

Winter 2015

## **We Happy Few: Accomplishments in Calendar 2014**

By

Edward F. Ansello, Ph.D.

O.K., it is a stretch to cite Shakespeare's *Henry V* and the king's inspirational speech before Agincourt. But I am so encouraged by the initiative and resourcefulness of our VCoA staff in their diverse activities, and how so few can accomplish so much.

This past year our small staff worked meaningfully in confronting elder abuse and domestic violence in later life; building and improving lifelong learning opportunities across the Commonwealth for mid-life and older adults; delivering interprofessional geriatrics training for health care providers and measuring the impacts of this training upon the patients they care for; training clinical students to partner across professions to improve geriatrics care; developing and delivering education and training programs to audiences in state, regional, and national conferences and webinars on topics ranging from gerontological education to aging with lifelong disabilities, community health to interdisciplinary teamwork; partnering with other organizations to identify innovations in family caregiving; administering the most productive seed grant program for dementia research in the country; and more.

All through the year we partnered with other organizations, groups, and individuals to help make the work successful. There were, in fact, so many such partners as to preclude listing them. But, as the saying goes, "They know who they are" and we are grateful.

I asked our staff to identify their three proudest accomplishments in 2014. Here are just a few, sometimes combined by focal area:

**Bert Waters:** 1) Served as core faculty for the VCU Donald W. Reynolds Interdisciplinary Partnership in Geriatric Education, being a preceptor for over 60 students from Social Work, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Medicine in the Interprofessional Virtual Geriatrics Case, a semester-long, web-based case system to overcome barriers to interprofessional education; 2) Co-authored two presentations for the federally-funded Richmond Health and Wellness Program (directed by Pam Parsons, Nursing, and Patty Slattum, Pharmacy) at the All Together Better Health, VII: The 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Interprofessional Practice and Education, in Pittsburgh, PA in June, 2014. The presentations were titled: *Social Acceptance: Working with Community Members in an Interdisciplinary Community Health Model*, and *Evaluating the Financial Sustainability of the Richmond Health and Wellness Program*.

**Paula Kupstas, Ruth Anne Young, and Lisa Furr:** 1) Our Domestic Violence in Later Life (V-STOP) project was among six Violence Against Women Act-funded programs from Virginia recognized in the White House report, *I is 2 Many: Twenty Years Fighting Violence Against Women and Girls*, thanks to our nomination by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. VCoA's Lisa Furr was quoted in the report; 2) Four partners from the Central Virginia Task Force on Domestic Violence in Later Life delivered the eight-hour Elder Abuse Training for Law Enforcement to 32 participants from eight different localities at the Henrico Training Center; this was a concentration of a normally two-day training and it received very strong evaluations; 3) Completed all of the trainings required by our USDOJ OVW grant which is focused in Bristol, and Washington County in far Southwest Virginia, including two basic trainings on abuse in later life for law enforcement, two basic abuse in later life victim services trainings, and one advanced law enforcement training on financial exploitation; **The community now has 26 victim and aging services professionals and 39 law enforcement professionals who have received basic training in how to apply these key points to their work in addressing abuse in later life. Twenty additional professionals added the advanced law enforcement training to their credentials as well;** 4) Completed the community needs assessment required by the OVW grant and identified three needs to propose to OVW for funding: an abuse in later life specialist position to be created, an emergency fund for victims of abuse in later life, and a coordinated shelter program with the facilities to assist victims who need emergency housing and have caregiving needs.

**Sung Hong:** 1) Published (with Connie Coogle) a critical review in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology* that prominently featured the ARDRAF and its administration by VCoA. The study began with an examination of Dr. Toni Calasanti's 2003 ARDRAF-funded project report, *Gender Differences in Informal Care Work for Persons with Alzheimer's Disease*, and her ensuing published articles. A literature review through the deductive process determined that her core thesis of caregiving as a gender-based tiered entity remained quite plausible in the literature throughout the subsequent years; 2) Completed the compilation "Violations of regulations in assisted living facilities with special care units in Virginia," which reveals the relative magnitude of citations by inspectors during the past 30 months, and may provide long-term care professionals and advocates with insights into the administration/operation of dementia care facilities.

