

March / April 2021

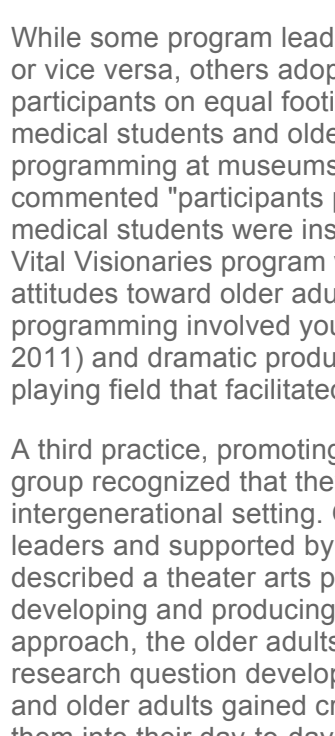
The *Advancing Age Inclusivity in Higher Education* Newsletter is a place where educators, administrators, scholars, and community members can share news about how colleges and universities are responding to aging populations and the rise of more age-diverse campuses. Integral to advancing age inclusivity in higher education is the Age-Friendly University (AFU) principle that advocates for promoting intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages. Intergenerational exchange can occur in a multitude of ways in higher education, and it holds benefits for younger and older learners alike. Read about some of these initiatives in this issue.

Comments and suggestions about Newsletter content and special areas of focus are very much welcomed from our readers. Please send correspondence to ageinclusive@geron.org.

Feature Article

Intergenerational Programs: Making the Most of AFU Principle 4

By Shannon E. Jarrott, PhD, The Ohio State University



Intergenerational exchange can offer valuable educational experiences as my colleagues and I recently found in a scoping review of intergenerational programs (Jarrott et al., 2021). The studies included in our sample systematically gathered evidence that associated program practices with outcomes. Many of the studies we reviewed were conducted in higher education and reflected practices that cut across a range of intergenerational programs engaging students and older persons in diverse settings. Each study was coded for a number of features; in this essay, I concentrate on the coded practices these programs implemented that support Age-Friendly University (AFU) Principle 4: To promote intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.

First, the practice of offering meaningful roles broadly referred to younger and older participants having developmentally appropriate, contributing roles. Engaging participants in developmentally appropriate decision making and engaging students as mentors to older participants also emerged as key program features. To illustrate, service learners responsible for leading discussions with nursing home residents invited input from residents to inform the selection of topics (Bunting & Lax, 2019). Students learned the value of offering meaningful roles to older participants as interest and involvement in the discussions remained high among residents. Shifting from low- to high-tech, students from various majors mentored older adults on how to use their mobile devices to do things they wanted to learn (Breck et al., 2018). Both experienced reciprocal learning as older adults gained new skills, while students gained self-efficacy through their reverse mentoring role.

While some program leaders clearly delineated students as mentors to older adults or vice versa, others adopted a best practice of putting younger and older participants on equal footing by engaging them in something novel. For example, medical students and older adults shared multiple sessions of creative arts programming at museums in eight cities (Gonzales et al., 2010). The authors commented "participants perceived each other as peers - the older adults and medical students were insecure of their creative abilities." The practices used in this Vital Visionaries program were credited for the significant improvement in students' attitudes toward older adults. Other programs employing the practice of novel programming involved young persons and older adults in photography (Alcock et al., 2011) and dramatic productions (Anderson et al., 2017) to try and create a level playing field that facilitated reciprocal learning.

A third practice, promoting equal group status, occurred when members of each age group recognized that they had something to contribute to and gain from the intergenerational setting. Oftentimes, equal group status is conveyed by program leaders and supported by program design. Anderson and colleagues (2017) described a theater arts program that involved students and older adults as equals developing and producing plays. Using a community participatory research approach, the older adults also engaged as researchers who contributed to research question development and data collection. Participating university students and older adults gained creative problem-solving strategies that they carried with them into their day-to-day lives.

