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Gerontology Newsletter

Program in Gerontology

2008

Spring 2008 Gerontology Times

St. Cloud State University

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SPECIAL POINTS OF IN- TEREST:

- **Courses in Aging
Fall schedule**
- **Kaleidoscope
Playground
Update**
- ****NEW T-Shirt
design** Get
yours today**
- **St. Cloud State
Gerontology
Program Open
House**

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Notes from the Director

It's spring, and that means it must be time for the Gerontology Program's annual **Open House on Wednesday, April 16th, from 3 to 5pm in Stewart Hall 330.**

This is a great opportunity to meet others interested in the field of aging. This year we are continuing our tradition of joining with The Gerontological Society of America and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education to celebrate the 7th Annual Careers in Aging Week (April 13th – 19th). In addition to the ever-fabulous door prizes, our open house will feature information on "Careers in Aging". The open house is co-sponsored by the Gerontology Program, our local Beta Zeta Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega, the Gerontology Club, and the Department of Community Studies.

Are you a member yet? I

invite you to consider joining Sigma Phi Omega (the National Academic Honors and Professional Society in Gerontology) and/or the SCSU Gerontology Club. Sigma Phi Omega "seeks to promote scholarship, professionalism, friendship, and services to older persons, and to recognize exemplary attainment in gerontology/aging studies and related fields." Students, faculty, and community professionals are encouraged to join! Also, all are welcome to join "The Gerontology Club" which was formed in conjunction with our local Sigma Phi Omega chapter. In case you missed it, our February joint SPO/GERO club meeting featured a fabulous chocolate fountain! (Chocolate does have antioxidants, after all!) Stop by for more information,

it's never too late to join!

Students -- now is a good time to start thinking about registering for summer and fall classes (see page 4 for a "sneak preview" of the Summer and Fall offerings). Be sure to check in with your advisor (Dr. Phyllis Greenberg – Master's and Certificate Students; Dr. Rona Karasik – undergraduate minors) to make sure your program is on track!

Finally, I wish you all a happy, healthy, and productive Spring semester!

Rona J. Karasik, Ph.D.
Director, Gerontology Program
Professor, Community Studies



Faculty Notes

Gary Whitford, Social Work, along with 3 colleagues from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities will be presenting at the 2008 joint conference of the American Society on Aging and the National Council on Aging at the end of March in Washington, D.C. Their topic, “Lesbian & Gay Aging Couples: Satisfaction & Supports”, reports on the data recently collected from 71 gay and lesbian couples over the age of 50 who have been together for at least 10 years. In the study, the average years in the relationship for the sample is approximately 23 years, and the oldest participant is 81 years old. This is one of the first studies to investigate the lives of older same-sex couples who have been together for an extended period of time.

By Gary Whitford

It's been a busy spring so far, with many research projects in the works. The work and family life in academia study has produced some interesting findings regarding issues of parent care (thanks to John Tasto for his help with data analysis). Our research partnership with Lakeview Ranch is progressing as well, with a new grant to help us collect additional data this summer (thanks to Ai Takamatsu and Missy Reichl for their pledged upcoming assistance). Finally, there are many service-learning ventures in the works – and we are looking forward to working with our many community partners!

By Rona Karasik

Recent Presentations:

Greenberg, P.A.(2007). The changing face of chemical dependency and mental health treatment for older adults. Poster presentation Gerontological Society of American Annual Conference, November, San Francisco.CA.

Karasik, R.J. (2008). Internships, Practicum's, and Field Placements – Oh My! Applied Experiences in Gerontology and Geriatrics Education. Resource exchange presented at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, Baltimore, MD.

Berry, J., Eden, N., Habben, J., Liesch, S. & Karasik, R. (2007). Lakeview Ranch: A New Model of Dementia Care. Poster to be presented at the 60th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, San Francisco, CA. November 19, 2007.

Berke, D., Karasik, R., Scheer, S. (2007). Work-Family Intersections over the Life Course: How Family Friendly are Academic Institutions? Paper to be presented at the National Conference on Family Relations Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. Nov. 6-10, 2007.

Notes form the Gerontology Graduate Coordinator

The Mississippi is still frozen and covered with snow – as is my front yard which means I will not have to mow the lawn for a few more months – so there is good news in winter! Some other good news is that this year we have record numbers of students in our undergraduate and graduate courses. More students have applied and been admitted for the Masters and the Graduate Certificate which bodes well for the future and services, research for older adults, their families and communities.

