

# transitions

INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY

*Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond*

Fall 2010

## New Two-Year Grant To Evaluate and Expand Mental Health Training

The Retirement Research Foundation awarded a \$208,000 grant to IOG Director Peter Lichtenberg and Deputy Director Cathy Lysack to increase the reach and effectiveness of an educational training series the IOG created in 2008. The DVD-based training set, *Integrating Mental Health into Occupational Therapy Practice with Older Adults* has already been purchased by hundreds of occupational therapists and home health care workers who needed targeted information on older adult problems such as depression, prescription drug use and misuse, impaired cognition, and falls and balance.

The IOG created the DVD series in response to the dearth of quality training information available to OTs, home care professionals, and nursing assistants on the mental health issues faced by older adults. "Interest in the materials has been high," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "So we are grateful to the RRF for the chance to refine and expand the materials." The current series (© 2008) is the only DVD set on geriatric mental health endorsed by the American Occupational Therapy Association for continuing education credits.

*cont. on pg. 2*



## IOG Alum "Delighted" to Give

Martha Sachs, a 1978 graduate of the IOG Certificate of Gerontology Program, said she was delighted to be able to make a recent gift of \$25,000 to the IOG as a thank-you for the training that launched her fulfilling career in senior housing. The donation will be used to support IOG research projects and its doctoral student training program. "We are honored to receive her gift," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "Patrons like Martha Sachs are the lifeblood of the IOG."

After completing her masters' degree in consumer affairs at Wayne State with a certification in gerontology, Martha began her career as education manager for Cooperative Services, a non-profit that manages low-income housing for thousands of older adults in several areas of the country. "We created councils in the buildings and taught seniors how to self-manage the property," she explained. "Our job was to lead from behind, not to tell them what to do."

Martha wants to lead by example, too. She

*cont. on pg. 5*



The IOG proudly announces that board member **John Villa** won the 2010 Claude Pepper Award for his extensive volunteer work to improve the lives of older adults in Michigan. Well-deserved, John!

research  
education  
outreach  
partnerships



# International Neuroscience Conference Coming Soon

The IOG is honored to have been selected to host the Margret M. and Paul B. Baltes International Conference on Lifespan Cognitive Neuroscience. The October 2011 Conference, will invite 12 top researchers from Europe and the United States to present on changes to the brain and cognition as we age. Upwards of 100 of the world's top cognitive neuroscientists, as well as graduate students and professionals who work with older adults, are expected to attend the three-day event. The Baltes Foundation has granted \$50,000 toward conference expenses.



Dr. Naftali Raz, an internationally recognized researcher and head of the IOG's Lifespan Cognitive Neuroscience Program, is organizing the conference to focus on neural and cognitive plasticity. Plasticity, the brain's ability to alter its structure and function in response to experience, is a hot topic in contemporary neuroscience yet little is known about its role in lifespan development and the maintenance and decline of cognitive skills across the lifespan.

"Brain aging is not a discrete event that happens overnight," Dr. Raz said, "but a long stretch on the developmental continuum. We want to look at the largely unanswered questions of when, how and why the brain changes, and how those changes affect the way we think and behave." The conference will bring together neuroscientists from multiple disciplines: molecular neurobiology, developmental psychology, gerontology, and cognitive science. The goal is building interdisciplin-

ary bridges to inspire fresh research approaches and interventions that could alleviate cognitive loss in aging.

Conference sponsors, the Paul and Margret Baltes Foundation, held an international competition for proposals. Advantages to the IOG as a host site include the leadership and reputation of Dr. Raz, our unique concentration of faculty committed to lifespan developmental research, and our proximity to the other major centers of cognitive gerontology at the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.

Dr. Lichtenberg sees the conference as an excellent fit with recent institute initiatives. "Our new Lifespan Alliance at Wayne State is a collaboration between the IOG and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute to further lifespan and intergenerational education and research," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "This conference, combined with our recent hires in developmental neuroscience and the strengths of Drs. Raz and Scott Moffat in aging and neuroscience research, adds to the momentum of the alliance."

## Grant from page 1

The two-year project will build on the series' original evaluations in which OTs showed clear improvements in their knowledge and clinical practice after viewing the seven DVDs. To further disseminate the information, Drs. Lichtenberg and Lysack will create a train-the-trainer curriculum and evaluate it on a large sample of OTs.

