

Creative Expressions

Inspiring vibrant and positive aging ∞ Promoting participatory arts ∞ Engaging civic stakeholders

The Official Newsletter of the Creative Aging Calgary Society

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SPECIAL INTEREST

- Upcoming Events page 4
- Submissions to our newsletter are welcome! See page 4 for details.
- Watch for our next issue in Summer 2013!

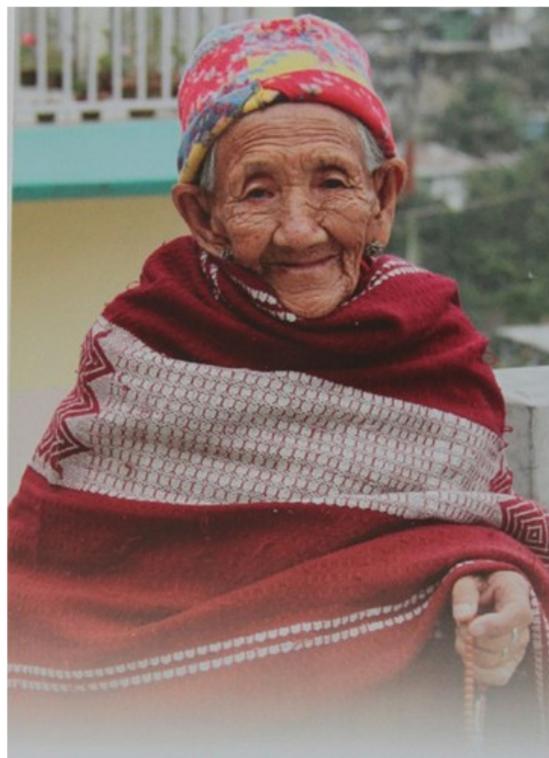
The Spirit of Aging Photography Exhibition

The sights, sounds and smells of a nursing home were a familiar part of my early life. As the eldest of four in a pastor's family in Northern Ontario, we often accompanied our parents when they conducted church services for the residents of various local nursing homes. As young as five I was playing piano despite my feet not touching the floor. My musical inadequacies were seemingly irrelevant to the residents. Mistakes and all, I felt their love and acceptance. Those early years forged a lifelong bond between myself and older adults.

Throughout my high school and university years, I worked as a nurses' aide in local nursing homes continuously drawn to the spirit of the older person.

Throughout my life's work as a registered nurse, registered psychologist and professor, I have had many opportunities for involvement in the field of gerontology including curriculum design, teaching, supervising students and clinical practice.

Cont. p. 2.



The Spirit of Aging

by Dr. Sharon Moore

January 19th - March 24th, 2013

McMullen Gallery

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In 2010, while on study leave from Athabasca University I combined my passions for the elderly, photography, research and travel by conducting an arts-based research project exploring aging in other cultures and representing it photographically. During that year I lived with older adults in Africa, Nepal, and India, briefly becoming part of their communities. The experience was one of “seeing what my eyes had never seen before, feeling what my heart had never felt before”. I was left with the awareness that “the seat of the soul is not inside a person or outside a person but the very place where they overlap and meet with their world” (Nerval in Phillipps, 2000, p. 43).

As the days passed, I came to understand that “in contrast to the spoken and written word, a picture can be understood anywhere in the world. It can bridge the chasm created by differences of language and alphabet. It is a means for universal communication. It is the language of One World” (Feinenger in Phillips, 2000, p. 25).

For almost six weeks, I lived as a resident at the Jamgon Kongtrul III Memorial Home in Northern India in the West Bengal District. This is a home designed to

Brain Plasticity and Cognitive Decline

Research into the brain has debunked the myth that brain function starts to decline in early adulthood. Like many other beliefs about aging, scientists have demonstrated that the decline is related to lack of use, rather than the normal aging process. We can continue to develop new neural networks throughout life. This ability to produce new neural networks is called brain plasticity and has helped us to recognize that the brain is highly adaptable.

There is a clear relationship between the degree of stimulation in our environment and how well our brain functions. The less stimulation we get, the less demand we place on our brains, therefore, the fewer brain cells we need to use. Dying brain cells aren't replaced. In comparison, a rich, stimulating environment challenges our brain and in order to meet the challenge, it needs to

provide food, shelter and compassion to destitute elderly and children. I fully expected to make photographs of older persons but soon realized that the culture of the Home resided, not solely in the individual but in the rhythms of life that were reflected through the activities of the elderly, children and staff. These rhythms allowed me to experience *the spirit of place*. Capturing the spirit of place with images has been described as “where everything comes together in a harmonious fashion and makes you feel what it was like to be there” (Krist, 2000, p. 8).