This semester Michelle Huddleston, Ai Takamatsu and I have been busy in compiling five years worth of data for the Dual Diagnosis and Substance Abuse project. I have been working with Recovery Plus/Senior Helping Hands in St. Cloud (part of the St. Cloud Hospital) and Fountain Center in Albert Lea. It has been an amazing opportunity and I have been truly appreciative of those in treatment who have shared their experiences with me. Both Recovery Plus and Fountain Center have received grants from the State and we have participated in the projects. I will be using the summer for further analysis and writing. Some areas of interest that have been noted are the changing nature of substance abuse and aging, the significance of mental health issues and family as a source of support. Michelle and I are also looking at conducting a survey this summer to explore if there are other age specific treatment programs in the United States, their funding source, mode of treatment, services and what if any accommodations are made for dual diagnosis.

This semester will have our “famous” Open House during Careers in Aging Week. Once again we will have fabulous door prizes and great information on Careers in Aging. Mark April 16th on your calendar – Stewart Hall 330 from 3-5. Also be sure to check out our new T-shirts.

Registration will soon begin for Fall Semester. If you are a graduate student either in the Masters or Graduate Certificate Program be sure to make an appointment to see me. Have a wonderful semester.

Phyllis A Greenberg, Ph.D
Coordinator of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor, Dept of Community Studies

Summer Semester Aging Course Schedule 2008

Under graduate

Sociology

SOC 350 01 Sociology of Age and Aging Online

Psychology

PSY 345 54 Psychology of Death and Dying Online

PSY 345 55 Psychology of Death and Dying Online

Social Work

SW 430 01 Social Work Practice with the Aging T R 12:30-4:30 pm

Graduate

Counselor Education and Educational Psychology

CEEP 678 01 Introduction to Graduate Statistics MTWR 10:00-11:55 pm

CEEP 678 02 Introduction to Graduate Statistics MTWR 12:30-2:25 pm

CEEP 678 54 Introduction to Graduate Statistics Online

Social Work

SW 530 01 Social Work Practice with the Aging TR 12:30-4:30 pm

Fall Course Schedules 2008

Undergraduate Courses in Aging

Gerontology

GERO 208 01 Introduction to Gerontology	MWF	10:00- 10:50 pm
GERO 208 02 Introduction to Gerontology	TR	12:30-1:45 pm
GERO 405 01 Aging and Diversity	T	5:00 - 7:00 pm
GERO 411 01 Aging Policy & Programs	TR	3:30 - 4:45 pm
GERO 425 01 Dementia & Aging	MW	3:00 - 4:15 pm
GERO 440 01 Elder Law	R	6:00 - 8:40 pm
GERO 444 01 Internship	Hours Arranged	

Psychology

PSY 345 54 Psychology of Death & Dying	Online	
PSY 345 55 Psychology of Death & Dying	Online	
PSY 345 65 Psychology of Death & Dying	Online	
PSY 443 01 Psychology of Adult Development & Aging	W	6:00 - 8:45 pm
PSY 443 54 Psychology of Adult Development & Aging	Online	

Sociology

SOC 350 54 Sociology of Age & Aging	Online	
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Community Studies

CMTY 333 01 Studying Communities	TR	12:30- 1:45 pm
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Finance, Insurance & Real Estate

FIRE 479 01 Social Insurance	MWF	11:00 - 11:50 am
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Graduate Courses in Aging

Gerontology

GERO 505 01 Aging and Diversity	T	5:00-7:40 pm
GERO 515 01 Aging Policy & Program	T R	3:30-4:45 pm
GERO 525 01 Dementia and Aging	M W	3:00-4:15 pm
GERO 540 01 Elder Law	R	6:00-8:40 pm
GERO 600 01 Advanced Research Methods in Gerontology	W	5:00-7:40 pm
GERO 630 01 Aging and Community: Current Issues In Social Gero Culture & diversity	M	5:00- 7:40pm
GERO 644 01 Internship	Hours Arranged	
GERO 696 01 Practicum (Plan C)	Hours Arranged	
GERO 697 01 Starred Paper (Plan B) Prepare	Hours Arranged	
GERO 699 01 Thesis (Plan A)	Hours Arranged	

Counselor Education and Education Psychology

CEEP 678 01 Introduction to Graduate Statistics	M	5:00-7:45 pm
GEEP 678 02 Introduction to Graduate Statistics	R	2:00-4:45 pm
GERP 678 03 Introduction to Graduate Statistics	T	5:00-7:45 pm
GERP 678 54 Introduction to Graduate Statistics	Online	

Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

FIR 579 Social Insurance	MWF	11:00-11:50am
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Remember to check the on-line schedule for any last minute changes!!