In addition to showing the many ways intergenerational exchange can be created in higher education, our work demonstrates the value of systematically evaluating the effect of particular practices on intergenerational program outcomes. We hope our observations will inform new intergenerational efforts designed to address AFU Principle 4 and bring generations together to learn from each other.

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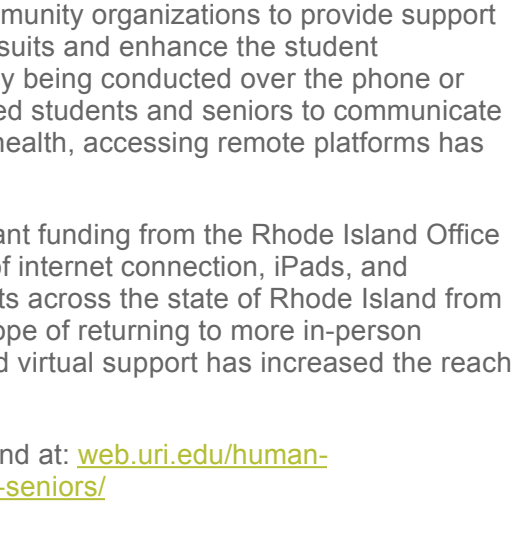
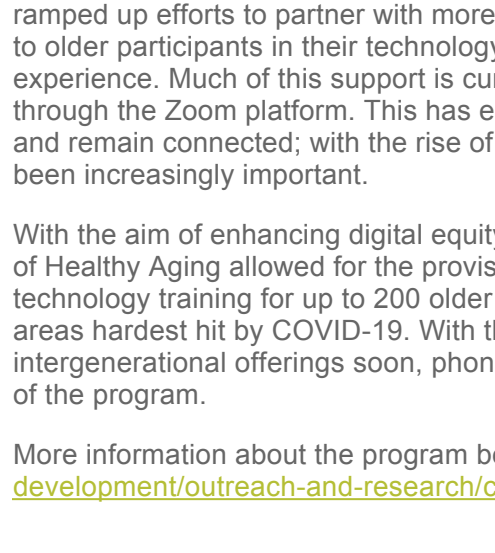
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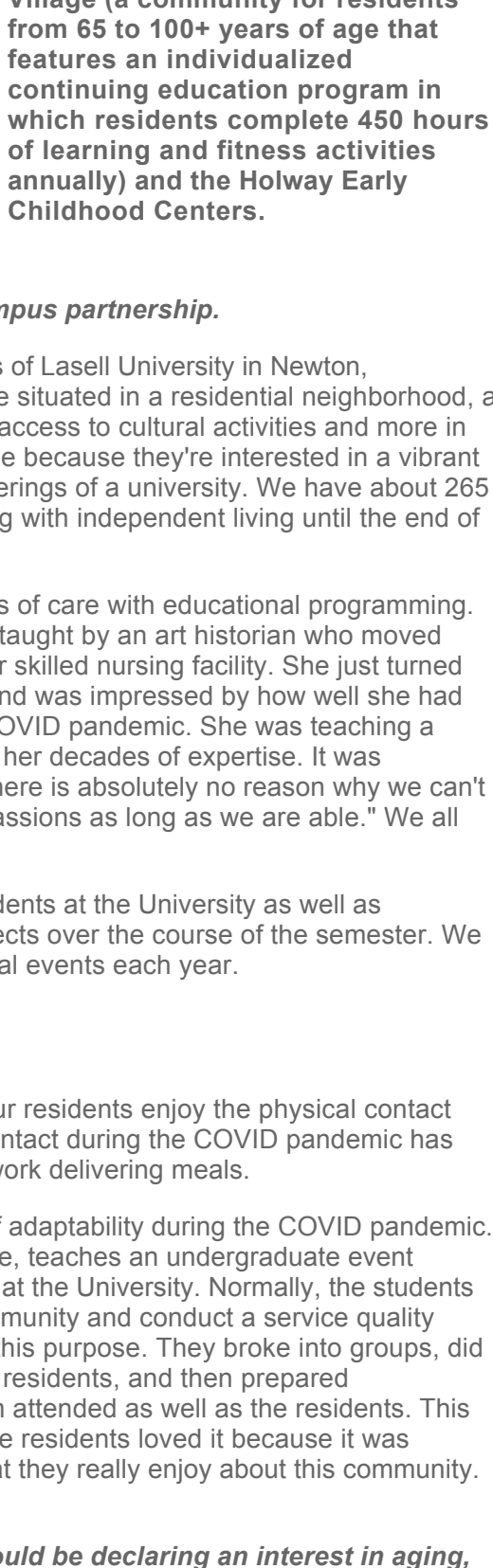
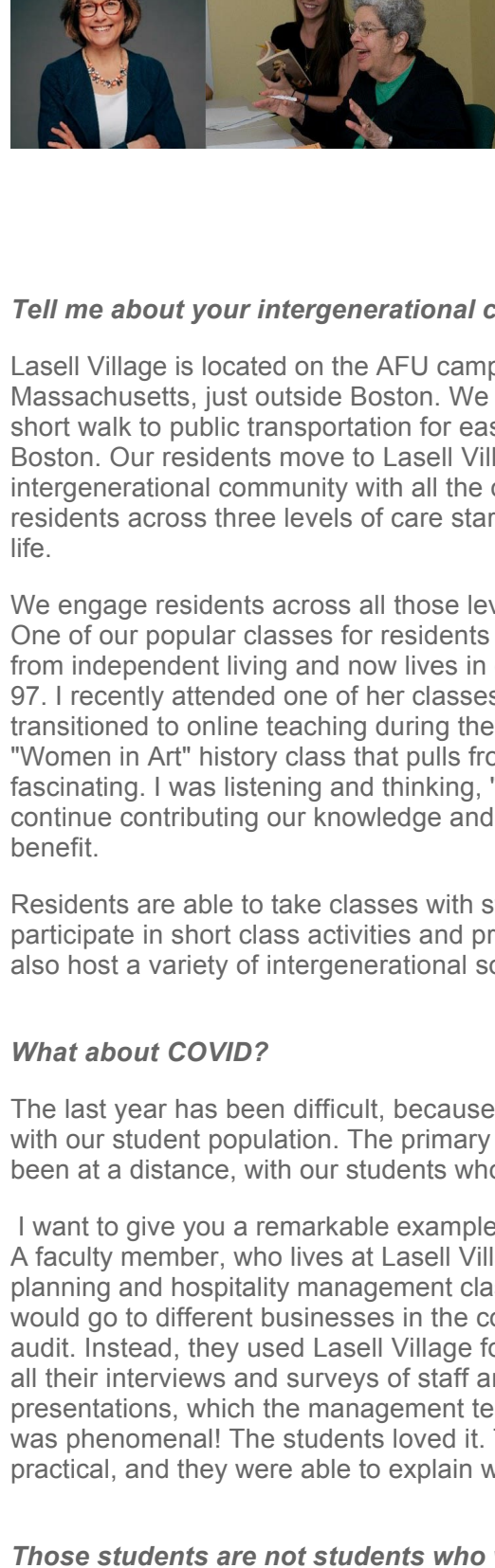
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Campus Spotlights



