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32nd Summer Institute on Aging June 8-10 honors wisdom and experience of elders

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. – The Division of Social Work at West Virginia University will host the 32nd Summer Institute on Aging June 8-10 at the Lakeview Resort and Conference Center in Morgantown, W.Va. The theme, “In Honor of Wisdom and Experience,” boasts sessions that will celebrate and demonstrate how practitioners can improve their services by listening and learning from the people they serve.

New this year, the SIA workshops are categorized by topic and practitioner tracks, including: adult protective service workers; senior center directors and staff; cultural competency and diversity; mental health and clinical; core practice; and management, administration and policy.

Also, noteworthy at this year’s event is the variety of new and veteran sponsoring community organizations, including the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services, the Beatrice Ruth Burgess Center for West Virginia Families and Communities, and Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia, in addition to WVU’s Division of Social Work and Center on Aging.

Steve Burton, director of the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia, aligns his agency with the SIA, because the aging population is identified for increased risk of developing a gambling problem. “The WVU Summer Institute on Aging allows us to educate individuals working with the aging population on the consequences of developing a gambling problem. This is at the heart of our mission.”

Nancy Lohmann, director of the Beatrice Ruth Burgess Center, believes the SIA is a unique opportunity for aging practitioners and students to advance their knowledge and skills. She is proud to have the Center sponsor the opening keynote address, titled “Honoring Wisdom and Experience in Planning with Our Elders: Insights for West Virginia from Kentucky’s Elder Readiness Initiative,” given by Graham Rowles, PhD, to kick off the conference on Tuesday, June 8, at 9:30 a.m.

Rowles is a professor of gerontology at the University of Kentucky with joint appointments in nursing, behavioral science, geography and health behavior. His research focuses the lived experience of aging by exploring the changing relationship between elders, their environments and health. Currently, he leads the Kentucky Elder Readiness Initiative (KERI), a statewide project to explore communities of the Baby Boom cohort, and is founding director of the Graduate Center for Gerontology. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Bristol University in England, and a doctoral degree from Clark University in Massachusetts. Rowles is also a past co-director of the WVU Center on Aging.

“As a former WVU faculty member who conducted research on individuals living in rural West Virginia, Dr. Rowles will bring an interesting perspective on how the experience of aging has changed in the last few decades,” said Lohmann.

Later at 12:30 p.m., Joanne Dennison, known as the “The Guidance Counselor for Grown-Ups” by those she has motivated in personal and professional development, will present “It’s Just…” during lunch. Her research interests center on the concept of “the last parent---twice,” and she’s known for her straightforward, yet humorous, speaking style.

On Wednesday, June 9, at 10:30 a.m., Jane Marks, executive director of the West Virginia Chapter Alzheimer’s Association, will give a keynote address, titled “Brain Health and Wellness: The Final Frontier.” She is active in state and federal legislative issues having spoken before the West Virginia

Silver Haired Legislature and testified before the West Virginia Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Resources Accountability (LOCCHRA).

At noon, the Anita Harbert Awards will be presented over lunch, and the String of Pearls, a local tap dancing group sponsored by the Senior Monongalians, Inc., will perform. Later at 5 p.m., Everett Lilly, PhD, and his intergenerational band of young singers, called "The Songcatchers," will perform "Traditional Music: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." The group was created at Mountain State University in Beckley, W.Va., where Lilly, son of Everett Lilly of the famed Lilly Brothers, teaches bluegrass and other traditional music classes.

On Thursday, June 10, during lunch, Kristina Hash, PhD, associate professor of social work at WVU, will show video clips and lead a discussion about the documentary "Healing in the Hills," which is a series produced by the West Virginia Geriatric Education Center, WV Seniors and WV Public Broadcasting.

The SIA conference is approved for maximum continuing education contact hours (CEUs) under the WVU School of Applied Social Sciences, Division of Social Work WVBSWE for the following: 21 CEUs for licensed social workers in W.Va., Md., Va., and Pa.; and 16.75 CEUs for licensed professional counselors in W.Va. An application for approval for Ohio Social Work CEUs has been submitted. The SIA conference has also been approved for 22.8 CEUs for nurses through the WVU Center on Aging.

Participants will be provided lunches each day, and free parking will be available.

Interested exhibitors and conference participants can visit www.wvsioa.org for a complete conference schedule, a downloadable brochure and an application.

For more information, contact Jacki Englehardt, coordinator of Professional and Community Education in the Division of Social Work, at (304) 293-3280 or Jacki.Englehardt@mail.wvu.edu.

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