For Registration information
 Web: <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/registrar/>
 Phone; (320)308-224 or 1-800-369-4260
 Contact continuing Studies for more Information
 (320)308-4721

A Career in Aging
By Rona J. Karasik, Ph.D.
Director, Gerontology Program
Professor, Community Studies

You meet someone for the first time, you shake hands, and you wait for the inevitable question -- "*And what is it you do?*" There should be an easy answer -- one that doesn't produce the puzzled look I so often get. I've tried many responses but they all lead to the same look. If I say, "*I'm a teacher*" they ask "What do you teach?" If I say "I'm a professor" they ask "*What is your field?*" Eventually I answer "*Gerontology*" and there it is -- the puzzled look. I counter with "aging?" and I get a slightly different look. It's a look of recognition, yes, but of even greater puzzlement as well. "*Why would you want to study that?*"

It's a good question -- one that is important to answer for those considering careers in Aging. Demographics alone should tell you that Gerontology is a growing field. According to the Administration on Aging (2005), the older population (65 and older) in the U.S. reached 36.3 million (12.4% of the population) in 2004 -- up from 3.1 million (4.1% of the population) in 1900. By the year 2030 (which is only 23 years away), it's estimated that the older population will grow to 71.5 million (roughly 20% of the U.S. population).

Not impressed by the numbers? Job security not enough of an incentive? I'm not surprised. I've lost count of how many times people have confided in me "*But old people are so _____*" (feel free to fill in the blank with your favorite ageist belief). Truth is, the older population is highly diverse and so are the career opportunities in aging. Yes, some elders are frail -- but most are not. Some elders (around 5%) living in nursing homes -- but most (95%) do not. And yes, some elders fit the prevailing stereotypes of sick, crotchety, and well, just plain unpleasant (as do some children, teens, and young adults), but *most* do not. Aging families are families with members who have grown older. Some families work well together, some do not. Some families face major illnesses or similar challenges, some do not. These days, most families, in fact, contain aging members -- as spouses, parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents.

So what kinds of career opportunities are out there to work with elders and/or aging families? The range is as diverse as the population. According to the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) which offers career resources on their website: <http://www.careersinaging.com/careersinaging/> aging professionals work in a variety of settings including health care, human services, business, advocacy, government, religious organizations, housing, and academia. Some positions (e.g., counseling older persons and their families, advising aging clients, and/or developing and implementing social and recreational activities/services) allow you to work directly with older adults. Other options provide opportunities to work indirectly on an elders' behalf (e.g., research, product design, legislative advocacy). Many professionals work full time with or for older adults, while others divide their time working with a variety of ages and clientele. The Gerontological Society of America (GSA), which sponsors AgeWork <http://www.geron.org/agework>, offers job seekers a place to view career opportunities across the country. A quick glance at the site shows current openings ranging from marketing coordinators and community relations managers, to geriatricians, family counselors, and academic faculty.

So is that how I ended up being the director of an academic program in Gerontology? Not by a long shot. Despite the growing number of older adults and the ever-increasing career opportunities in aging, not many people think of aging as their first career choice. To be honest, it never even crossed my mind as an undergraduate. I knew I wanted to work with people -- but older adults never occurred to me as I tried out volunteer opportunities working with children, teenagers, and even middle aged in-patients at a state psychiatric hospital.

So what changed? I wish I could say it was something glamorous -- a lightning bolt or some life-changing epiphany. Rather, it was real-life and the job opportunities available to me in my community after graduation. I had planned to work for a bit before going on to graduate school in counseling and the two job openings I qualified for were (1) an overnight shift in a home for teens with behavioral issues or (2) a group home for adults with developmental disabilities. Having no real experience with either population, I chose the position with the better (daytime) hours and a slight advantage in pay. Two weeks into the job, serendipity struck. The agency I worked for was struggling to provide better services to their aging clientele -- a new problem for them brought on by ever-increasing life expectancies. Would I be interested in helping to design a group home for older adults with developmental disabilities? Casually, I signed on for one of my most life-changing experiences. My ignorance about aging (and some persistent encouragement from my father) sent me back to school in my off hours -- a Masters program in aging housed in the School of Family Studies. A Ph.D. in Individual and Family Studies specializing in aging families followed.

