My World...Your World...Free of Elder Abuse: Observing the Fourth Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

On June 15th, we will observe the fourth annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (World Day), an effort to focus much needed attention on abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older individuals. Established by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) in 2006, and recognized by the United Nations and the World Health Organization, this commemoration will include a broad palette of activities, ranging from grassroots and community outreach events to legislative proclamations, professional conferences, and the launching of new programs and public awareness campaigns. International, national, regional, and local initiatives will illustrate that elder abuse is a threat to aging individuals globally. The core messages of World Day focus on the hidden nature of elder abuse; the belief that ageism and disempowerment of elders contributes to the invisibility of the problem; that empowerment is the most effective tool in the response to elder abuse; and, above all, that elder abuse should never be ignored.

Continued on p. 3

Color Our World Purple on June 15th!

Not only the title of Alice Walker’s novel of a woman who triumphs over abuse, the color purple is a hue used for decades to raise awareness of domestic violence. In recent years, the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse adopted purple as the color to represent World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (World Day) and has urged advocates to wear purple ribbons and wrist bands. Psychologist and advocate Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D. recently wrote to NCEA in an effort to expand this concept, and to color the world purple in observance of World Day 2009

“How about wearing purple for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in solidarity with all the known and unknown victims – to stand proudly, regally in their

As Dr. Baladerian points out, donning a specific color on a given day grabs attention and gets people asking questions, but it can lead to much more. For example, the American Heart Association in 2004 launched the Go Red for Women campaign to generate national awareness concerning the risk of heart disease among women. The “red dress” has emerged as an icon of the campaign, and women participate in National Wear Red Day on the first Friday of February annually. The campaign has enjoyed significant success, generating corporate sponsorship and considerable funding contributions. Even landmarks such as Graceland and Niagara Falls have “gone red” through lighting effects in concert with the campaign.

Dr. Baladerian envisions a sea of purple when we observe World Day, if not this year, eventually in years to come. She doesn’t think we should limit ourselves only to wearing purple, however. Here are a few other colorful ideas:

- Purple background for emails
- Purple ink
- Purple stationary or business size postcards
- Violet holiday lights strung around windows and door frames

“You can let your imagination run wild!” exclaims Dr. Baladerian who is renowned for her clinical expertise working with victims of crime and trauma, particularly individuals with disabilities.

“It is the color purple that celebrates the age of freedom to do as you wish – and purple also as a recognition of the bruises some carry on the outside from physical abuse or inside from financial, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse. It signifies so many things, and most of all I think it is important to celebrate and honor all our senior citizens, and nursing home residents and even visitors, and increase awareness of the abuses they are often suffering in silence. I, for one, will be wearing purple and letting people know why on June 15.”

NCEA encourages you to show your colors and turn our world purple on June 15th. Email forums, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and online announcements through individual organizational web sites are just a few of the channels available to promote the idea.

Join us in this vibrant, violet statement to make elder abuse a visible issue this year and in years to come. Have an idea for turning the world purple? Share it with NCEA at ncea-info@aoa.hhs.gov!

Special thanks to Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D. for contributing these ideas. For more information on Dr. Baladerian and her work, visit her website at: http://www.norabaladerian.com.

“Words Not Spoken” -- Bringing the Issue of Elder Abuse to Life through Improvisational Theater

Hedda Matza-Haughton, LCSW, has been using improvisational theater for over twenty years for prevention and education work, in order to break through the barriers and stigma that surround many unspeakable subjects, such as elder abuse. Recently, the licensed clinical social worker and consultant, along with Bessie, Molly, and Susan, presented a workshop at the Jewish Women’s International Conference on Domestic Violence in the Jewish Community, highlighting various aspects of elder abuse through interactive scenarios.
Bessie, Molly, and Susan are just three of the characters that Ms. Matza-Haughton has created over the years to breathe life into painful subjects, and to engage audience members to discuss their thoughts, feelings, and strategies for dealing with topics including elder abuse, child abuse, and intimate partner violence effecting couples of all ages, from teens to seniors.

