



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Connecticut Commission on Aging, Earth's Elders Foundation Offer State's Schools a Unique New Curriculum

HARTFORD—The Earth's Elders Foundation and Connecticut Commission on Aging are collaborating on a unique project that offers schools a new curriculum designed to foster intergenerational respect and understanding.

The foundation, based in Kent, Conn., strives to raise consciousness about America's elderly and to bring the very young into contact with the very old through in-school programs that foster intergenerational activities.

The foundation's founder, Jerry Friedman, traveled the world interviewing and photographing "super centenarians"—people at least 110 years old. The photos and interviews appear in a book entitled "Earth's Elders: The Wisdom of the World's Oldest People."

The Commission on Aging and Earth's Elders Foundation presented a month-long exhibit of the 62 life-size photographs during June to kick-off the statewide effort introducing the new educational initiative.

"We are thrilled to work with the Earth's Elders Foundation to bring this inspirational and educational program to Connecticut," said Connecticut Commission on Aging Executive Director Julia Evans Starr. "The foundation and the commission have the same ultimate goal—to improve the quality of life for older adults."

Friedman collaborated with professors from New York's Bank Street College of Education to develop a school curriculum for elementary and high school students that encourages the young to interact with older adults.

The curriculum features innovative ways to learn about history, geography, health and ethics by exploring original family documents and engaging family and community elders to create oral histories.

Successful pilot programs were introduced during the 2005-2006 school year in a small group of public and independent schools in New York City and Westchester, N.Y.

"It's very gratifying for the foundation to offer the educational component of our work to schools in our home state," said Friedman.

To learn more about the program, call the Connecticut Commission on Aging at (860) 240-5200.

The commission is the non-partisan, independent state agency solely devoted to advocacy for older adults. It serves as an objective source of information and works directly with the state legislature, executive branch and other state agencies to shape effective public policy.

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