"OTs are in a unique position to assess mental health functioning in their older patients and determine its impact on daily functioning," said Dr. Lysack, a professor of gerontology and occupational therapy. "But they often receive little training in the practical skills needed to do this. Many therapists have told us they don't feel

confident talking about mood or sadness with older adults." A train-the-trainer curriculum to educate supervisors and organization decision-makers about handling mood disorders will ensure that OTs are encouraged to learn these skills and use them in daily practice.

Current societal trends compound the need for increased education on mood disorders for anyone working with older adults. "Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the population," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "But despite their ever increasing numbers, depression and cognitive impairment are greatly under-detected. Our tight economy and retracting medical services compound the problem." Empowering more "generalists" to identify mental health issues and refer them for proper treatment is a prac-

tical, cost-effective way to safeguard the mental health of older adults.

"Our goal is to make the SAGE educational series the strongest evidence-based, empirically-tested training in the country on the mental health of older adults," Dr. Lichtenberg said.



To learn more or purchase the SAGE DVDs, visit [iog.wayne.edu](http://iog.wayne.edu) and click on the SAGE icon.

## Hundreds of Motivated Seniors Pledge to Improve Health

This year marked the first Healthier Black Elders conference at the New Providence Center on Plymouth Road, a bright, spacious hall capable of holding the 1,000 plus seniors who regularly attend. "This is a wonderful place," Winifred Hamilton, 75, said of the new venue, as she walked briskly from the health screening room to the vendor area. "It's bright and easy to get around in." Like most guests, she took advantage of the many free health screenings offered. "My blood pressure always stays good, but I'm diabetic," she says. "So what the screeners tell me about my A1C is very helpful."

Donald Peteet, 72, is a first-timer from Detroit's eastside who heard good things about the HBEC from a friend. He arrived early to ensure a short wait for health screenings. "I'm going to get them all," Donald said, "even the eye test." Screeners identified many abnormal results putting guests at high-risk: 52 high blood pressures, 7 abnormal prostate exams, 14 high glucose levels, and 11 high cholesterol levels. Guests were referred on to immediate help.

The conference keynoter shared positive health behaviors and information to help reverse the health disparities faced by older African Americans. Dr. Cynthia Tagg from the Greater Detroit Area Health Council kicked off the formal program with tips on how to live longer and stronger, such as paying attention to what we eat, moving more, and caring for ourselves. "We can't care



National experts field questions on diabetes and heart disease: (L-R) Keith Whitfield, Ph.D., J. Taylor Harden, Ph.D., John Flack, MD, and James Bridgforth

for others unless we keep ourselves healthy," she said.

The day's program included experts on the social, emotional and physical aspects of aging. Speakers and panelists talked about dehydration, diabetes, pain management, dementia, how to talk to your doctor and why African Americans are at increased risk for certain health problems. Audience members submitted dozens of questions to panelists and took advantage of the chance to discuss issues with experts after their presentations.

The post-conference survey confirmed the day's success: 88% found the health screenings useful; 89% found the health information useful; 82% said the event affected their health habits over the past year; and 99.2% plan to attend next year's conference to be held on June 7, 2011.

Winifred, surrounded by friends, offered a final compliment on the day's events. "It's a blessing to get old," she said, "if it means I get to come here."



**KRISTEN KENNEDY, PH.D.**, won a five-year, \$1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the brain as it ages. Dr. Kennedy did her pre-doctoral training in the IOG's Cognitive Neuroscience lab from 2003-07 when she became a post-doctoral fellow in the University of Texas' Center for Vital Longevity in Dallas. "This is a stellar accomplishment from a very talented and hard-working investigator," said IOG Deputy Director Dr. Lysack.

The Pathway to Independence award is a career development grant that will reduce Dr. Kennedy's teaching load so she can devote 75% of her time to research. Her project will examine the role of the brain's white matter in reorganizing brain function as we age. She will also continue to work closely with the Dallas

Lifespan Brain Study, a large national project examining cognitive aging from 20 to 90.

**HEATHER OROM, PH.D.**, a post-doctoral fellow at the IOG from 2006-08, received a \$2.4 million grant to study racial and ethnic differences in decision making related to treatment for prostate cancer. Dr. Orom is an assistant professor of health behavior at the University of Buffalo's School of Public Health and Health Professions. Her co-principal investigator for the five-year project is Willie Underwood, M.D., a former Wayne State School of Medicine assistant professor who is now an associate professor of urology at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo.