“You can have a didactic program on elder abuse, for example, that teaches signs and symptoms, techniques on how to help someone experiencing abuse, and key points about healthy relationships, but when I present a character through improvisational theatre, I open up the audience’s feelings about what the character is experiencing. The audience can then more easily discuss what they observed as the ‘red flags,’ the consequences of the abuse, and other important issues,” noted Ms. Matza-Haughton.

“After the improvisational theatre presentation, I have the audience interact with the characters or ‘try them on.’” The power of improvisational theater as a tool to open discussion of hidden interpersonal issues prompted her to create the aptly named program, “Words Not Spoken.” “Watching the scenarios can be much more compelling, and can evoke greater emotional responses from participants,” commented Ms. Matza-Haughton. They also provide a way around the embarrassment that often inhibits individuals, including professionals, from speaking out on sensitive issues. She created Bessie, an 86 year old widow suffering with emphysema, in the mid-90’s, when she was first asked to present scenarios of family violence.

“I included Bessie right from the beginning to show that family violence wasn’t only child abuse, teen or young adult violence, or domestic violence between younger couples.”

Over the years, Bessie and the other characters have evolved to render three-dimensional images of individuals mistreated. In the most recent solo performance by Ms. Matza-Haughton dealing with elder abuse, Bessie illustrates a familiar dynamic. Increasingly isolated since the deaths of her husband and only child, she extends her generosity to her niece. The niece eventually loses her job, moves in with Bessie, and then becomes financially exploitative as well as physically and psychologically abusive. Molly is an older divorcee who is afraid to tell anyone that her new and seemingly charming boyfriend, Jake, is sexually abusing her. Susan has recently suffered a stroke and her husband, who previously has demonstrated controlling behaviors, has become increasingly abusive in response to her new disability.

Reaching Unique Audiences

In developing these programs, Ms. Matza-Haughton works with the sponsoring organization to learn who the audience is, to select the themes to be highlighted, and to tailor the program to the venue.

While some presentations such as the recent domestic violence conference are “one-woman-shows,” others involve “actors” from the sponsoring organization, audience, or community. In each presentation of “Words Not Spoken” the characters change, as they are creation of the community based non-professional actors or Ms. Haughton in her solo performances. Over several months, she trains the community actors to create and perform their characters, providing guidelines and direction. Recognizing that more often than not, audience members will open up and want or need to discuss personal experiences, she asks that appropriately trained individuals be on hand to listen, or to refer these peoples on to professional resources to address their needs.
“Words Not Spoken” presentations are customized for a variety of venues. Some programs are presented directly to specific populations; others are delivered in general community settings; and some target professionals and advocates who work directly with specific populations. For example, some performances are designed for older individuals, but Ms. Matza-Haughton has also worked with professionals to develop the comfort and skills to talk with their aging clients about other personal issues, such as intimacy and sexuality. Through improvisational theatre, aging services professionals practice broaching topics such as elder abuse, safe sexual practices and power and control issues within sexual relationships. Some of the other topics in the “Words Not Spoken” program include cancer survivorship, communication on death and dying, and teen and young adult dating violence.

Extending Community Outreach

In particular, Ms. Matza-Haughton would like to work with organizations to develop community-based troupes involving seniors and/or professionals and advocates to deliver “Words Not Spoken” improvisational presentations. This is the strategy she employed successfully when developing “Faces,” Maimonides Teenage Improvisational Theater Network, which conducted outreach for teens on mental health and interpersonal issues. She believes that it is important to help participants take practical information from these presentations so she shares research and information as part of the discussion. For instance, she provided participants of the recent domestic violence workshop with NCEA tip sheets for community prevention activities.

