



The Masterpiece Living Mosaic

12600 W. Colfax Ave., Suite B-110, Lakewood, CO 80215

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Highlights from Lyceum 2017: The Summit of Change

By: Danielle Palli

Residents and team members from more than 80 partner communities gathered in Denver for **Lyceum 2017: The Summit of Change**. The theme of this year's Masterpiece Living conference was change ... social change and advocacy, the changing landscape of technology, and the changing perspective of older adults and how older adults are regarded in this modern age.

During the **Ask Anything** panel, speakers Dr. Roger Landry; Toni Antonucci, PhD; Kristine Rogers; David Gobble, PhD; Rob Winningham, PhD; Kay Van Norman; Thomas Kamber; and Harry (Rick) Moody, PhD discussed how we can change public policy on a national and international level by creating age-friendly cities, focusing on preventive medicine and using research and data to educate people about living well on a global level. They also advocated outreach to university students in our communities to expose them to the positive aspects of aging and encourage young people to explore gerontology and the vast opportunities that working in the field can provide. When asked about creative new practices in technology, the panel shared innovative ways to integrate technology into our everyday experience. Examples of this included creating digital memoirs, connecting with people via Skype and other online tools – not only to remain socially connected, but as an opportunity to learn and practice a new language, and using virtual programs to “walk” to Paris.

In **Masterpieces: Creativity in Later life**, Dr. Rick Moody explored the freedom and changing perspective of artists such as Monet, Matisse and Rembrandt as they aged, juxtaposing their earlier works with their later pieces. Without the constraints of making a name for themselves, and with wisdom and maturity, they were free to “be outrageous.” They also adapted to their changing experience. When Matisse could no longer paint, he sought the simplicity of cutouts.

After Monet became homebound, he was able to paint his garden. Rembrandt became more introspective with age, evident in his self-portraits over time. “Creativity doesn't have to be a novelty,” Dr. Moody shared. “You can do the same thing over and over again and see things differently each time.”

Another insightful presentation was **CSA in Action**. Here, residents and team members from Certified Centers for Successful Aging communities shared creative ways to get the community socially, intellectually, physically, and spiritually engaged. Resident Ken Stenmen shared that he interviews people from all over Holly Creek for his *Wandering* radio show. Meanwhile, Tim Rogers, Executive Director of Someren Glen, challenged communities who have already earned the CSA certification to collaborate in order to continuously raise the bar in the aging field. And, resident Carol Hodges initiated the AIR policy at her community: Advertise, Invite, and Remind people of the value of getting involved.



The Fun and Serious Sides of Technology

By: Danielle Palli and Verna M. Cavey, PhD

In Juliet Kerlin's delightful Lyceum 2017 presentation, ***The Fun Theory: Transformation Through Person-Based Technology***, we learned how fun can be a great motivator! In one study, research demonstrated that people are 66% more likely to use the stairs when steps are transformed into piano keys that played musical notes. Subsequent studies continue to support the value of technology as a way of motivating people to remain physically, intellectually and even spiritually active. Kerlin cited the example of a devout Catholic who lived with anxiety and found comfort by saying a digital rosary, and a lethargic man – a former farmer who was energized by watching a video of farming life. The fun side of technology also gives people the opportunity to learn and explore in ways they may not otherwise be able. For example, digital painting creates a “no mess” and cost-efficient option for creating art, while flight simulators “fly” travelers to remote destinations. The beauty of this side of technology is that it's also scalable to a person's cognitive and skill levels. Using a strength-based approach, new technologies meet a user where they are – finding their skill set and building upon it.

With that in mind, Tom Kamber reminded us in his presentation, ***Beyond the Basics: Getting Serious about Making a Difference with Technology*** that “technology itself is not the solution” and that we must examine outcomes to ensure that the technologies we use promote engagement, lifelong learning and good health. Kamber went on to discuss the Longevity Revolution and how older adults are reinventing their lives and creating their own aging agenda. Getting serious about making a difference using technology includes creating a “temple of awesomeness” which is the magic that happens when we can strategically use advancements to create stronger communities and personal growth.

We Are All Connected

By: Dr. Roger Landry

Early Sunday morning on October 23, 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon and during the Lebanese Civil War, two suicide truck bombers struck the barracks of the multinational peacekeeping force, killing 241 US marines, sailors and soldiers, 58 French peacekeepers and six civilians. I was serving at the Air Force Headquarters Europe in Ramstein, Germany. For the next several days, our team assisted with evacuation and medical care of the injured.

So, when early this year, over 33 years later, I was contacted by a resident at Westminster Village in Dover, Delaware who wanted to speak to me about the event, I was more than surprised. Joan Muffler told me her son John, a 19-year-old marine, was killed in that attack. She wanted to hear my story. But mostly, she wanted to thank me. Imagine this magnificent Gold Star Mother wanted to thank ME!

Joan spoke at this year's Lyceum, and her stirring, generous words reminded us all of the power of working for the greater good, of the meaning of resilience, and the need for purpose. She has dedicated her life to helping veterans and military families. Joan has emphatically reminded us that we are indeed all connected. Thank YOU, Joan.