Through this photographic exhibition, it is my hope that you will feel the spirit of the people and the Home and sense the story of hope and compassion that is at its core. This exhibition is dedicated to my father, Rev. Harold Stewart who died May 2012, an exemplar of living and dying with courage, grace and dignity.

By Sharon Moore

Krist, B. (2000). *Spirit of place.: The art of the traveling photographer*. New York: Watson Guptill Publications.

Phillips, J. (2000). *God is at eye level: Photography as healing art*. Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House.

create new neural networks. The brain gets healthier the more we use it.

Physical exercise, brain gym, and healthy eating are health promotion strategies that have the most impact on the brain. Physical exercise not only improves circulation and therefore oxygen supply to the brain, it also challenges the brain cells to coordinate the body movements that are part of the exercise program. Brain gym is an exercise program for the brain and generally consists of a mix of intellectual challenges to the brain. It incorporates activities to stimulate our ability to remember, do math, use language, learn new skills, socialize/communicate, and use the creative side of our brain (art, drama, music, dance).

While some researchers and practitioners have been focusing on how to maintain a healthy brain, others have been examining the possibility that the brain is so adaptable, it could compensate for areas of actual damage to brain cells.

Continued from page 2

What researchers have learned is that the brain not only produces new neural networks, it also can re-wire itself.

Typically certain parts of the brain are responsible for certain functions, for example the frontal lobe is associated with reasoning, motor skills, and expressive language. The temporal lobe interprets sounds. However, work with individuals who have had a stroke or a brain injury has shown that if one area of the brain is damaged, another area can be intentionally trained to take over for the damaged cells. People can regain lost function.

This awareness has led some researchers to explore whether other areas of the brain can be trained to compensate for damage done by Alzheimer disease and other dementias. Early research is showing promise. Several studies have used either physical exercise and/or brain gym targeting specific areas of the brain. Some researchers have suggested that as well as these strategies, a rich and stimulating living environment is also important.

Indeed, a dementia care complex in the Netherlands houses 150 people living with severe dementia. These residents live in a community—four acres of land with two-story, nicely decorated homes along with a café, restaurant, theatre, hair salon and small market. There's lots of open space with quiet boulevards, courtyards and gardens. They manage their lives as independently as possible, but are overseen by a cohort of staff and volunteers. Residents are free to go shopping, eat in the café or restaurant, wander the grounds, and visit anyone they want. If a resident gets confused about where they are or what they should be doing, one of the staff is always around to help them get back on track. These residents also integrate with the adjoining community where they share time with artists and students and the population as a whole. This rich and stimulating environment is proving to maintain higher cognitive function into the very late stages of dementia and significantly improve the quality of living for the residents.

So, in order to maintain brain health, we need to exercise physically as well as exercise the brain. We also need to eat a healthy diet. If we have some memory loss, we can improve how our brain functions. We can prevent or delay the onset of dementia by challenging the brain and even if we have dementia, there is promise that continuing to live in a rich and stimulating environment can improve how we function and contribute to a longer period of time when we can manage independently and have a good quality of living.

By Dianne McDermid

Daybreak's Healing Balm

By Carol Stewart

82 year old author and painter uses poetry and painting to renew her spirit



***The morning's dew upon the grass
The lake is mirror calm
The sun peeps o'er the mountain peaks
The day break's healing balm.***

***Renews the weary spirit from watching through
the night
While hope revives and hearts renew at dawning's
early light.
And so our lives may be revived to face life's weary
way
Let's keep the morning calm within
As we walk throughout the day.***

Get to Know Your Board

Over the next few newsletters, we will introduce you to members of the CACS Board of Directors



Elaine Danelesko, Secretary

Creativity is a common thread woven throughout Elaine Danelesko's professional and personal life. Building knowledge transfer capacity--the need to build and share knowledge--is Danelesko's biggest goal in research. The Director of the Integrative Health Institute says both she and the institute have a responsibility for promoting research across academic disciplines to "answer meaningful questions in creative ways." Recently this has taken the form of studies on student stress, employee wellness, physical activity and literacy development in child care centres, and new projects, such as reviewing an asset building program for young offenders and adaptive nature experiences for people with disabilities. In her role as the Program Development Director in the Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension, she explores community needs and engages in a artful process to design new course and

program offerings. Having worked at MRU since 1985 in a variety of roles, Danelesko is able to use her knowledge of personnel, resources and community partners to spark projects and pull resources together from a variety of sources. This means that faculty members, students and groups like child care centres, non-profit organizations and government services are brought together to conduct research and / or guide new program development.

Elaine lives life in an artful way by engaging in a local book club and 'some serious cooking' based on travels to learn about and enjoy food cultures from afar.