“Words Not Spoken” is only one program of Ms. Matza-Haughton’s “For the Health of It” Consultation Services, a company that promotes the health of organizations and individuals in an electrifying, non-traditional manner. An expert in stress management also, her “Laugh For the Health of It” program is nationally acclaimed. For more information, visit: http://www.laughforthehealthofit.net or email Ms. Matza-Haughton at: hmhforthehealthofit@verizon.net

Observing World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in the US

In recent months, NCEA has asked readers throughout the country to share their planned World Day activities. The following updates reflect versatility and creativity. Special thanks to our contributors:

Alabama

Kaleigh Flatt, Public Information Manager for the Alabama Department of Senior Services recently wrote about the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day statewide rally. The event will take place on June 15th on the Alabama State Capitol Lawn in Montgomery from 10:30 to 11:30.

"We have made wondrous strides in partnering across state agencies, non-profit organizations and local churches to make this event a success. Our event is being sponsored by the Alabama Civil Justice Foundation and other partners include Department of Human Resources, District Attorneys Association, AARP, Nursing Home Association, Hospital Association, Medicaid Agency, Assisted Living Association, State Bar, Public Health, Attorney General’s Office, Department of Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Department of Youth Services, RSVP, Securities Commission, Department of Insurance, Department of Public Safety, Wiregrass Hospice and the Banking Department... not to mention our Area Agencies on Aging and our strong faith-based community." The goal of the rally is to increase the recognition of
elder abuse as a public health and elder rights issue ranging from financial scams to neglect. All participants are encouraged to wear purple.

**Delaware**

The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services has created several public awareness tools to in recognition of World Day. According to Adult Protective Services Administrator Pamela Williams, on June 8th 12 elder abuse prevention billboards throughout the state’s three counties will be mounted, emphasizing that abuse hurts no matter the age of the victim. The billboards will be up for four weeks. Two posters have also been created to highlight World Day based on INPEA templates, including a call for action to wear purple in recognition of the day.

In addition, the Division of Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities and the Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly, based at the University of Delaware, will co-sponsor a second *Dine Out Against Elder Abuse*. The event has expanded to include multiple restaurants throughout New Castle County, including Grotto’s Pizza and Lamberti’s Cucina. Participating eateries will donate a portion of the receipts to support elder abuse outreach efforts. For more information on the event, email cpettrak@udel.edu.

**Minnesota**

Elder rights advocate Kevin Hansen recently updated NCEA on a conference taking place in Minnesota to observe World Day and strengthen community collaboration. The Minnesota Network on Abuse in Later Life, The ElderCare Rights Alliance, The William Mitchell College of Law Center for Elder Justice and Policy, and the Alzheimer’s Association (MN/ND), and many other state and community organizations are hosting “Building Community Partnerships.” The event will take place on Monday, June 15th, 9:00 -- 4:00 at William Mitchell College of Law Auditorium (Room 245), 875 Summit Avenue, in St. Paul. The goal of the event is to share multidisciplinary insights and enhance coordinated approaches to address elder abuse. A presentation on *The Vulnerable Adult Justice Project* will be among the featured topics. For more information, send an email to: jennifer.kirchen@state.mn.us.

**Vermont**

The Northeast Kingdom (NEK) Vulnerable Adult Action Coalition, a multidisciplinary team first funded through an NCEA Elder Justice Mini-Grant, is hosting a series of community awareness events in three locations throughout the region simultaneously. According to co-chair Lynn Goulding, the events will take place on June 15th, 2009, from 11 until noon. “Members of the Northeast Kingdom Vulnerable Adult Action Coalition will be present at each site to facilitate discussion, answer questions on elder abuse and provide information in various handouts, along with purple ribbons. We will host this event at two area senior centers/meal sites and the hospital in the community. Flyers and a press release will be distributed ahead of time as part of the promotional outreach for the event.” Vents will take place at The Good Living Senior Center (Main Street, St. Johnsbury); the Northeast Vermont Regional Hospital (St. Johnsbury); and the Lyndon Area Senior Meal Site at The Darling Inn (Broad Street, Lyndonville). For more information, email Lynn at LGOULDING@NEVAAA.ORG.

**Wyoming**

Dorothy Thomas, consultant for Woming APS, wrote about the state’s truly multifaceted and multigenerational efforts.

