# THE SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE OLDER PERSON'S AGENDA

**UPDATE NO.3** **JUNE 2003**

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Queen Margaret University College
EDINBURGH

From Margaret and Belinda: Welcome to Update No. 3 of the work of the Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda (OPA Initiative). We were delighted to welcome a new member of staff to the Centre in April. Chris Jones has joined us and will be working 3 days per week on the 'Recipe for Life' project and one day per week on other Centre projects. Chris, who was formerly an occupational therapist, has a wealth of experience in research and development, particularly that which focuses on inclusive approaches. We look forward to working with her over the coming years.

## NEW PROJECTS

### DEVELOPING A NEW SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

**Contributed by Belinda Dewar, OPA Initiative**

We were delighted to receive funding from the Scottish Executive and the ESRC for a Teaching Company Scheme (TCS) Associate who will be involved in a 30 month collaborative project between OPA and Outlook Housing Ltd. TCS is a Government scheme which helps companies and charitable organisations access the knowledge and skills within the UK's "Knowledge Base" (i.e. universities, research centres). In particular, the scheme helps companies to undertake strategic growth projects. The aim of our project is to develop and pilot a new short-term rehabilitative care service designed to meet the changing care requirements for older people and to provide a sustainable service model on which Outlook Housing Ltd. can base its future.

A successful TCS programme will enable Outlook to establish a pilot 'Revolving Door' service, and demonstrate it as a sustainable care model which can be rolled out as a new service in one or more purpose built units.

We hope to appoint a graduate to this post in June of this year. For more information about this project please contact Belinda Dewar - bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk
0131 317 3575

### 'RECIPE FOR LIFE': HELPING OLDER PEOPLE WHO LIVE ALONE TO EAT WELL

**Contributed by Chris Jones, OPA Initiative**

As we get older, a number of things can lead to us not eating well. In some cases, it may not be easy to get to the shops. In other cases we may have developed an illness or disability which makes it difficult for us to cook or enjoy our food. If we live alone, we may not feel it is worthwhile cooking a meal for one. However, a poor diet can have a major impact on an older person's ability to stay well and in control of their own life.

The Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda at Queen Margaret University College is working with

the Dementia Services Development Centre at University of Stirling and with Age Concern Scotland, on a project called 'Recipe for Life', the aim of which is to help older people who live alone to eat well. The project is funded by Zurich Financial Services Community Trust under their 'Zurich Cares Older People Programme' and our Advisory Group for the project includes in its membership four lay older people.

**Through the project we hope to:**

- gain a better understanding of the many factors that can lead to an older person who lives alone not eating well;
- gain an understanding of the issues facing organisations which provide meals for older people;
- learn about positive policies and good practice ideas that are operating nationally and internationally; and
- discover some solutions to the problems older people face when trying to eat well.

**We will do this by:**

- speaking directly to older people who live alone;
- hearing the views of carers;
- meeting with professionals who are responsible for assessing older people's nutrition needs and arranging or delivering services;
- making contact with organisations that have found creative ways to help older people to eat well; and
- working closely with three service providers that want to find better ways to meet the needs of older people.

We have been reading widely around the subject, making initial contacts, and are currently setting up a database of people and organisations with an interest in helping older people to eat well. We will be sending out regular project updates to the people on this database.

**Please get in touch if you:**

- would like to know more about the project
- have any information that would help the project
- would like to receive regular project updates.

Contact: Chris Jones, Project Development Officer at QMUC on 0131 317 3771 or at cjones@qmuc.ac.uk

**LAUNCH OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN OUTLOOK HOUSING LTD. AND OPA**

In November last year, together with a number of invited guests, we celebrated the launch of a unique and innovative partnership between Outlook Housing Ltd. and OPA. Our former Principal, Professor Joan Stringer, and the Chairman of Outlook Housing Ltd., Mr Stephen Fox, attended the launch and formally signed the Memorandum of Agreement. The aim of the collaboration is to bring together a well-established voluntary sector provider of services for older people and an academic institution with a broad diversity of subject interests of direct relevance to developing services with and for older people. We are already working together to develop a new service for older people - see first item under 'New Projects' above.

