

# PA CREATIVE AGING INITIATIVE

*"Each of us in this room has a story to tell and when given the opportunity to have someone really listen and help record one's story and one's wisdom...transforming memories and life experiences into a variety of artwork...what a gift for all involved."*

*–Teresa Osborne, Secretary of Pennsylvania Department of Aging*



## WHAT IS CREATIVE AGING?

Creative Aging is an evidence-based arts program focused on skill building, mental wellness, creative expression and community building. It's healthy aging through participation in a creative process that helps people discover their own artistic possibilities.

## WHY NOW?

*Pennsylvania population is the fourth "oldest" state in the nation, with nearly 2.9 million individuals aged 60 and older, and more than 300,000 individuals aged 85 and older. By the year 2030, it is estimated that more than 3.6 million Pennsylvanians will be aged 60 and older.*

Many of Pennsylvania's older adults reside in the 48 counties (of Pennsylvania's 67) that are classified as rural. Many live alone and some live at or below poverty level. Others suffer from one or more chronic health conditions. Additionally, there are many who are at risk of abuse, neglect, abandonment, or exploitation.

Through outreach to its partners in the aging services network and, most importantly, to the consumers of its services and supports, the Department of Aging identified innumerable opportunities to address the needs of older Pennsylvanians. New goals will help the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enhance the current system and continue to serve older residents through a high-quality, cost-effective, responsive system that clearly makes Pennsylvania the best state in which to age.

## WHY THE ARTS ARE GOOD FOR HEALTHY AGING

Creative aging focuses on the role of the arts in enhancing the quality of life for older adults. In 2006 a national research project was conducted by Gene Cohen, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the Center on Aging, Health & Humanities at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The study, titled "The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults," demonstrated that professionally conducted, sequential arts-



Lee Skyward, class participant at  
LifeWorks Erie

learning programs promoted better health and disease prevention among older adults who actively engaged in them.

Despite the fact that people who span different generations have varying life experiences, cultural references, and exposure to educational opportunities, they all share the same very human needs: to create, convene, learn, and express themselves. *The arts are the perfect lens through which older adults may explore life and share their personal experiences with others.*

## ABOUT THE LEAD AGENCIES



The **Pennsylvania Department of Aging** leads the way in safeguarding and enhancing the lives of older Pennsylvanians, their families, and caregivers throughout the commonwealth. The

Department's mission is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of older Pennsylvanians by empowering diverse communities, the family, and the individual. At its foundation are prevention and protection: 1) Prevention from instability in health and well-being that may result in institutional care and dependence on government aid. 2) Protection from abuse, neglect, abandonment, and exploitation.



The **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA)** is a state agency charged with fostering the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts and broadening the availability and appreciation of those arts throughout the state. It strives to make the arts available to all

Pennsylvanians so they may enjoy the various benefits that can be gained from a vibrant arts infrastructure.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Take the **Creative Aging Arts Program** online training module accessed through the Long Term Living Training Institute's website [www.ltlttrainingpa.org](http://www.ltlttrainingpa.org). Just create an account to access the free training. Each module takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. For assistance or questions about the training, please contact Carmen Toro at [ctoro@pa.gov](mailto:ctoro@pa.gov) or 717-214-7507.



For help identifying arts resources and for creative aging planning assistance, contact the PCA's AIE Director, Jamie Dunlap, at [jadunlap@pa.gov](mailto:jadunlap@pa.gov) or 717-525-5542.

To learn more about Pennsylvania Department of Aging's Bureau of Aging Services opportunities and resources please call (717) 772-1221 or email [RA-paagingservices@pa.gov](mailto:RA-paagingservices@pa.gov)