many of these projects are described in greater detail in this issue of the Silverwire. I encourage you to read about them and visit our website at www.mainecenteronaging.org to learn more.

Stay warm and happy holidays!

Partnerships and Programs.....

MAINE KINSHIP CONNECTIONS PROJECT FUNDED, COA TO EVALUATE AND COORDINATE GRANT WORK

Services to assist grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship caregivers throughout Maine are now being expanded, thanks to the receipt of a three-year, \$1.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grant funding for the Maine Kinship Connections Project was made available in connection with the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (PL 110-351).

The Center on Aging, in collaboration with the Maine DHHS, has teamed up with three statewide agencies that have proven track records working with foster care and kinship families. Families and Children Together, Casey Family Services, and Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine will together provide an array of services geared towards supporting children at-risk for entering the child welfare system who are now living with relatives, as well as children already placed with relatives through the system.

Supports that will be available to families may include: Kinship Navigators to help families navigate the complex social service delivery system; Court Navigators to provide legal support; Mental Health Educators; facilitated Family Team Meetings; and assistance with finding additional family members. Family Finding services will also be made avail-

able to teens ages 15-17 living in non-relative foster homes to help them meet or reunite with relatives to form relationships as the teens move into adulthood.

Referrals to receive the services provided through this project will be made by the Maine DHHS Office of Child and Family Services and Families and Children Together. In addition, any grandparent or other caregiver raising a relative's child in Maine may contact Families and Children Together at (866) 298-0896 and receive free caregiver support and family assistance through the Maine Kids-Kin Program.

In addition to services provided directly to kinship families, the Maine Kinship Connections Project will provide training, consultation, and mentoring to child welfare staff and professionals at community organizations. Support provided will include general training about kinship issues, as well as specialized support in Family Team Meetings, Family Finding, mental health education, and kinship navigation.

The Center on Aging will conduct a comprehensive multi-year evaluation of all components of this project. This evaluation effort will ultimately lead to the development of a best practices manual that will highlight methods for successful collaboration, outline components of effective Family Team Meetings and Family Find-

ing, and provide a detailed training curriculum that other states can utilize to better support their kinship families and youth.

RAPP OFFERS INTERNET TIPSHEETS FOR GRANDFAMILIES

Since the commercialization of the Internet in the 1990's, the Internet has become a learning tool incorporated in our daily lives, our education system, and often our careers. The Maine Rural Relatives as Parents Program, through funding from the Brookdale Foundation, has recently completed a set of computer use tip sheets aimed at familiarizing the user with the computer process.

Aligned with the program's innovative use of online technology to support kinship caregivers, the RAPP program's new computer tipsheets provide structured support through nontechnical descriptions and simplistic diagrams. Covering a broad range of areas, the RAPP computer tip sheets can be utilized by individuals with a wide range of computer experience and skill.

Illustrating basic skills needed to operate a computer, these tipsheets will be distributed through local libraries and will be available free of charge. They have been designed to be a simple and valuable tool to help alleviate anxiety surrounding computer usage. For more information on this project, contact Melissa Adle at melissa.adle@umit.maine.edu or by phone at 207-262-7928.

RSVP PRESENTS THE FIRST ANNUAL KAY LEBOWITZ LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



(left to right): Chevelle Marshall, Mary E. Hunter, Paula Burnett and Kay Lebowitz

The 7th annual UMaine Center on Aging RSVP Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on November 10th was the setting for the presentation of a new award honoring two long time RSVP volunteers; Kay Lebowitz and Mary E. Hunter.

Kay Lebowitz has both a name and a face that is familiar to many in the Greater Bangor and the larger Maine communities. Many have met her at St. Joseph Hospital, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Bangor Symphony or Historical Society, at the airport greeting our servicemen and women, or at any number of other places she has volunteered her time (for more years than a lady like Kay might care to admit!).

Kay has served as an RSVP volunteer and as an Advisory Board member for both the Center on Aging and RSVP with her particular thoughtful, gracious manner, her unflagging optimism and sincere encouragement. These

qualities have woven her directly into the fabric of RSVP and we would not be what we are without her. Kay embodies the very spirit of community voluntarism, which many RSVP members clearly share, and to which many of us aspire. The Kay Lebowitz Lifetime Achievement Award will be an award given to a volunteer only once in a career and in recognition and honor of this same generosity of spirit and dedication to community.

