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# A Study of Educational Resources Available to Older Adults in Norfolk, Virginia

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A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
AVAILABLE TO OLDER ADULTS  
IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

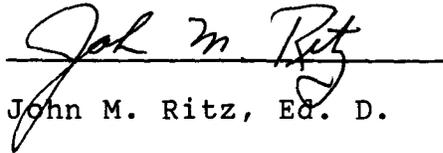
A Research Paper  
Presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies  
at Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for  
the Master of Science in Education Degree

By  
Dolores E. McFarland  
August 1993

This research paper was prepared by Dolores E. McFarland under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in Problems in Education, OTED 636. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education.

APPROVAL BY:

  
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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

As the older adult population expands in the United States in a period of technological, economic, and demographic changes, resources must be increased to meet the diverse educational needs of that population. More adults over fifty are in need of retirement and vocational counseling as a result of a longer life expectancy, high unemployment, and economic uncertainty. Due to the wonders of modern medicine and improved health practices, human life expectancy is now around 76 years. In light of this, it is ironic that many employers are using early retirement plans in a time in which more older adults are capable of longer working lives. More older adults need to update job skills or learn new vocational skills to re-enter the workforce or to become self-employed. Also, attention must be given to those older adults who need survival or literacy skills. A wide range of educational resources would benefit this population.

Educational resources are currently being provided to older adults by the public school system, other educational institutions, organizations, and community groups in Norfolk, Virginia as in many other communities. As the older population increases, one may expect an increase in the demand and type of educational services and activities offered in the city of Norfolk.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to identify and to describe educational resources available to adults fifty years and over in Norfolk, Virginia.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In an investigative survey of educational organizations and programs in Norfolk, the following questions were used as a guide to identify and describe educational resources available to adults fifty years and over.

1. What educational institutions and organizations in Norfolk provide learning activities and services to adults fifty years and over?
2. What types of educational activities are provided by each?
3. What other educational supportive services are provided by those groups?
4. How many participants are fifty years or over?

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

One may follow the growth of older adult education through its history from an outgrowth of early adult education programs and as it grew out of the social movement of the 1960s. Since 1886, Norfolk Public Schools have organized educational activities for adults. Today, adults sixty years or older may enroll in tuition free classes.

During a time of social concern in the 1960s, there was an increasing awareness of the special needs of the

aging population. These needs were addressed in the White House Conference on Aging in 1961 and in 1971. Throughout the United States, educational interests of older adults increased with heightened interest in the field of gerontology.

Among other developments of the 1970s, the Elderhostel Program grew as a non-profit educational organization offering non-credit residential study programs at universities and colleges for people sixty years and over. Today, the program has even greater popularity. Programs are hosted by educational institutions around the world.

It has been stated that projections about demographic trends can increase understanding of the need for more educational opportunities, especially since one can expect future generations to be better educated and more likely to seek educational opportunities in later life (Lowy and O'Connor, 1986, p. 32). Furthermore, communities must take into account the dramatic increase in the aging baby boomers. It has been projected that by the year 2035, one out of every three citizens of the United States will be 65 years and older. This tremendous growth of the older adult population will have a profound impact on the educational institutions in this country and on the way society views the elderly. Resources must enhance educational opportunities for the benefits of easing the economic burden of a future society as well as for the benefit of the older adult. Improvements in education can improve the standard of living

or quality of life for older people. One research study has revealed that older adult participants in a wide variety of continuing education programs have reported an increased feeling of well-being and vitality (Panayotoff, 1993, p. 10). There are numerous benefits to justify these programs.

This study of educational resources goes beyond justifying need. It examines services, activities, and participation in relation to the census population of the age group in Norfolk. The study provides valuable information for older adults who seek educational opportunities and it is a foundation to measure future growth of older adult educational programs and services in Norfolk.

#### LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were noted in this research study:

1. Some older adult programs serve people 60 and over and not in the 50 to 59 age group which is also included in the definition of older adult.
2. This study may not have identified all organized educational resources in Norfolk serving older adults.