**Jenni Matthews and Myra Owens:** 1) Provided an online environment for the Virginia Geriatric Education Center (VGEC) Faculty Development Program in Blackboard to facilitate scholar/faculty communication and centralize course materials for participants; 2) Presented a research poster at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Southern Gerontological Society in Arkansas demonstrating how we measured the collaborative success of the VGEC consortium; 3) Collaborated with Connie Coogle, NTACC, the Maine GEC, and others in conceiving and writing a manuscript about our Evidence Based Practice (EBP) program on falls prevention and intervention, which has been accepted for publication; 4) Reviewed, with Connie Coogle and

Lewis Hackett (EVMS), the de-identified medical records of 346 PACE participants to document the degree that healthcare practitioners in the VGEC EBP have adopted our protocols to reduce falls among community-based older adults.

**Jeffrey Ruggles, Catherine Dodson, and Rachel Kelly:** 1) Increased the number of Road Scholar programs conducted, from 22 in 2013 to 25 in 2014, and increased the number of participating Road Scholar learners, from 551 in 2013 to 673 in 2014, up 22%; 2) Established a new Road Scholar location for programs at Big Meadows Lodge in the Shenandoah National Park; 3) Regenerated our Road Scholar Genealogy program, with sufficient success to warrant multiple offerings annually; 4) Maintained the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) in Chesterfield County, founded and co-sponsored by the Virginia Center on Aging, Chesterfield County Public Schools, and Chesterfield County, for mid-life and older adults. In 2014, its 11th year of growth, the LLI had 734 members, including 191 new members; it offered 485 classes with 13,060 registrations in three full semesters of daytime, nonresidential, college-level courses and related activities, for 86,385 total classroom hours taught by 211 instructors; LLI's lifelong learners represent 29 different zip codes.

**Connie Coogle:** Worked, at the suggestion of the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission, to broaden the awareness and impact of the Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Research Award Fund (ARDRAF) by having the results of ARDRAF-funded projects (2008-2013) included in the International Alzheimer's Disease Research Portfolio, an online portal and database sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association; this process will help them (and the ARDRAF) better target funding efforts, identify gaps, and facilitate opportunities for collaborative research; using a Common Alzheimer's Disease Research Ontology, results revealed that ARDRAF funding aligns with the proposed revisions to the Commission's *Dementia State Plan: Virginia's Response to the Needs of Individuals with Dementia and their Caregivers* (Goal V.A.1); 2) Conducted follow-up surveys of previous ARDRAF awardees to determine their research trajectories and subsequent ARDRAF award-related funding, i.e., grants enabled by the results of their ARDRAF pilot study findings; determined that, since its inception in 1982, ARDRAF has solicited, third party-screened, and awarded \$3.33 million for Virginia-based pilot studies which have produced 275 research journal publications and \$36.7 million in subsequent non-state grants obtained, for a return on investment (ROI) of \$11 for every \$1 appropriated.

Lastly, **Ed Ansello:** 1) Conducted with partners in the Area Planning and Services Committee (APSC) on aging with lifelong disabilities both the annual statewide conference and November workshop on issues related to the well being of these adults and their family and formal caregivers; 2) Partnered with colleagues in the Lindsay Institute for Innovations in Family Caregiving, led by Senior Navigator and named for legendary geriatrician Dick Lindsay, in identifying high tech and low tech resources for those who shoulder the lion's share of long-term caregiving; 3) Celebrated the gift of having such dedicated and creative partners in the Virginia Geriatric Education Center (VGEC), our VCoA, the School of Allied Health Professions, and elsewhere across the Commonwealth. Thank you.