Western Carolina University named **MARY BYRNES, PH.D.**, an affiliated faculty member in its Public Policy Institute. Dr. Byrnes is already an assistant professor tenure-track in WCU's

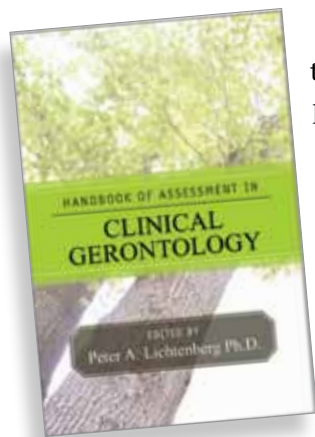
sociology program. At the Public Policy Institute, Dr. Byrnes' gerontology and urban planning experience will help her conduct senior needs assessments on housing and community issues. The results will inform regional policy makers on how to build elder-friendly communities. Dr. Byrnes was a pre-doctoral trainee at the IOG from 2003-07.



Former IOG post-doctoral fellow Jacquelyn Taylor is now an associate professor at Yale and made the July cover of **Yale Nursing Matters**. The article covered her search for genetic causes of hypertension in African American women.

## AWARDS & HONORS

Two pre-doctoral trainees at the IOG received generous scholarships from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation's Student Award Program. First year trainee **Jane Huang** won \$3,000 for her study, *The Effects of Medicare DRG (Diagnosis-Related Groups) Payments on the Quality of Hospital Care and the Volume of Patients*. **Elham Mahmoudi** also won \$3,000 for her research, *Medicare Part D and its Impact on Racial / Ethnic Disparities in Access to Prescription Medications*.



IOG Director **Dr. Peter Lichtenberg** released the second edition of his *Handbook of Assessment in Clinical Gerontology*, a comprehensive set of tools and guidelines for assessing general mental health, cognitive functioning, functional age, psychosocial health, comorbidity, behavior deficits, and more. "Clinicians and graduate students alike have found the book helpful," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "I'm pleased to offer an updated edition." The book also provides in-depth coverage of older adult psychopathology, behavioral disorders, changes in cognition, and changes in everyday functioning, as well as a wide range of other conditions and disorders common among older adults.

**Dr. Mark Luborsky**, director of IOG aging and health disparities research, accepted a four-year appointment to serve on the study section for Community Influences on Health Behavior in the Center for Scientific Review at the National Institutes of Health. Study sections review grant applications submitted to the NIH, make recommendations on these applications, and survey the status of research in their field of science. Invitation to membership in a study section is extremely selective. Dr. Luborsky was chosen based on competence and achievement in his scientific discipline as evidenced in the quality of his research, journal publications, and other scientific activities, achievements and honors. "Service on a study section also requires mature judgment, objectivity, and the ability to work effectively in a group," said Center Director Toni Scarpa, M.D., "qualities we believe Dr. Luborsky will bring to this important task."

IOG Associate Director for Research **Dr. Thomas Jankowski** won the 2010 McNamara Award from Senior Alliance for his relentless pursuit of excellence in services to older adults. This marks the second year in a row Dr. Jankowski has won the award, making him the only person in the organization's 30-year history to receive back-to-back honors.

**Does low-dose aspirin prevent disease?** The IOG will assist Wayne State School of Medicine professor and physician **John Flack** in a new research study, *Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly* (ASPREE). The project plans to enroll 6,500 healthy US adults, age 70 and up and another 12,500 in Australia to be assigned to daily low-dose aspirin or placebo for five years. The goal is to determine whether aspirin can prolong life, curb physical disability and prevent dementia in older adults who do not have a history of cardiovascular disease. Wayne State will recruit 600 persons; Dr. Lichtenberg's work with the ASPREE study team will concentrate on community outreach and recruitment. Dr. Flack is site investigator for the study.



Dr. Allon Goldberg assesses a patient's balance and strength.

## New IOG Faculty Fellows to Focus Research on Mobility and Health Shocks

The IOG granted two Fellowships for Advanced Study in Aging and Lifespan this year to outstanding candidates from the departments of Economics and Healthcare Sciences. The one-year fellowships allow faculty members to build relationships with IOG researchers, and to lighten their teaching loads in order to pursue rigorous research and writing projects related to aging.