An Intergenerational Program for Increasing Digital Inclusion for Older Adults

By Skye N. Leedahl, PhD, and Erica Estus, PharmD, University of Rhode Island

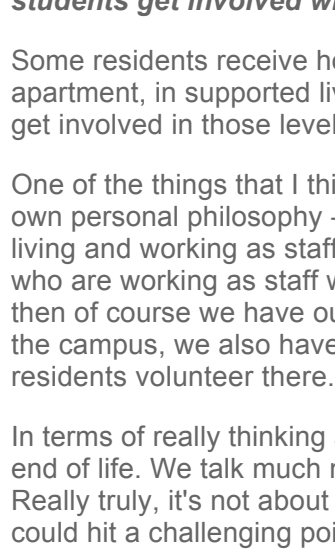


Skye N. Leedahl

Erica Estus

Intergenerational and inclusion: Two key themes that inspire the University of Rhode Island Engaging Generations Cyber-Seniors program

The University of Rhode Island (URI) became an Age-Friendly University (AFU) partner in 2018. Much of URI's AFU efforts have been centered around a past, present, and future focus across campus on intergenerational programming. The URI Engaging Generations program collaborates with the Cyber-Seniors organization (cyberseniors.org) to support the inclusion of older adults in the digital world while affording opportunities for students to build communication, teaching, and problem-solving skills.



URI Cyber-Seniors Participant and Student Mentor

Here's what stakeholders have to say about the URI Engaging Generations Cyber-Seniors collaborative programming:

"Trine Healthcare serves residents in senior/disabled buildings. Our partnership with URI's Cyber-Seniors program has given our seniors a sense of pride and accomplishment from learning something new. They have frequently felt 'left out' when it comes to technology. The intergenerational interaction with our members at their pace helps them learn how to use computers, tablets, and their cell phones. We are so very grateful for our partnership with URI."

Natasha Perez, CEO, Trine Healthcare

"I love this program! I couldn't have done my PowerPoint presentation for work without [my student mentor's] help. I love working with the URI student. She is so helpful and kind and patient!"

Older Participant from Trine Healthcare

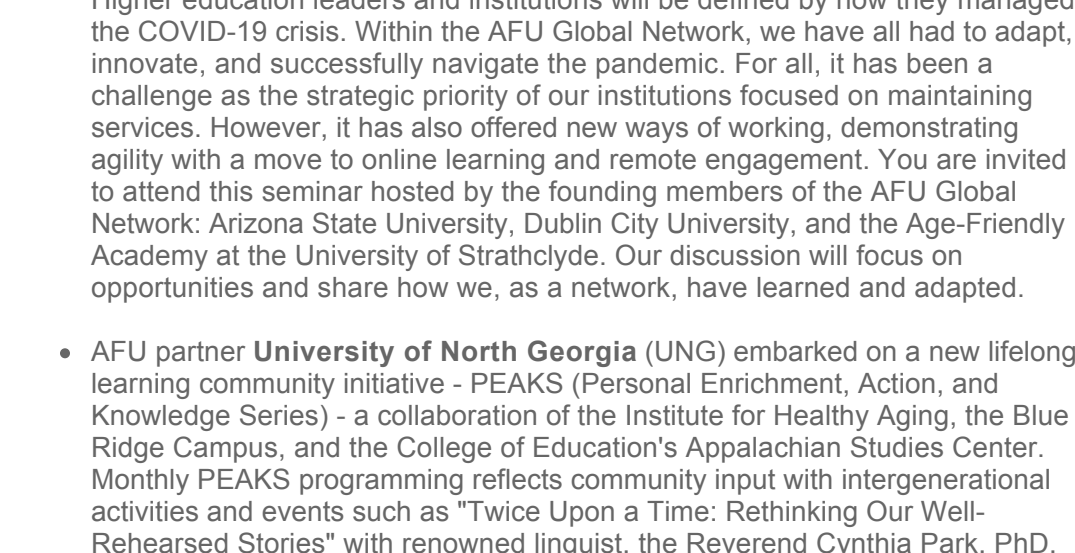
"This experience taught me several lessons that will make me a better pharmacist in the future. Some takeaways are that people may require information to be explained to them in a different way than others to understand, developing a personal relationship can increase level of trust, and people become more confident when they know someone is willing to work with them."