The first annual Kay Lebowitz Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Mary E. Hunter in honor of her great dedication to volunteer service. As you may recall, Mary was featured in the Spring 2005 edition of Silverwire. Mary has donated almost 2,000 hours to various volunteer activities in 2009 alone. As an RSVP member, Mary and her cheerful demeanor have served over 22,000 hours at such organizations as Stillwater Healthcare, Hospice of Eastern Maine and Eastern Area Agency on Aging.

PENOBSCOT VALLEY SENIOR COLLEGE UPDATE

Senior College continues to invite new members to join us as we prepare for spring semester courses to be offered from March 5 to April 9, 2010 over six Fridays. Curriculum Committee chair, Christina Diebold has announced several courses that will be offered with additional courses currently being developed. The complete list of about 15 courses will be posted on the Senior College web page at the Center on Aging web site.

Some early course listings are: Women of Afghanistan, Ethics, Short Stories, Darwin's Lectures, Maine Wildlife, Nutrition for Health, Model Trains, Education Then and Now, the Supreme Court, Science of Climate Change Research, Islam, and Bangor Area Architecture.

Senior College benefits significantly from its continued affiliation with the Center on Aging and opportunities for mutual support. With the resignation of the Interim Executive Director, office operations will move to the Eastern Area Agency on Aging where its staff will receive registrations and prepare publications. Volunteer committees will assume additional responsibilities for organizing programs and overall management. Further information, including the latest Memo for Members and a Senior College membership application, is available at: www.umaine.edu/mainecenteronaging/seniorcollege.htm.

SAFE MEDICINE DISPOSAL FOR ME CONTINUES TO OFFER DISPOSAL OPTION FOR MAINE RESIDENTS

Think for a minute about the medicine in your home. Is there medication that is expired? Do you have medicine that you are no longer taking? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then the Safe Medicine Disposal for ME Program may be able to help you. The program is free of charge to all Maine residents thanks to a Fund for A Healthy Maine allocation provided to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency. By using this program, Maine residents are insuring the safe destruction of medications that could otherwise fall into the wrong hands, or get flushed into our lakes, streams

and drinking water. Through this program, administered by the Center on Aging, residents can go to one of over 100 participating sites and acquire a postage paid envelope. Inside the envelope will be directions on how to use the envelope. Once filled, drop the envelope in the mail and it is sent to the Maine DEA where the drugs are catalogued and incinerated. The program has another two years of funding through a Fund for a Healthy Maine allocation which has allowed the program to re-stock all of its existing sites along with many new sites. Since the program began there have been over 4,000 envelopes returned amounting to over 2,000 pounds of drugs. The returns represent over 300,000 pills which all told have an estimated value of around \$210,000. Program evaluation surveys have shown that 99% of people using the program found

it to be helpful. To obtain an envelope, visit one of the programs sites. The sites are listed online at www.safemeddisposal.com/sites. If you have any questions you can call 1-866-637-9743 or email info@safemeddisposal.com.

ENCORPS continued from Front Cover...

devote all their time and energy to various volunteering efforts. ENCorps has something to offer to anyone interested in improving the world around us, lifelong learning, and a willingness to devote some time to volunteering.

If it sounds like ENCorps can fit into your life please consider applying today! For more information or application materials, please contact Amanda at info@encoreleaders.org or by calling (207)262-7931. The application process can be done over the phone if this is more convenient.

ALISON ASHLEY : A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE FIELD OF GERONTOLOGY

By Wes McFarlin

Alison Ashley's interest in the field of aging began with her acceptance into the graduate program at the University of Maine School of Social Work. Currently enrolled as a part-time student, Alison is preparing for a career as a leader in the field of gerontology. Along with furthering her education as a graduate level social work student, Alison is currently enrolled in the newly established certificate program, the Certificate in Leadership in Rural Gerontological Practice at the University of Maine. Alison describes the program as, "phenomenal and a great opportunity." Prior to entering into the graduate program, Alison had never considered or even thought twice about working with the aging population. She believes it was the professors and the course material that has inspired her to pursue her education and her future career in the field of gerontology. Through her participation in the program, Alison is in the process of developing professionally as a committed professional in gerontological practice. With her education due to be complete in the near future, Alison can positively reflect on her courses and the programs offered at the University. "I wouldn't change a thing about the program. I'm learning what it takes to work in rural communities."