**Jennifer Ward-Batts, Ph.D.**, is an assistant professor of economics interested in how health affects household wealth, especially after "health shocks" in which a husband or wife faces unexpected illness. She will also examine factors such as family ties and social networks that could mitigate the financial impact of health on wealth.



Dr. Ward-Batts

**Allon Goldberg, Ph.D.**, is an assistant professor of healthcare science in the physical therapy program. An IOG postdoctoral fellow from 2003-2005, Dr. Allon then joined the Wayne State faculty. He established the Mobility Research Laboratory at Wayne in 2005 to conduct mobility and balance-related studies on older adults and those with neurological disease. Dr. Goldberg's fellowship research will include detecting small changes in balance and gait in older adults, and determining the effects of the ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) genotype on physical performance.

## Alum Gives from page 1

hopes her gift to the IOG will be a beacon to others searching for a worthy cause to support. She follows the IOG through newsletters and annual reports, and has been especially impressed with the number and quality of its outreach events. "I met (IOG Director) Peter and he's a very impressive guy," she said. "I could see that from the start."

The pleasures of working with older adults became clear to Martha in high school when she worked in her physician father's medical office. "I felt comfortable around that generation," she said of his older patients. "I loved being around people who had the time to talk and listen."

During Martha's 12 years with Cooperative Services, she rose to co-general manager responsible for developing more than 2000 units of Senior Citizen Housing in Michigan, California, Maryland and Massachusetts. In the resident buildings, she met dozens of vibrant, active seniors. Despite economic disadvantages, they soon became wise managers of the buildings they called home.

One of her career highlights was interacting and working with community leaders and Washington decision-makers. "I was able to represent the perspectives of our senior residents to these leaders," Martha said. "They got to hear, through me, what residents themselves wanted and needed." Her goal was to instill a sense of community into every housing project, to make people feel part of something bigger. "Senior housing advocates are still trying to do that," she said, "because seniors, like all of us, do better if they're engaged and involved."

Martha retired in 2001 from home furnishings manufacturer Arden Companies, founded by her husband Bob, where she was vice president of operations and remains on its board. She enjoys traveling, volunteer work and supporting various civic, academic and charitable organizations. She plans to visit an IOG colloquium and tour the expanded offices. "It was just a little corridor when I came here as a graduate student," Martha said. "And now the IOG's reach and research are extensive and growing. We feel lucky to be able to give back to a place that is doing so much good."

## PARTNERSHIP CORNER

### Lifelong Learning with CE Partners

Demand for our EZ CE programs continue to grow as IOG partners schedule gerontology-focused trainings for their employees. We provide expert speakers and CE certification on several topics, including ethics, elder law, pain management, depression and dementia. "We are fortunate to be perfectly positioned to fill the need for professional education on aging issues," said Outreach Director Donna MacDonald. "Our experienced CE presenters come from a wide range of disciplines, but each one specializes in aging and knows how to bring research to life. Training tomorrow's leaders in aging is at the core of the IOG's mission."

**To learn more please visit:**  
www.iog.wayne.edu or  
call Donna at 313-875-6834

**UPCOMING CE PROGRAMS** in Social Work, Nursing, Financial Planning and more.

**Sept. 8 (9 am–noon) Kinship Care (5.5 CEs), \$20**  
Greater Grace Conference Center  
23500 W. Seven Mile Rd., Detroit 48219  
Provided by the IOG & Detroit Area Agency on Aging

**Sept. 23 (9 am–noon) Cognition and Depression (3 CEs), \$20**  
Wayne State University Oakland Center  
33737 West Twelve Mile Rd, Rm 145, Farmington Hills 48331  
Provided by the IOG & Area Agency on Aging 1-B

**Oct. 19 (8:30–11:30 am) Pain Management (3 CEs), \$20**  
American House Lakeside  
15731 Nineteen Mile Road, Clinton Township, 48038  
Provided by IOG & American House

**Oct. 27 (9am–4:30pm) Crossing Borders/Alzheimer's (6 CEs), \$100**  
(Student & Senior Rate of \$35)  
Michigan Education Center  
811 W. Square Lake Road, Troy 48098  
Provided by the IOG Elder Law and Finance Committee