#### ASSUMPTIONS

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. A wide range of educational opportunities in Norfolk are available to older adults.
2. Older adult participation in educational activities are currently low compared to that of the younger

adult population.

3. More older adults will seek educational opportunities in the future.

#### PROCEDURES

Using leads from community resource directories and other information sources, schools, organizations, and other community agencies were contacted to obtain program descriptions and enrollment information. On-site visits were made to distribute and collect surveys from these sponsors of education. Population data was obtained from the most recent census study.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined to clarify the meanings of terms used in this study.

Educational Activity - An activity organized for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge, information, or skills.

Older Adult Student - An individual 50 years or over who participates in an educational activity.

Educational Gerontology - The study of the education of older adults or the participation of older adults in education.

Life Expectancy - The number of years a person can expect to live. The number is derived from an analysis of birth and death records and it takes into account effects of accidents and disease.

## SUMMARY

In Chapter I, the problem and goals of the study were introduced. The problem was to identify and to describe educational resources available to adults fifty years and over in Norfolk, Virginia. The remaining sections gave support for the value of the study and described procedures for collecting data. There is a need to investigate the availability of current educational resources to supply information to adults who seek educational opportunities and special services. The study is also of value to measure future growth of older adult educational programs and services.

In the following chapter, a review of the literature relating to the study was provided. Other chapters which follow include methods and procedures, findings, summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature was conducted to give support to the problem statement. Authorative writings related to the significance of the problem were reviewed. The literature served as a guide for identifying and describing programs and services which address specific educational needs of older adults. Furthermore, the literature revealed descriptions of some national educational programs which have affiliates in Norfolk, Virginia.

Although this study focused on programs and services provided by public institutions and other organizations, it is important to keep in mind that many older adults are capable of directing and carrying out their own learning activities. Researchers have studied the self-directed learning efforts of the elderly (Long, 1993, p. 1). Learning efforts may be seen from a broader perspective to include such activities as travelling and watching educational television. Also, from the broad perspective, one may view libraries and self-help groups as educational resources. Nevertheless, more older adults could learn how to improve their skills in directing their own learning activities. In an Educational Gerontology article entitled "Broadening Perspectives on Learning Activities in Later Life", the author, Barbara Clough writes the following about how educators can enhance self-directed learning:

As educators, we are challenged to shift our focus from a narrow band of institutionally sponsored educational programs to a broader range of activities that includes community-based, media-sponsored, and self-directed activities. This requires collaborative efforts among educators, older learners, and community organizations. (Clough, 1992, pp. 456-457).

To supplement self-directed efforts, educational resources are necessary to meet specific needs of older adults. The purposes of programs and services help to identify needs. Jerold W. Apps identifies four major purposes of adult education (Apps, 1992, pp. 13-17). These purposes are to help people acquire tools for survival, to help people discover a sense of meaning in their lives, to help people learn to learn, and to help communities provide a better environment for residents.

#### Educational Needs of Older Adults

Five categories of educational needs were identified by H.Y. McClusky while developing background material for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. "Needs" refer to something required to survive, to maintain health, or to grow. Five categories of educational needs have been identified as coping needs, contributive needs, influence needs, expressive needs, and transcendental needs.

The basic educational need for coping is essential to survival and security. In their book, Why Education in the Later Years?, Louis Lowy and Darlene O'Connor indicated that

coping needs are fulfilled through educational activities such as literacy training, vocational training, and wellness programs. Also, educational activities can contribute to the older adult's increased personal, social, and financial security by helping them to learn more about crime prevention, legal rights, housing regulations, and benefit programs. Certainly, older adults facing problems as a result of low income, illness or inadequate shelter require assistance in meeting basic needs through education which enhances basic survival skills. Programs are needed to empower older adults as addressed in the following statement by Lowy and O'Connor:

Despite the fact that most older people have already demonstrated their ability to cope, many do need these types of skills to solve specific problems. Education for physical fitness, consumer training, skills in accessing the aging network, identifying and promoting personal needs and interests, as well as recognizing and seizing opportunities to improve their lives can result in older adults learning vital empowerment strategies (Lowy and O'Connor, 1986, p. 69).