Sharon Moore, Education & Newsletter

Sharon Moore's passion for photography and arts-based research provided the focus for her recent sabbatical when she travelled and spent time with older adults in Uganda, Tanzania, Nepal and India. One of the outcomes of that project is featured in the Photography Exhibition described below. She is a registered nurse and registered psychologist who enjoys being involved with older adults and creative processes in her volunteer work with a long term care facility. She is a professor at Athabasca University in the Faculty of Health Disciplines and enjoys teaching advanced

qualitative research methods in the graduate program in Nursing & Health Studies. She is a member of the Steering Committee of the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health and has just completed a five year term as a member of the Seniors' Advisory Committee of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

She is an avid hiker and cross country skier and shares many of these times with older adults out in the mountains.

Save the Date: Fall PD Workshop Older Adults, **Creative Expression and ART**

Many of you who attended the Creative Aging Symposium in 2012 were inspired by Jeff Nachtigall's workshop on Creative Aging and said you wanted more of this. We listened and Jeff is returning to facilitate a full day session - **Older Adults, Creative Expression and ART: Professional Development Workshop**.

September 24, 2013 0900-1600 Kerby Centre \$150

More info and to register: www.creativeaging.ca



Jeff Nachtigall, artist and creator of a studio program for residents in a long-term care facility

Upcoming Events

Event: Gerontological Nursing: We Are All In This Together!
AGNA 32nd AGM & Education Day

Date: April 5, 2013

Location: Red Deer Lodge, Red Deer AB

Info: lynne.moulton@albertahealthservices.ca or info@agna.ca

Event: 2013 CLPNA Spring Conference - Integrating Nursing
Care: Body, Mind, Spirit

Date: April 17-19, 2013

Location: Rimrock Resort Hotel, Banff AB

Info: info@clpna.com or (780) 484-8886

Event: 33rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Canadian Geriatric
Society

Event: Building from the Basics - Keeping it Meaningful

Date: April 25 & 26, 2013

Location: Capital Care Grandview, Edmonton AB

Info: Heather Rozak (780) 417-4330 or
heather.rozak@capitalcare.net

Event: 2013 Supportive Pathways Train the Trainer Session
(offered by Carewest Innovative Health Care)

Date: May 16 - 17, 2013

Location: Carewest Signal Pointe, Calgary AB

Info: Kirsten Cloutier (403) 267-2752 or
kirsten.cloutier@albertahealthservices.ca

Event: 17th National Conference on Gerontological Nursing -
Personhood and Caring: Honouring the Older Adult's Life Journey

Date: May 29 - June 1, 2013

Location: Sheraton Airport Hotel, Richmond BC

Info: cgna@malachite-mgmt.com or (604) 484-5698

Event: 2013 Supportive Pathways Train the Trainer Session
(offered by Carewest Innovative Health Care)

Date: June 20 - 21, 2013

Location: Edmonton General Continuing Care Centre, Edmonton
AB

Info: Kirsten Cloutier (403) 267-2752 or
kirsten.cloutier@albertahealthservices.ca

Event: 2013 Supportive Pathways Train the Trainer Session
(offered by Carewest Innovative Health Care)

Date: September 12 - 13, 2013

Location: Carewest Signal Pointe, Calgary AB

Info: Kirsten Cloutier (403) 267-2752 or
kirsten.cloutier@albertahealthservices.ca

Event: 2013 Supportive Pathways Train the Trainer Session
(offered by Carewest Innovative Health Care)

Date: November 21 - 22, 2013

Location: Carewest Signal Pointe, Calgary AB

Info: Kirsten Cloutier (403) 267-2752 or
kirsten.cloutier@albertahealthservices.ca

Associations / Organizations that support Seniors' participation in Arts

City of Calgary—Seniors Programs and Services

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Pages/Seniors/Seniors-Programs-Services.aspx#recreation>

Kerby Centre for the 55 plus—Education and Recreation

<http://kerbycentre.com/calgary-adult-services/education-and-recreation/>

Greater Forrest Lawn 55+ Society—Activities and Classes

<http://www.gfls.org/activities--classes.html>

Confederation Park 55+ Activity Centre—Classes and Clubs

<http://www.conpark55.org/#!classes--clubs/cxin>

Ogden House Seniors—Activities and Calendar

<http://www.ogden50plus.org/calendar.html>

Alliance for Active Aging—Programs

<http://www.allianceactiveaging.ca/programs/>

Bow Cliff Seniors—Activities

<http://www.bowcliffseniors.org/Activities.html>

Parkdale Nifty 50's—Activities

<http://www.pdnf.org/Pages/Classes.html#>

Calgary FLC Seniors Club—Activities

<http://www.flcseniors.ca/activities>

Calgary Association of Life Long Learners—Programs

http://calgarylifelonglearners.ca/wordpress/?page_id=1859

Silver Stars Musical Revue Society

http://www.calgary-acts.com/view_member.php?MemberID=24

“Voices” Seniors Choir

<http://www.thirdagecommons.ca/resources/voices-seniors-choir>

SAG-Seniors Action Group

http://www.seniorsactiongroup.com/pb/wp_c06741e7/wp_c06741e7.html

Seniors A Go-Go

http://www.calgarysexualhealth.ca/aging_intro.html

Calgary Music Makers Senior Citizens Choir

<http://calgarymusicmakers.ca/>

Calgary Raging Grannies

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Calgary-Raging-Grannies/149773808411499>