“We are honoring grandparents [who are] raising grandchildren for our Elder Abuse Awareness Day of celebration in Cheyenne. Other communities
within our state are also planning activities. We have a committee of partners which includes Legal Services, Victim Services, the Aging Division, the local Senior Center, Wyoming Kinship Advocacy, Community Action and the local Safehouse. Victim Services and Wyoming Legal Services, in partnership with others, are hosting a tea at the old governor's mansion. The senior center donated the food, Wyoming Kinship is providing the respite care for the grandchildren, and local merchants and AARP are donating gifts.

“We are also partnering with the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club to sponsor a contest whereby children can submit an essay, a poem, or a drawing of what their grandparents mean to them. Judging will be by local media volunteers, and prizes will be awarded. The children will then be invited to join us for the signing of the proclamation with the Governor on June 11.

“In addition we are ‘adopting’ the yards of two of the families raising grandchildren and with community volunteers and the support of the City we are doing yard clean up and repair as needed or within the context of what we can do.

“Finally, we have a banner that is rotated on city buses throughout the state so it is seen on all routes. It reads ‘Bring Elders Out of the Shadows....Elder Abuse Awareness Day June 15’. This is the third year we have used the banner."

Do you have state news to share?
NCEA E-News publishes a quarterly update on state programs, projects, and initiatives. Email the NCEA to spread the word on activities in your area.

Online Resources:

AARP’s Inside E Street
AARP's web TV show, Inside E Street, recently aired an episode entitled “License to Steal.” According to Naomi Karp of AARP, "The show focuses on power of attorney abuse, using the Brooke Astor case as a graphic example and featuring research and law reform efforts. Guests include Lori Stiegel, author of the AARP Public Policy Institute report Power of Attorney Abuse: What States Can Do About It; Linda Whitton, law professor and Reporter for the Uniform Power of Attorney Act; Bob Blancato, Elder Justice Coalition; Congressman Joe Sestak; and Meryl Gordon, author of Mrs. Astor Regrets.”

Special thanks to Ms. Karp for providing this update. To access the show, visit: http://www.aarp.org/aarp/broadcast/Inside_E_Street_License_to_Steal/
Additional resources on power of attorney abuse and other forms of financial exploitation can be found on the AARP web site at: http://www.aarp.org.

Annually, the Older Women’s League (OWL) observes Mother’s Day as a ‘call to action day’ to improve the well-being of older women. In conjunction with this effort, OWL releases a report highlighting a specific issue relevant to women’s health and well-being. In 2009, OWL dedicated the report to the issue of elder abuse.

Elder Abuse: A Women’s Issue provides information and insights on many facets of abuse against older women, including intimate partner violence and financial abuse. In addition to an overview of what we know of elder abuse as it impacts older women, the report highlights institutional abuse and
neglect, medication misuse and neglect, proposed legislation, and other issues.

OWL, the Voice of Midlife and Older Women, is online at:
http://www.owl-national.org

To access the report, visit:

**NCEA Media Moxie Webcast Online**

On April 30th, NCEA presented Media Moxie: Tips for Engaging the Media in the Fight Against Elder Abuse. The presentation featured a panel of journalists and communications experts providing field-tested recommendations for enlisting of media attention.

For those of you who missed the webcast, it is available from the NCEA website, along with the questions and answers document, at:

http://www.ncea.acl.gov/NCEARoot/Main_Site/Library/Events_Webcast/Events_Archive.aspx

INPEA is also creating a video highlighting global initiatives, including a clip from actor and advocate Ed Asner! For more information, go to:
http://sites.google.com/a/nicenet.ca/weaad2009/

**Join Us in the Fight Against Elder Abuse**

Visit the NCEA web site to obtain fact sheets, tip sheets, and other information on elder abuse and for suggestions on how to raise awareness in your community.

NCEA welcomes you to submit your ideas for elder abuse awareness and prevention. Please email them to ncea-info@aoa.hhs.gov.

**Funding Opportunities**

Following are recently announced scholarship, grant, and other funding opportunities.