Krystle Sciafani, PharmD Student

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for the Cyber-Seniors program grew with the prevalence of social isolation and loneliness significantly increasing among older adults. Furthermore, students have had more difficulties securing internships during the pandemic. In response, URI Engaging Generations ramped up efforts to partner with more community organizations to provide support to older participants in their technology pursuits and enhance the student experience. Much of this support is currently being conducted over the phone or through the Zoom platform. This has enabled students and seniors to communicate and remain connected; with the rise of telehealth, accessing remote platforms has been increasingly important.

With the aim of enhancing digital equity, grant funding from the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging allowed for the provision of internet connection, iPads, and technology training for up to 200 older adults across the state of Rhode Island from areas hardest hit by COVID-19. With the hope of returning to more in-person intergenerational offerings soon, phone and virtual support has increased the reach of the program.

More information about the research be found at: web.uri.edu/human-development/outreach-and-research/cyber-seniors/



Campus Voices

Lasell University - Lasell Village: A Living and Learning Age-Friendly University (AFU) Intergenerational Campus Partnership

An interview with Anne Doyle, MBA, President of Lasell Village and Vice President of Lasell University ...with student and resident voices

By Caroline Cicero, PhD



Lasell University is home to Lasell Village (a community for residents from 65 to 100+ years of age that features an individualized continuing education program in which residents complete 450 hours of earning and fitness activities annually) and the Holway Early Childhood Centers.

Tell me about your intergenerational campus partnership.

Lasell Village is located on the AFU campus of Lasell University in Newton, Massachusetts, just outside Boston. We are situated in a residential neighborhood, a short walk to public transportation for easy access to cultural activities and more in Boston. Our residents move to Lasell Village because they're interested in a vibrant intergenerational community with all the offerings of a university. We have about 265 residents across three levels of care starting with independent living until the end of life.

We engage residents across all those levels of care with educational programming. One of our popular classes for residents is taught by an art historian who moved from independent living and now lives in our skilled nursing facility. She just turned 97. I recently attended one of her classes and was impressed by how well she had transitioned to online teaching during the COVID pandemic. She was teaching a "Women in Art" history class that pulls from her decades of expertise. It was fascinating. I was listening and thinking, "There is absolutely no reason why we can't continue contributing our knowledge and passions as long as we are able." We all benefit.

Residents are able to take classes with students at the University as well as participate in short class activities and projects over the course of the semester. We also host a variety of intergenerational social events each year.

What about COVID?

The last year has been difficult, because our residents enjoy the physical contact with our student population. The primary contact during the COVID pandemic has been at a distance, with our students who work delivering meals.

I want to give you a remarkable example of adaptability during the COVID pandemic. A faculty member, who lives at Lasell Village, teaches an undergraduate event planning and hospitality management class at the University. Normally, the students would go to different businesses in the community and conduct a service quality audit. Instead, they used Lasell Village for this purpose. They broke into groups, did all their interviews and surveys of staff and residents, and then prepared presentations, which the management team attended as well as the residents. This was phenomenal! The students loved it. The residents loved it because it was practical, and they were able to explain what they really enjoy about this community.

Those students are not students who would be declaring an interest in aging, right? This was a business class? That's what intrigues me the most. Students who are not in social work or working with older adults have the opportunity to get that connection.

Exactly. As we know, this longevity economy is one where all students are going to work with people of all ages. We have, for example, a very big exercise science program at Lasell University. Our residents are often taking part in research studies, and many of them have backgrounds as clinicians, nurses, physicians, or educators. The students are at first simply interested in having a population where they can walk over to do their project, but they learn quickly that these are the people who will be their customers.

There's a tremendous amount of layered learning, simply because students are exposed to older people, and then they realize, not only do they enjoy working with them, but also, they're actually learning a lot and sharing a lot. The residents are also learning a lot.

How does this all work within the University?

What we have designed happens with the guidance, support, and leadership of the Director of the University's Fuss Center for Research on Aging and Intergenerational Studies and the staff in our Lasell Village Education Office.