Education for survival also includes helping older adults attain technical and marketable skills or help in finding new ways to earn money.

Harootyan and Felman in "Lifelong Education, Lifelong Needs: Future Roles in an Aging Society" also discussed McClusky's five categories of educational needs. They wrote...

In a background paper for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging and in subsequent

writings, McClusky described a specific set of older persons' needs that could be addressed through learning experiences. These include coping (i.e., the skills that are required for functioning in society), expressive needs (i.e., enjoyment of the activity itself), contributive needs (i.e., being of service to others), influence needs (i.e., becoming an agent of change to enhance the well-being of society), and the need for transcendence (i.e., a sense of fulfillment). Placed on a continuum from more basic to higher order needs, these dimensions correspond to Maslow's hierarchy (Harootyan and Feldman, 1990, p. 352).

The 1992 revised Amendments to the Commonwealth of Virginia Adult Education Four-Year Plan is a document that does not specifically address the older adult learner or their program needs, however, it refers to various "delivery systems" of adult education programs such as adult learning centers and workplace education training. From the 1990 census, the document reported that 987,203 adult Virginians have less than a high school education. Furthermore, it stated the following on the state's mission regarding adult education:

The mission of Virginia adult education involves providing quality, accessible learning opportunities that respond to the varying needs of the 987,203 adults who want to make a contribution to Virginian society but need improved basic skills to do so (p. v).

The document referred to the National Literacy Act of 1991 (P. L. 102-73) as having a strengthening role nationally as well as in Virginia.

## National Programs and Educational Needs

There are large national educational programs which address any number of the five categories of educational needs which were previously discussed in this chapter. They are affiliated with programs in Norfolk as well as in other cities throughout the United States. Elderhostel and Laubach Literacy Action are also known internationally.

In the book, Why Education in the Later Years?, Lowy and O'Connor described Elderhostel as a program for older adults which focuses on "the expressive and, in some cases, transcendental needs of its students" (Lowy and O'Connor, 1986, p. 81). This program includes short term liberal arts and other classes. Another description states that "Elderhostel...sponsors low cost, non-credit study programs at more than 1,500 colleges, universities, and other educational and cultural institutions in the United States and around the world" (Goldfield, 1991, p. 14). Lowy and O'Connor, referred to its growth rate and stated "that it fills an apparent void for such learning experiences among older adults" (Lowy and O'Connor, 1986, p. 81). Scholarships are available and a formal education is not needed to enroll.

In giving an example of an educational program which addresses contributive needs, Lowy and O'Connor refers to the tax counselor's program in which older adults receive training to help their peers with income tax return preparation. The Internal Revenue Service, the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Retired Teachers' Association are

known to work together with the program.

As stated previously, literacy training programs provide basic survival skills for fulfilling coping needs. Three national programs are Laubach Literacy Action (LLA), the Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. The Contact Center, Inc. (Lincoln, Nebraska) offers informative brochures which describes programs and statistics on literacy. The brochure entitled "Literacy Questions and Answers: General Facts" stated that 32 percent of the "non-readers" in our country are over sixty years of age. Also, it stated that "75 percent of unemployed adults have reading and writing difficulties". Another brochure on volunteering describes Laubach Literacy Action as the United States program division of Laubach Literacy International, a non-profit organization. It was founded in 1955. The focus of this organization is on providing training for student/tutor pairs. The Tidewater Literacy Council is affiliated with Laubach Literacy Action. The federally sponsored Adult Basic Education Program has been developed through the cooperation of public school systems such as Norfolk Public Schools. The purpose of the ABE program is to provide basic education to adults who have less than a ninth grade education as stated in a Norfolk Public Schools brochure. English as a Second Language (ESL) is a free program available to non-English speaking adults. It provides instructions in speaking, reading, and writing. Communities must consider diversity in learning needs.