**Model Approaches to Statewide Legal Assistance Systems**

The U.S. Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, “plans to award up to eleven (11) cooperative agreements to support eligible states (see below) in developing approaches that will maximize the use of federal, state, and other funds by incorporating the utilization of senior legal helplines and other low-cost legal services mechanisms into the state legal services planning and development process….Each cooperative agreement will be funded at a federal share of approximately $100,000 per year for a project period of three years, contingent upon the availability of federal funds. The intent of this announcement is to expand the Model Approaches to Statewide Legal Assistance Systems program.
(Model Approaches) beyond the initial thirteen states which have been awarded AoA funding under this program....”

- **Application deadline:** June 30, 2009
- **For more information:**
  [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Grants/Funding/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Grants/Funding/index.aspx)

### Helping Outreach Programs to Expand Grants

**Helping Outreach Programs to Expand** awards grants to improve outreach to, and services for, crime victims. Grassroots, nonprofit, community-based, and faith-based victim services organizations are among those eligible to apply.

- **Application deadline:** Open, dependent upon available funding.
- **For more information**

### Elder Abuse Research and Literature

The Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly (CANE, an NCEA grantee) maintains an annotated catalog of peer-reviewed literature on elder mistreatment and related issues. Here are the highlights of several recently published references.

Paranjape, A., Sprauve-Holmes, N., Gaughan, J. & Kaslow, N.

*Lifetime Exposure to Family Violence: Implications for the Health Status of Older African American Women*

Journal of Women’s Health
Vol. 18 (2), 171-175; 2009.

This research article discusses the impact of lifetime family violence on the health of African American women over the age of 50 in inner cities.

Interviews were conducted with 158 African American women aged 50 and up receiving outpatient services in an inner city public hospital. Data was collected on the violence experienced by women over the course of their adulthood using the “Family Violence in Older African American Women (FVOW) Scale.” The mental and physical condition of the participants were also measured. Among the notable results, it was found that significant family violence in adulthood is linked to poor mental and physical health compared to similar individuals who did not experience the same level of violence. Study limitations discussed include issues related to self-reporting, such as the possible underestimation of family violence. Among conclusions, it is noted that family violence history should be a consideration for physicians treating female patients.

Liao, S., Jayawardena, K., Bufalini, E. & Wiglesworth, A.

*Elder Mistreatment Reporting: Differences in the Threshold of Reporting Between Hospice and Palliative Care Professionals and Adult Protective Service*

Journal of Palliative Medicine
Vol. 12 (1), 64-70; 2009.

This study examines the differences in elder mistreatment reporting rates between hospice and palliative care (HPC) workers and Adult Protective Services (APS) workers in California. Fictional elder mistreatment case studies were distributed to 54 HPC professionals and 42 APS professionals. Participants rated how likely they would be to report the case, as well as how likely APS professionals would be to accept the case. Among results, APS workers appeared more likely to accept cases than HPC professionals were to report them. Only 37 percent of HPC professionals surveyed correctly understood the appropriate reporting agencies for abuse in long-term care.
facilities. Study limitations raised involve extrapolation from the geographic area studied.

Choi, N., Kim, J. & Asseff, J.  
*Self-Neglect and Neglect of Vulnerable Older Adults: Reexamination of Etiology*  
Journal of Gerontological Social Work  
Vol. 52(2), 171-187; 2009.

This research examined various types of elder neglect and self-neglect and their relationship to an elder or caregiver’s economic resources and the availability of social services. Five-hundred seventy-nine APS reports from Texas were analyzed. Study findings indicate that while cognitive disabilities and physical and functional dependence were major factors in neglect and self-neglect, poor economic resources, as well as minimum social services, were also greatly influential. Study limitations, such as possible issues with the representativeness of the sample for an overall aging population, are considered.

Hodell, E., Golding, J., Yozwiak, J., Bradshaw, G., Kinstle, T. & Marsil, D.  
*The Perception of Elder Sexual Abuse in the Courtroom*  
Violence Against Women  
Vol. 15(6), 678-698; 2009.