**WORKING TOGETHER: SIMULATED PATIENTS AND STUDENT NURSES**
**Contributed by Lynn Wallace, Nursing.**

The Centre has been active over the last year in supporting a simulated patient project being undertaken in Nursing. The project aims to provide students with realistic experiences of practising nursing skills in the safety of the college-based Nursing Skills Laboratory while working with volunteer 'simulated' patients. This process of interacting directly with lay people, instead of just with models, helps to build up the students' confidence and competence before they encounter patients in the 'real world' of clinical practice. This is being achieved through modules of learning which teach and assess students in key nursing skills such as blood pressure recording, urine testing, wound dressings and administering medicines. Volunteers from our course 'Education for Participation: the voices of Older People' have taken part in these simulated patient roles, both for the nursing classes and for Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) with first and third year nursing students.

The volunteers attended preparatory workshops in which patient scenarios and roles were discussed and developed along with the nursing lecturers. Margaret MacMillan, one of the simulated patient volunteers, said "I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would recommend more of the public take part, as these students are our future and should be supported and encouraged to continue in this valued work".

Another volunteer, Ishbel Morrison, commented, " I feel it benefits both sides. It's an opportunity for older people and young people to work productively together. You feel you are still contributing to the community. It has given me an insight into how younger people think. I get a lot out of what the students teach me; they have surprised me in how they look at things".

Margaret MacMillan and Ishbel Morrison were particularly interested in promoting the agenda for older people with hearing difficulties. They feel that by helping as simulated patients they are able to teach students what the real concerns and issues are.

Anybody interested in volunteering or knowing more about the Simulated Patients project should contact Lynn Wallace, Lecturer, Nursing, QMUC (Tel: 0131 317 3567, email: lwallace@qmuc.ac.uk)

**EDUCATION COURSES FOR OLDER PEOPLE**
**Contributed by Belinda Dewar, OPA Initiative**

We have been busy over the past few months developing and running courses for older people. The innovative course 'Education for Participation: Voices of Older People', to which staff from four different disciplines within QMUC contributed, and which ran successfully last year, has been funded this year by Lloyds TSB. Twenty people are currently attending the Leith Campus of QMUC to take part in one or more of the four modules on offer, which are: 'Drama for Democracy', 'Reviewing Documents', 'Having a voice in formal arenas', and 'Helping to hear the stories of older people'. We were delighted this time to be able to invite an older person who is a resident in a care home to join in the drama workshops.

In addition, Scottish Human Services Trust (SHS) and OPA have been working together to develop and deliver a set of four workshops which aim to promote the value and contribution of older people in Scotland through a course called 'Wisdom in Action'. Twenty older people and ten professionals from throughout Scotland have met at The Lighthouse in Glasgow to explore the way older people in Scotland are viewed, and to work together to clarify the role they can play in improving the way older people are supported.

In one of the early sessions we asked the group to develop posters depicting 'positive and negative reputations' of ageing. We had a lot of fun doing this.

Below is a poster from one of the groups.

**SHARE UPDATE**
**Contributed by Fiona O'May, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, QMUC**

The SHARE database continues to grow, and now has over 70 entries, covering a wide range of topics, with contributions from a wide range of organisations and individuals. The database is now accessible online, at http://www.qmuc.ac.uk/opa/share, and information can be entered and submitted from the website. As well as continuing to expand the database, both in terms of the number of entries, and the geographical area covered, we are now focusing on establishing the network element of SHARE.