Alison Ashley

OLDER ADULTS AND PAIN: AN INTERVIEW WITH CONAN KORNETSKY

BY KATHLEEN GORMLEY



Dr. Conan Kornetsky

Eighty-three year old psychology research professor at Boston University, Dr. Conan Kornetsky, decided to study pain treatment techniques after experiencing an older relative being under-medicated for pain relief. Kornetsky states that one of the common misconceptions of physicians is that older people don't feel pain as much as young people and do not need as much pain medication.

Using tail flick procedure as a major test to study analgesic (pain relief) drugs in rats, Kornetsky found that it is true that older rats have a slower response and take more pain. This is called a spinal reflex. The spinal reflex is compromised in old rats. It doesn't mean they feel pain less; it just takes longer to feel pain. Additionally, while testing

thresholds (levels of pain intensity), Kornetsky found that young and old rats were identical. The older rats felt the pain as much as the younger rats.

Kornetsky says that while it is true that metabolism in older people is slower and the physician needs to monitor the patient so as to not overdose the patient, this should not be a major reason to not give the older patient the drug.

Interestingly, Kornetsky says that he gives a lecture on the topic of pain to both pain researchers and geriatric researchers. The pain group often disagrees with his approach and are often concerned that geriatric patients risk overdose and they are cautious to recommend it be administered to geriatric patients. Kornetsky says a bias occurs with doctors because they are concerned with patients becoming addicted to pain medications. Surprisingly, even in terminally ill cancer patients they often believe, "We don't want to addict them." He asks, "What's the relevance in that if someone is going to die soon?"

Kornetsky discusses the connection between pain medication and our pleasure systems, "Physical dependence is not addiction. Many people who are in hospitals for surgeries for extended periods of time may become physically dependent. The fact that you use it when you have pain and become physically dependent so you continually seek an increase in dosage is a medical problem. What happens in people who are using the drug chronically and find that it relieves the symptoms may continue the drug afterwards. It's pleasurable. People whose reinforcers aren't particularly strong, who are on the borderline of life, face an increased probability of addiction. The euphoria, at least according to addicts, can be terrific. My rats love it."

Conan Kornetsky, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Pharmacology at Boston University School of Medicine. He likes to mentor students and instill in them the excitement of research. He enjoys working and has no plans to retire.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! UPCOMING 2010 CoA EVENTS

SEXUALITY AND AGING COLLOQUIUM

APRIL 6, 2010

POINT LOOKOUT RESORT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

NORTHPORT, ME

The Center on Aging and various community partners are planning a special colloquium geared toward health and social service professionals focusing on issues of sexuality and aging. Specialized workshops will be provided. Save the Date. More information will be available at www.mainecenteronaging.org in the spring.

ENCORPS LEADERSHIP CORPS SUMMIT

APRIL 12-13, 2010

POINT LOOKOUT RESORT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

NORTHPORT, ME

Encore Leadership Corps (ENCORPS) is a free training program for Mainers 50 years of age or older who are interested in improving the health and well-being of their communities through local volunteer projects and activities. ENCORPS is a program that is available to both older adults who are currently volunteering locally and for those who would like to begin a new volunteer project. If you are interested in learning more about ENCORPS, visit www.encoreleaders.org. Applications will be considered on a first-come first-served basis. Lodging and travel support is available free of charge. E-mail info@encoreleaders.org or call 207-262-7931 for more information about ENCORPS.

CENTER ON AGING AND NEW MEDIA CONVERGENCE

The Center on Aging New Media Convergence Project is aimed at bringing issues of aging to life through documentary films produced by students at the University of Maine's New Media Department. The idea was spawned by Professor Bill Kuykendall of the New Media Department, and Colin McGovern, an Interdisciplinary Studies Major at the University. Colin has been working with two other New Media students over the past year to develop documentaries that highlight the diversity of aging. These videos are available for viewing online at: www.mainecenteronaging.org/studentvideos.htm. These films are excellent teaching tools and conversation starters.

Films available online:

A Visit to Adam Williams by Sean Collins

Back Home by Colin McGovern

A Life Pretty Full of Love by Kevin Wellenius

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Join Encore Leadership Corps!



A Free Training and Leadership Program for
Maine residents 50 and older

www.encoreleaders.org

Whether you are already working to improve your community or just beginning to find the time to get involved, ENCorps will provide you with new opportunities!