**Nov. 18 (9 am – noon) Pain Management (3 CEs), \$20**  
Wayne State University Oakland Center  
Provided by IOG & Area Agency on Aging 1-B

**Feb. 3, 2011 (9 am – noon) Aging in the Community (3 CEs), \$35**  
Judith Wahlberg Conference  
Wayne State University Oakland Center  
Provided by the IOG & Area Agency on Aging 1-B

**Feb. 24, 2011 (9 am – noon) Ethics and Elder Law (3 CEs), \$35**  
Embassy Suites, 28100 Franklin Road, Southfield 48034  
Provided by Jim Schuster, Elder Law Attorney



Partnership

### BE A PARTNER IN THE MISSION OF THE IOG

**YOUR INFORMATION:** (please print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### METHOD OF PAYMENT:

Please make check payable to *Institute of Gerontology*

VISA     MASTERCARD

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Sec. Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

**YES!** I'd like to make a contribution to Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology to promote successful aging research and outreach.

\$250     \$100     \$50

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ALL GIFTS ARE DEEPLY APPRECIATED

### MAIL TO:

Institute of Gerontology  
Attn: Terri Bailey  
87 E. Ferry Street  
Detroit, MI 48202





Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond

## UPCOMING EVENTS

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (Programs FREE unless otherwise noted)

Oct. 12 (10:30 – 11:30 am)

### **Brain Neurobics Interactive Workshop**

Royal Oak Senior Center, 3500 Marais Ave, Royal Oak 48073

Learn fun ways to stimulate your brain, improve your balance, and freshen your approach to life. Call 248-246-3900 to save your seat.

Oct. 13 (10:30 am – 12:30 pm)

### **Sexuality, Pain Management and Aging**

Joseph Walker Williams Recreation Center, 8431 Rosa Parks Blvd., Detroit 48206

Experts share tips on easing chronic pain, plus information everyone should know about HIV. Lunch is included compliments of Heartland Health Care.

Call Karen at 313-871-0735 to RSVP.

Nov. 10 (10:30 am – 12:30 pm)

### **Stroke Prevention & Treatment**

St. Rose Senior Citizens Center, 5555 Conner Street, Detroit 48213

Information on Alzheimer's Disease and the warning signs of stroke. Lunch

provided compliments of the City of Detroit. Call Karen at 313-871-0735 to RSVP.

Dec. 15 (10:30 am – 12:30 pm)

### **Healthy Cooking for Diabetics**

LaSed Senior Citizens Center, 7150 W. Vernor Hwy., Detroit 48209

Explore healthy, good-tasting ways to improve your diet while enjoying your food.

Experts will help you uncover hidden culprits to avoid as a diabetic.

Lunch provided by of the City of Detroit. Call Karen at 313-871-0735 to RSVP.

**Volunteer for Teen Discussion Group** The **Giant Step Teen Conference** is looking for volunteers to facilitate discussion groups with teenagers at its annual Nov. 4 conference, from 8 am - 2 pm. Giant Step invites 9th and 10th graders from metro Detroit to learn about each other and their community in small group discussions. You can be a leader in those discussions. All facilitators receive training and materials on the morning of Oct. 19. No experience necessary. Please contact Trudy Shiemke at 313-872-1790 or tshiemke@wayne.edu to learn more about this opportunity. Giant Step is organized by Wayne State's Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child & Family Development.

Jan. 1, 2011

### **Art Work Submission**

Deadline to submit creative works for display at the IOG's **Art of Aging Successfully** Conference on March 24. Art of Aging accepts writings, music, graphic arts, photography, poetry, handiwork, sculpture and other creative expressions from non-professionals age 55 and older. Forms required for submission can be found at [www.iog.wayne.edu](http://www.iog.wayne.edu) (click on the green Art of Aging icon) or by calling Donna at 313-577-2297. Submissions are displayed and published at no charge but a paid registration is needed to attend the conference.

Mar. 24, 2011

### **Art of Aging Successfully Conference**

Greater Grace Conference Center, Detroit

Watch our website at [www.iog.wayne.edu](http://www.iog.wayne.edu) for details.

For updates and weekly colloquia presentations visit: [www.iog.wayne.edu](http://www.iog.wayne.edu)