

2007

Fiscal Year Retrospective

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Summer 2007

Fiscal Year Retrospective

By

Edward F. Ansello, Ph.D.

Endings cause appraisals. The endings of fiscal years also cause reports. Drawing from our official and informal reports to the many valued partners across Virginia who make it possible for our small staff to do all that we do, I would like to share capsules of our activities during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

VCoA and Senior Connections: The Capital Area Agency on Aging completed the project year of *Workplace Partners for Eldercare*, an initiative funded by the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation, to assist caregiving employees of some 20 employers in central Virginia. VCoA's Dr. Connie Coogle and Bert Waters developed and collected data from on-line survey and in-person interviews with human resources managers and work/life coordinators to determine available elder care programs or services and potential initiatives. The project has been re-funded for another year.

VCoA, at the head of a formidable group of community partners, competed successfully for one of only 10 grant awards nationally from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. We are now three-quarters through our first year of a three year \$429,075 project directed by Dr. Paula Kupstas. The grant is allowing the VCoA and key collaborators to offer multidisciplinary elder abuse training to police officers, prosecutors, and court officials in the Richmond metropolitan area.

VCoA was pleased to administer a far-sighted 2006-2007 appropriation from the General Assembly for the continuing support of the VGEC and other geriatric initiatives. Championed by Delegate Jack Reid, this appropriation enabled the VGEC consortium (VCU, UVA, EVMS) to conduct staff training and development in long-term care operations, and the McGuire Research Institute and EVMS to provide Geriatric Academic Career Awards totaling \$120,000 to foster the geriatric research and clinical teaching skills of three prominent geriatricians. As noted elsewhere, the 2007 session of the General Assembly did not reauthorize these appropriations. Federal support for geriatric training and education is returning, although the extent and conditions for assistance remain unclear.

VCoA's Elderhostel programs for older learners, a range of weeklong, short, and traveling courses in Richmond, Natural Bridge, and, new in 2007, Staunton, drew over 1,300 learners this fiscal year. Richmond enrollments for the first six months of 2007 have already exceeded enrollments for the entire year of 2006.

The Central Virginia Task Force on Domestic Violence in Later Life (formerly named the Central Virginia Task Force on Older Battered Women), in which VCoA is a leading partner, received the **2006 Best Practices Award** for its work in training, public awareness, and advocacy, from the gubernatorial-appointed Commonwealth Council on

Aging. Dr. Dick Lindsay, Chairman of the Council, presented a commemorative plaque to the Task Force at its June 2007 meeting.

VCoA, as a result of House Bill 110 (2006) requiring all state agencies to prepare annual reports that address the impact of the aging of the population in Virginia, has been working with the Virginia Department of Alcohol Beverage Control (VABC) in an implementation workgroup to identify demographic impacts and the VABC's relevant objectives.

VCoA is representing VCU in a continuing pioneering effort to introduce applied educational gerontology in Japan and Southeast Asia. We worked with colleagues from universities in the U.S. and Japan to conduct an international invitational gerontology synthesis conference held in Okinawa in March 2007, and are now working on subsequent conferences in Japan in 2008 and India in 2009. See http://www.carefit.org/sympo/sympo2007/index_en.html

VCoA's Lisa Furr, Project Coordinator for the Central Virginia Task Force on Domestic Violence in Later Life, at the request of the Office of Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, trained 345 magistrates around the Commonwealth in the months of November and December 2006 in six, two-hour sessions focusing on domestic violence in later life and elder abuse.

VCoA is a leading partner in the Area Planning and Services Committee for Aging with Lifelong Disabilities (APSC) in metropolitan Richmond, a research-based model strategy to address issues related to the aging of adults with lifelong disabilities. In this fiscal year the APSC conducted training workshops on Down syndrome and dementia in Richmond and Virginia Beach; helped Henrico County Public Relations & Media Services to develop *Healthy Cooking*, a teaching DVD for group home staff and consumers; and hosted this June's "Aging in Place, Aging Well" conference that drew 160 service providers, caregivers, planners, and others.

VCoA's co-sponsored Lifelong Learning Institute in Chesterfield (LLI), an educational program for older adults that is administered and operated by its volunteer members and sponsors, offered over 120 courses and special events between July 2006 and June 2007. Since launching classes in early 2004, the LLI has provided an important presence in Chesterfield County for VCU and VCoA, and a strong partnership association with Chesterfield County and Schools, John Tyler Community College, and a number of other organizations, businesses and groups.

VCoA staff gave in the 2006-2007 fiscal year substantial services to Virginia's agencies and citizens by serving on the boards of some dozen non-profit organizations, providing leadership, technical assistance, and *pro bono* services to groups such as the Shepherd's Center of Richmond, the Virginia Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission, the Virginia Coalition for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, the Virginia Coalition on Aging, the Virginia Quality Healthcare Network, the Culture Change Coalition (on long-term care), and the Virginia Elder Rights Coalition.

Again, we rely on the dedication and selflessness of so many collaborating groups, agencies, and individuals to make our work for older Virginians possible. We thank them deeply and look forward to continuing these partnerships.