For instance, every semester we put out a call to faculty across the curriculum to teach an intergenerational module, which is an intergenerational activity in their class. I love this concept, a nested class for three or four weeks. The faculty member designs it with support from the Fuss Center Director and a stipend. These classes are always extremely popular and cover a huge range of topics from a criminal justice class, where residents are designing mock crime scenes for students, to psychology and history classes.

What about your continuum of care? Is there a hospice component, and do students get involved with end of life?

Some residents receive hospice care in their home whether it be in their independent apartment, in supported living, or in skilled nursing. We do have some students who get involved in those levels of care because their majors cover overlapping needs.

One of the things that I think a lot about in terms of our philosophy - and also just my own personal philosophy - is the benefits of a multigenerational community. We are living and working as staff in our 30s, 40s, 50s, or 60s. We have undergraduates who are working as staff who are in their 20s or early 30s. There are students, and then of course we have our residents who are in their late 50s all the way to 100. On the campus, we also have a day care and preschool, and a lot of our students and residents volunteer there.

In terms of really thinking about the stages of life, we don't talk explicitly a lot about end of life. We talk much more about making the most of life, wherever you are. Really truly, it's not about burying the fact that there are difficult life events; you could hit a challenging point at any stage in life, with illness or something very tragic in your family or in the world. It is really about optimizing the time that we have.

Can you tell me more about the preschool component?

During pre-COVID times, there's been a lot of interaction with the preschool, which is a nice healthy walk across campus. A lot happens pretty organically. A preschool teacher may call up and say, "Village, we have this idea," and so then we have these little ones trekking down to the Village to do a show or work on an art project with residents!

Lasell Village is open to creating new intergenerational opportunities every day. This is a community that cares about each other and the outside world, and these attributes are strengthened by the friendships developed across campus, from preschool to age 100.

Philip Shabecoff, a Lasell Village resident on his preschool volunteering: "I spent a year and a half as a volunteer teaching assistant for a class of 5-year-olds at the Rockwell preschool. I did it because I love being with little children. My wife and I agree that raising our kids was the best part of our life. But I am now 87 years old with grown-up grandchildren and no great-grandchildren in sight... Being with the children was wonderful - physically and mentally invigorating. It also made me feel useful, hard to come by at my age."

Alexis Gatto, a Lasell University student on the influence residents have in her classes: "A few residents have impacted me in different ways. One specific occasion of North America, when a resident came to teach one of our classes and critique our artwork. He taught us about traditional rock art and how individuals used this art form to communicate and currently still use it today to express the culture. I remember learning about how many different indigenous languages have been lost over the years through reservations stripping people of their culture. He showed us the importance of expression of culture through artwork and keeping these art forms alive to spread awareness on the severity of cultural assimilation."

"His interaction with me was something I'll never forget. As he examined my artwork, I felt a sense of calm and deep intellect as he watched over me and admired every stroke of my brush. This experience I shared with him was so important to me because I could feel how genuinely he cared to shed his wisdom upon each student, not to benefit his ego but for the students to benefit from him. He was a very smart, kind, and talented man, and I still see him from time to time when I work at the Village, as I pass by the art studio. He taught me patience and humility. Without a doubt, he has created and seen extraordinary art over his lifetime, but he still made it a point to see something 'extraordinary,' as he put it, in my work and [art by] other students."

Penny Peoples, a Lasell Village resident on getting involved with the Student Government Association and intergenerational social events: "In January of 2020, I was invited to represent the Village on the Student Government Association. For the first couple of months, I attended the weekly 3-hour meetings and then, when COVID shut us all down, I continued to meet with the students via Zoom. The experience of getting to know and interact with the students was wonderful. I was immediately captivated by the intelligence, work ethic, and engagement of this group of young people. They impressed me greatly."