This article examines how mock jurors view elder sexual mistreatment. Prior research in the area of courtroom perceptions of various types of abuse are highlighted, such as findings that in cases of physical abuse or neglect, elders were seen to be believable witnesses. A higher willingness to convict among women was also noted. Two mock trial summaries were provided to 118 college students, along with a questionnaire regarding their evaluation of the two scenarios. The two scenarios differed in design in order to test differences in the effect of victim-perpetrator relationship (relative or stranger), as well as abuse environment (home or care facility). The questionnaire evaluated the mock juror perceptions of the believability of the elder, verdict decision, and confidence in this decision. Among the results, the elder was believed only to a moderate extent, and conviction rates were fairly low. In addition, further evidence that females are more willing to find alleged perpetrators guilty is noted. Crimes in nursing homes seemed to produce fewer guilty verdicts than in homes.

McCool, J., Jogerst, G., Daly, J. & Xu, Y.  
*Multidisciplinary Reports of Nursing Home Mistreatment*  
Journal of the American Medical Directors Association  
Vol. 10(3), 174-180; March 2009.

This research examines the perceptions and knowledge of nursing home employees in Iowa in regard to mandatory elder abuse reporting laws. A 28 item questionnaire was administered to 335 nursing home employees from two Iowa facilities. Forty nine individuals responded to the questionnaire, which queried the workers about demographics, experiences with abuse, and opinions about mandatory reporting laws. In addition, 22 individuals were interviewed. Among results, 53 percent of participants had suspected abuse of the elderly in their workplace yet approximately a third of these individuals did not report all suspected cases. The vast majority of the respondents had a correct understanding of Iowa reporting laws. Interviews uncovered four themes: the desire for greater education on elder abuse; uncertainty about whether to report; difficulties in reporting; and caregiver stress. Researchers suggest that good knowledge of reporting laws does not always ensure reporting of suspected cases. In addition, better education and structural reforms are advocated. Possible study limitations, such as low response rate, as well as problems with
generalizing from the demographic studied, are noted.

Special thanks to Dave Wihry of University of Delaware Center for Community Research and Service for compiling this update.

Calendar of Events

Now through June 18, 2009
Elder Abuse Information Piece
15-second video to be viewed as pre-movie trailer
Major metropolitan areas throughout US
Web site: http://ncea.acl.gov

June 15, 2009
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Global Observance
Web site: http://www.inpea.net

June 17-18, 2009
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Domestic Violence and a Disability: Assistive Technology
Embassy Suites Hotel
Altamonte, FL
Web site: http://www.fcadv.org
Telephone: 850 325-3208

June 22 – 24, 2009
National Center for Victims of Crime National Conference
Hyatt Regency Washington Capitol Hill
Washington, DC
Web site: http://www.ncvc.org

July 5, 2009
My World...Your World...Our World...Free of Elder Abuse
Paris, France

July 15-17, 2009
Illinois Department on Aging's 23rd Annual Elder Rights Conference
Lincolnshire Marriott Resort
Lincolnshire, IL
Web site: http://www.ipha.com

July 19 –22, 2009
N4a Annual Conference and Trade Show: Highlighting INNOVATIONS in Aging
Minneapolis, MN
Web site: http://www.n4a.org

August 24-26, 2009
2009 Florida Conference on Aging
Trade Winds Island Resort
St. Pete Beach, Florida
Web site: http://www.fcoa.org
Telephone: 850-222-8877

September 21 - 26, 2009
Institute on Violence, Abuse & Trauma: 14th International Conference on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma
Town and Country Resort and Convention Center
San Diego, California
Email: ivatconf@alliant.edu
Web site: http://www.ivatcenters.org
**September 30-October 2, 2009**
National Professional Training Conference on Responding to Crime Victims with Disabilities
Hyatt Regency Denver Convention Center
Denver, Colorado
[http://www.register123.com](http://www.register123.com)

**October 27 – 30, 2009**
20th Annual NAPSA Conference/26th Annual Texas APS Conference
El Tropicano Holiday Inn
San Antonio, Texas
Email: APSConference@dfps.state.tx.us
Web site: [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)
Telephone: 210-223-9461

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**Credits and Contact Information**

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