Mindful Aging: The Power of Presence

By: Cera Meintzer

“Wherever you put the mind, the body will follow,” Chaplain Jim Kok, Executive Director of Chaplain Services at Christian Living Communities, told us. He began his presentation on mindful aging by citing the work of researcher Ellen Langer. In the '90s, Langer studied the mind-body connection and specifically how your thoughts and beliefs affect your physical experience in the world. Langer's studies all brought her to the same conclusion – that the mind and body are indeed connected.

In our busy world, it is common for individuals to live on automatic drive, not fully engaged with each moment of life. Langer calls this mindlessness and describes it as “a lack of awareness, insight and understanding; it is a failure to notice new things. To act mindlessly represents a loss of perspective and context while acting and reacting in habitual patterns of behavior that serve to confine and constrict our experience.”

The antidote to *mindlessness* is *mindfulness*, and it is characterized by awareness of thoughts, the world, the moment as it is happening, of others, and an awareness of God. To transform mindlessness into mindfulness, Jim recommended these nine tips:

1. Reflect on your assumptions, worldview, beliefs and stereotypes.
2. Re-frame critical self-talk.
3. Shift your perspective.
4. Practice mindful attention.
5. Think about what matters most, then write it down.
6. Challenge your brain with new learning and activities.
7. Find guidance through a teacher, study group, or social network.
8. Move from 'I' to 'we'.
9. Remember that death makes life possible. Face your mortality.

Seek out and create opportunities in your life and community to practice mindfulness. Master Practices shared in the MPL network include: mindful meditation classes, prayer groups, tai chi classes, yoga classes, contemplation rooms with relaxed environments, and walking meditation groups.

Suggested Reading: *Nine Practices for Conscious Aging* – <http://spiritualityhealth.com/articles/nine-practices-conscious-aging>

Congratulations to This Year's Valuing Gray Finalists!

The Valuing Gray video contest from MPL was designed to showcase systems for leveraging the talents of older adults. The purpose of these systems is to contribute to the greater good of society. Entrants each submitted a video explaining their process and how it contributes to world change. The top entries were then open to public voting. This year, MPL was proud to announce the following Valuing Gray Winners at our annual Lyceum:



- **Lutheran Senior Services:** *1st Place*
- **Deerfield Retirement Community** –
A Lifespace Community – *Runner-Up Finalist*
- **Edgemere:** An SQLC Community –
Runner-up Finalist
- **Las Ventanas:** *Honorable Mention*
- **The Birches Assisted Living:**
Honorable Mention

“Valuing Gray challenges the historically negative views of aging.” Masterpiece Living President, Dr. Roger Landry, shared. “It is bringing awareness to this underutilized resource, and making a commitment to be part of the solution.” The Valuing Gray Award exemplifies an organization's impact in supporting these endeavors.

Trailblazing to the Summit of Social Change

By: Danielle Palli and Verna M. Cavey, PhD

How does societal change relate to successful aging? How can we be proactive vs. reactive and facilitate opportunities for growth during these changing times? These were the questions addressed to tackle the tough – and often sensitive – topics surrounding marijuana usage, End-of-life rights and adopting an inclusive culture in LGBTQ communities.



Cindy Hogan, president and COO of Christian Living Communities (CLC) explained in her presentation, **Trailblazing to the Summit of Social Change** how legal issues can complicate and

sometimes contradict an organization's policy. She uses CLC as an example, as the organization has a drug-free community. However, due to Colorado recently making marijuana usage legal, CLC has removed drug testing of employees, but retains the right to test any team member who appears to be under the influence at work. This puts CLC in a unique situation because, while marijuana usage may be legal at a state level, it is still considered a federal crime. To address this growing concern, CLC implemented education and continuing conversations between residents, team members and board members about the use of marijuana – regardless of whether it is smoked, consumed in a pill or edible form, or used as a cream. Residents

of CLC expressed mixed opinions about this hot topic.

Another legal issue raised was over medical aid in dying. New legislation permits, with the permission of two doctors and within a period of six months before dying, a prescription which can be filled to end a life to avoid needless suffering. While CLC supports the rights of a resident to end his or her life, no team member can participate in the administration of the prescription. To further complicate this issue, resident Dee Deeter pointed out that Medicare and Medicaid do not currently cover such a decision that can cost the resident more than \$4,000.

The final topic addressed the demographic shift in LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer) communities. In 2016, 4% of the older adult population (i.e. 200,000 people) self-identified as LGBTQ. The sobering truth is that 33% of LGBTQ boomers live alone and 25% have no close family. This caused communities to ask themselves, “are we being inclusive” and “how can we ensure that everyone feels welcome?” In learning circles, residents currently gather to express inclusivity in the midst of those with religious concerns.

Successful aging means providing opportunities for residents to discuss relevant trends and become educated about the issues. It also requires that team members provide the space for these conversations to occur.



Next year's Lyceum
will be held
in Philadelphia
("the city of brotherly love")
April 3-5.
We hope to see you there!