Creative Aging Calgary Society

Executive

Dianne McDermid President
 Gail Hinchliffe, Past President
 Ralph Hubele, Vice-President
 Bernice Schumlich, Treasurer
 Elaine Danelesko, Secretary

Board of Directors

Sharon Moore
 Wendy Rodger
 Carrie Erickson
 Christine Gordon
 James Milne

Janene Burwash
 Karina Szulc

Board Advisor

John Mungham

Newsletter

Phone: 866-375-8570
 Email: sharon.moore@athabascau.ca

Vision: Vibrant and positive aging

Mission: To increase awareness of the positive physical and psychological impact that arts participation can have on older adults

Strategic Priorities:

Advocacy

Enhance awareness of participatory arts and aging programs with a variety of stakeholders

Practice

Foster connections between older adults, artists, professionals and interested community members

Research

Clearly communicate cutting-edge research specific to arts participation

Education

Share information about local arts-based programs and opportunities for learning

Governance

Generate an effective Board with membership that reflects our diverse community

Membership Info

Memberships are available at no charge online:
www.creativeagingcalgary.ca.

Members receive event and information updates as well as quarterly newsletters.

Creative Expressions is the official newsletter for the Creative Aging Calgary Society (CACS). It is published four times a year and distributed electronically (www.creativeagingcalgary.ca). Questions regarding article / photo contributions should be directed to the editor at sharon.moore@athabascau.ca or 866-375-8570. **Please note**, the information and opinions in this newsletter are subject to change, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the publisher, the editor, or the CACS Board of Directors. **Disclaimer:** Any advertisements, businesses, or other parties listed in Creative Expressions should not be interpreted as recommendations or endorsements by the CACS, the editor or the publisher. Re-publication of the Creative Expressions Newsletter (in whole or part) requires the expressed written permission of the article's author and the publisher. Please direct republication requests to sharon.moore@athabascau.ca

Volunteer Here

The Creative Aging Calgary Society is relatively new group and is seeking volunteers to help with our various committees. Please contact: info@creativeagingcalgary.ca for more information related to:
Education & Programming, Communications, Membership, Sponsorship & Funding, Marketing & Promotion or Research.

Submissions Welcome

Articles, book reviews, event and special interest items related to Creative Aging are all welcome. Please contact the editor at editor@creativeagingcalgary.ca for more information. Next issue: Summer 2013. Submission deadline June 30, 2013.

Your Business Ad Here

Business ads are welcome: \$20/issue for 40 words (first ad free for members). Graphic ads, 1/8 page size, also welcome for \$75 per issue (members receive 20% discount). Please contact the editor at sharon.moore@athabascau.ca. Next issue: Summer 2013. Submission deadline: June 30, 2013.

Worth Reading : Reviewed by John Mungham

What Are Old People For? How Elders Will Save the World

Author: William H. Thomas, M.D. VanderWyk & Burnham, 2004

This magnificent inspiring book leaves the reader with a sense hope. Dr. Thomas challenges our obsession with youth and how this impacts our belief about the natural process of getting older. He points out that society sees old age (elderhood) as a process of declinism from adulthood, and identifies how absurd this is. Dr. Thomas goes on to identify the important role older adults play in society and how this can positively impact all ages. What a refreshing way to look at getting older

A must read!

“**Creative aging** is about possibilities, freeing ourselves of limiting beliefs about aging and embracing the reality that individuals continue to grow, learn and contribute to their communities throughout the life journey ”

- Sheridan Elder Research Centre, Sheridan College

The Creative Aging Calgary Society

welcomes new members

Benefits of Membership

- Appreciate the importance of arts and aging
- Discuss the benefits of professionally conducted, participatory arts and aging programs and why it is necessary to reach out to many stakeholders (artisans, elected officials, funders, partners, and policymakers)
- Explore how to design, implement, market, support, evaluate, and sustain arts and aging programs for older adults
- Experience examples of arts-based programs and services in and around Calgary (fee reduction for members)
- Network with individuals actively engaged or interested in creative expression and aging programs
- Receive an informative newsletter four times per year (advertisement opportunities available at reduced prices for members)

FREE memberships available online

www.creativeagingcalgary.ca