For those who have already indicated an interest in joining, either via their database entries, or through direct contact, their details will be transferred and they will be registered on the network. For anyone wishing to join, registration can be done online, at the website http://www.qmuc.ac.uk/opa/share, or by contacting me at the address given below. In order to make the network a dynamic, informative and beneficial online community, we need as many people as possible to register and participate. So, please visit and browse the website - and send any queries or comments either online, or by contacting:

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**UPDATE ON MEETINGS**

Mental Health and Well-being of Older People in Scotland
Contributed by Belinda Dewar, OPA Initiative

In March, two older people associated with the Centre and I were invited by the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) and the Scottish Executive to attend a residential workshop in Stirling. The purpose of this workshop was to begin to explore the key mental health and well-being issues which will inform the development of a comprehensive national review of evidence, research, policy and practice. It was extremely hard work, but we had a lot of debate and fun and made some new contacts. We look forward to receiving the report from this workshop in the near future.

**INVOLVEMENT OF OLDER PEOPLE IN RESEARCH ACTIVITY IN SCOTLAND**
**Contributed by Belinda Dewar, OPA Initiative**

I met with colleagues from the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, HEBS, the Nuffield Centre for Community Care Studies, the Scottish School

for Primary Care and the Department of Social Work to discuss the issue of involvement of 'users' in research activity in Scotland. We hope to work together to map out what is currently happening in Scotland with a view to sharing ideas about good practice. We would really like to hear from anyone who knows about research projects that aim to work with older people.

Please contact Belinda Dewar bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk 0131 317 3575 or Heather Wilkinson h.wilkinson@ed.ac.uk 0131 651 1832

**AND FINALLY**
**WATCH THIS SPACE...**

**ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND SUPPORT FOR OPA**
**Contributed by Margaret Alexander and Belinda Dewar, OPA Initiative**

Some of you may have seen the intimation, publicised in a Press Release just before Christmas 2002, of the Royal Bank of Scotland's support for the Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda. This will provide, over a five year period, funding for a full-time Professor and Director of the Centre, together with supporting staff. We are currently working with senior management of the University College to complete the necessary preliminary protocols. Needless to say, we are excited and delighted about the Bank's recognition, not only of the work of the Centre thus far, but of the importance of the role of older people in our society. The Bank's support will ensure a growing local, national and international role for the Centre as it continues its commitment to working in partnership with older people, so that their voices and rich experience are heard and are effective in shaping services and in our society in many other ways too. A few examples of potential future activities of the Centre:

Collaboration with the Foundation of Nursing Studies on a project to work with health care practitioners to implement strategies that promote healthy ageing.

Collaboration with St Columba's Hospice to evaluate the implementation of an Integrated Care Pathway for end of life care across a number of care homes in Lothian.

**AND A LAST WORD:**

In April 2003, Maya Angelou was interviewed by Oprah Winfrey on United States television ... on her 70+ birthday. Maya is an amazing woman who has led an interesting and exciting life. Oprah asked her what she thought of growing older. And there, on television, she said it was "exciting". Regarding body changes, she said there were many occurring everyday... Like her breasts - they seemed to be in a race to see which will reach her waist, first. The audience laughed so hard they cried. Here are some thought-provoking and uplifting words from Maya:

*"When I was in my younger days, I weighed a few pounds less,*
*I needn't hold my tummy in to wear a belted dress.*
*But now that I am older, I've set my body free;*
*There's the comfort of elastic where once my waist would be.*
*Inventor of those high-heeled shoes my feet have not forgiven;*
*I have to wear a nine now, but used to wear a seven.*
*And how about those pantyhose- they're sized by weight, you see,*
*So how come when I put them on the crotch is at my knee?*
*I need to wear these glasses as the print's been getting smaller;*
*And it wasn't very long ago I know that I was taller.*
*Though my hair has turned to gray and my skin no longer fits,*
*On the inside, I'm the same old me, it's the outside's changed a bit.*

*But, on a positive note... I've learned that no matter what happens,*
*or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.*
*I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life.*

*I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life". I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.*

*I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone.*
*People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

THE QUEEN'S ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
2002