"I was frankly surprised to discover their intense interest in the Village and its residents. They thought of all kinds of creative ways to interact with us and were truly eager to build relationships with us. When the pandemic prevented them from putting on their annual 'Senior Prom' at the Village (an event that everyone here talks about and assures me was always fabulous fun for both residents and students), they came up with the idea of throwing a 'virtual' prom. The students volunteered for different tasks and wore their prom clothes when each one made a video. The result was a perfectly delightful video letting us know how they were studying from home and living again at home and wishing all of us good health and joy. Not only did it seem a remarkable technological feat, but it was so joyous and creative and heartfelt."

"I felt and still feel very lucky to have been able to get to know some students soon after coming here. It certainly helped me better understand the University and it also allowed me, early on, to get to know many more of my fellow residents as I attempted to represent our group to the students."

News and Notes

- **COVID-19 Seminar: Adapting and Innovating in Age-Friendly Universities**
Friday, April 23, 2021, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm EDT
Register via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).
Higher education leaders and institutions will be defined by how they adapted the COVID-19 crisis. Within the AFU Global Network, we have all had to manage, innovate, and successfully navigate the pandemic. For all, it has been a challenge as the strategic priority of our institutions focused on maintaining services. However, it has also offered new ways of working, demonstrating agility with a move to online learning and remote engagement. You are invited to attend this seminar hosted by the founding members of the AFU Global Network: Arizona State University, Dublin City University, and the Age-Friendly Academy at the University of Strathclyde. Our discussion will focus on opportunities and share how we, as a network, have learned and adapted.

- AFU partner **University of North Georgia** (UNG) embarked on a new lifelong learning community initiative - PEAKS (Personal Enrichment, Action, and Knowledge Series) - a collaboration of the Institute for Healthy Aging, the Blue Ridge Campus, and the College of Education's Appalachian Studies Center. Monthly PEAKS programming reflects community input with intergenerational activities and events such as "Twice Upon a Time: Rethinking Our Well-Rehearsed Stories" with renowned linguist, the Reverend Cynthia Park, PhD, and "Appalachian Folklore: Renowned by the Signs" with Rosann Kent, Director of the UNG Appalachian Studies Center. For information, email PEAKS@ung.edu

- AFU partner **University of Wisconsin-La Crosse** (UWL) launched the semester-long intergenerational "Happiness Project" with therapeutic recreation undergraduate students serving as "Happiness Coaches" who met virtually with older adult residents from a local skilled nursing community. The evidence-based curriculum was developed by a UWL graduate student with faculty mentorship, and student coaches created "Happiness Toolkits" to further connect with the residents. The innovative program aims to increase happiness through positive psychological approaches while also providing students valuable telehealth experience during the pandemic.

- At AFU partner **Purdue University**, students in the Interior Design II course worked with residents of a local senior housing community to create new age-friendly designs for apartments and shared living space. Residents of the facility consulted with students and selected winning designs that best met the residents' needs as safe, accessible, and attractive spaces. Read more [here](#) about the Purdue Interior Design Challenge.

- AFU partner **Portland State University** and its **Senior Adult Learning Center** (SALC) continue to support lifelong learners during the pandemic with the opportunity for Oregon residents 65 years of age or older to audit undergraduate and graduate courses at little to no cost. Over 290 learners registered this quarter for newly adapted virtual classes.

Resource Center

- **75+ Resources for Gerontology Education** celebrates GSA's 75th Anniversary with an inspiring and diverse set of resources educators can use in their classes to expand students' aging education experiences. The project was created by AGHE's Academic Program Development Workgroup members: Tina M. K. Newsham, PhD; Maria Claver, PhD; Suzie Macaluso, PhD; and Rona Karasik, PhD.

- The World Health Organization launched its **Baseline Report for the Decade of Healthy Ageing**, which sets the stage for the second action plan of the Global Strategy, the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030.

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Editor: **Joann M. Montepare**, PhD, GSA Age-Friendly University Workgroup Chair
Associate Editors: **Caroline Cicero**, PhD, MSW, MPL,
and **Andrea Zakrajsek**, OTD, OTR/L



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1220 L St. NW, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20005.

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