A budding Gerontologist was born -- and with that, my first of many experiences answering the question "*Why aging?*" Sometimes I still answer with the easy platitudes like "*It's rewarding*" (it is) or "*Because we are all aging*" (we are). When students ask me "*What can Gerontology offer me?*" I realize that the answer is much more complicated than that. Aging offers the widest range of opportunities to work with and for people regardless of field -- Community Health, Family Science, Social Work, Nursing, Business, Law, Medicine -- the possibilities are endless. I guess the real question is "*Why not aging?*"

Kaleidoscope Playground



- A regional accessible playground in Wilson Park designed for people of all abilities**
- A place where children and adults of all abilities can play and grow together**
- A place where all children can build their strength, self-esteem, and social skills**
- A way to break down the barriers that can develop between people from different backgrounds and abilities**

Please help us finish the job!

The playground opened in June 2007 in Wilson Park (with a temporary surfacing). We are still working to raise money for the permanent, specialized poured-rubber surface for maximum accessibility and safety. Please help us finish this wonderful community playground!

Join us for these Upcoming Fundraising Events!

Silent Auction

April 15-16

St. Cloud State University (Atwood) 11am-2pm

Car Show

April 27th

Gander Mountain, Waite Park 1-4pm

Please send donations to:

"The Kaleidoscope Fund"
Central MN Community Foundation
101 7th Avenue South, Suite 100
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Contributions are tax deductible—
the Central MN Community Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

The Kaleidoscope project was created through a unique partnership with the St. Cloud State University Department of Community Studies, the St. Cloud East Side Boosters, the city of St. Cloud through its Park Department, and the Central Minnesota Community Foundation. In addition, the SCSU Gerontology Club and SPO have helped to support the Kaleidoscope project.

For more information, contact:

Rona J. Karasik, Ph.D.

St. Cloud State University

320-308-5224

Karasik@stcloudstate.edu

or visit our website at: www.stcloudstate.edu/gerontology/kaleidoscope

Spring Interns 2008

Boubacar Bah

St. Benedict's Senior Community

Andrew Huhta

Talahi Care Center

Christa Pfannenstein

Lakeview Ranch

Lynn Sauerer

Good Shepherd

Amy Wegscheid

Good Shepherd

SPO News

New T-Shirt Design!! “AGING: Every Body Doing It”



Size	S, M, L, XL, XXL
Price	\$16
Color	Blue

Be Sure to get your Aging: Every Body's Doing it T-Shirt. All proceeds benefit SPO activities. You can purchase shirts from the Gerontology Graduate Assistants' office in Stewart Hall 342 or you can call the office at (320)308-4183. You can also contact Rona Karasik by email at:

karasik@stcloudstate.edu

Or Phyllis Greenberg by email at:

pagreenberg@stcloudstate.edu

Careers in Aging Week, Gerontology Annual Open House



Open House

Day: Wednesday April 16th

Place: Stewart Hall 330

Time: 3 pm-5 pm



Come to the Open House for food, Socializing ,Networking, and to win fabulous Prizes.

Prizes have been donated from

- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Hair and Body Works
- Burger King
- Bonanza
- Arby's



- St. Cloud State Book Store Clothing
- Campus Book and Supply



A Careers in Aging Event 2008
 Hosted by the SCSU Gerontology Program
 The Department of Community Studies
 The Beta Zeta Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega

St. Cloud State University
Gerontology Program
Department of
Community Studies
365 Stewart Hall
720, Fourth Avenue South
St. Cloud MN, 56301-4498

Gerontology Open House

The St. Cloud State Gerontology program, the Sigma Phi Omega Academic Honors and Professional Society in Gerontology and the SCSU Gerontology Club are hosting the annual Spring Gerontology Open House. Students, Faculty and community members are invited to an afternoon of networking and learning what's new in the field of Gerontology. We welcome you on April 16th to join us in Stewart Hall room 330 from 3-5pm. We will be drawing for door prizes during that time. All are welcome.