## The Impact of Demographic Change

Huey B. Long addressed the consequences of demographic change and the higher educational background of Baby Boomers. He described Baby Boomers as the large population of Americans born between 1946 and 1960. Of course, this group will create a great increase in the older population. As stated in his article, "Educational Gerontology: Trends and Developments in 2000 - 2010", "national governmental policies and institutional services will increasingly reflect the number of Baby Boomers joining the retired, semiretired, and active elderly" (Long, 1990, p. 319). Furthermore, he pointed out that more institutions of higher learning are "expanding the variety and character of their educational programs for older adults" (Long, 1990, p. 319). This institutional change is also related to the decline in numbers of the traditional younger population in colleges and universities. Educational resources will be required to meet the educational needs of a much larger and more educated aging population. For as stated by Harootyan and Feldman in "Lifelong Education, Lifelong Needs: Future Roles in an Aging Society", "a lifelong approach to education assumes that persons will continue to learn in formal and informal ways, covering a spectrum of instrumental and expressive needs, throughout the course of a lifetime" (Harootyan and Feldman, 1990, p. 351).

## SUMMARY

The review of the literature has provided evidence related to the study of identifying and describing resources which address specific educational needs of older adults in Norfolk, Virginia. The next chapter presents the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze information in this research study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter will present information on methods and procedures used to collect and analyze information for identifying and describing educational resources available to adults fifty years and over in Norfolk, Virginia. Included are sections on population, instrument design, and data collection.

#### POPULATION

The population for this study included sponsors of education for older adults. All sponsors are located in Norfolk, Virginia. The population included Elderhostel, Norfolk Senior Center, SEVAMP (Southeastern Virginia Area-wide Model Program, Inc., Senior Services), The Ghent Venture, Jewish Community Center of Tidewater, American Association of Retired Persons, The Resource Center of Sentara Leigh Memorial Hospital, Norfolk Public Schools, Tidewater Literacy Council, Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, and Virginia Wesleyan College. To distribute and to collect surveys, the researcher made on-site visits to sponsors.

#### INSTRUMENT DESIGN

In constructing the survey, a combination of closed and open form questions were used. Designated respondents were not only asked to check those educational activities and services provided, but to also indicate the number of parti-

participants served under fifty years of age, fifty to fifty-nine, and sixty years and over. Also, the respondents were given instructions to write under "other", any activity, class, or service provided and not listed on the survey. A cover letter was attached to each survey and it explained the purpose of the survey. A sample survey is exhibited in Appendix A, and a sample cover letter is exhibited in Appendix B.

#### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The surveys were distributed on May 28, 1993 with instructions to expect collection of completed forms on June 7, 1993. Follow-up telephone contact was made a few days prior to the deadline. A follow-up letter was sent if the survey was not received by June 7, 1993. The responses were tabulated and summarized in narrative as well as in figures and tables. The mean participation rate will be determined.

#### SUMMARY

In Chapter III, the population surveyed, the design of the survey, and the data collection process were discussed. The proceeding chapter presents the findings which will be followed by the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The problem of this study was to identify and to describe educational resources available to adults fifty years and over in Norfolk, Virginia. Questionnaires were hand delivered or mailed to twenty-nine educational and community organizations located in Norfolk. Nineteen respondents or 65.5% returned completed questionnaire forms. Responses to the survey questions were compiled, analyzed and summarized for this chapter.

#### GROUPS PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

In response to survey questions, nineteen groups gave information identifying educational programs and services which they currently offer in Norfolk. All nineteen groups sponsor educational resources that are available to older adults. As listed in Tables 1 and 2, these groups have been identified as:

1. Tidewater Literacy Council
2. Endependence Center, Inc.
3. Norfolk Skills Center
4. Norfolk Technical Vocational Center
5. Madison Career Center
6. Virginia Wesleyan College
7. Old Dominion University
8. Community Outreach at Old Dominion University
9. Tidewater Community College (Norfolk Center)
10. The Ghent Venture
11. William A. Hunton Y.M.C.A.
12. SEVAMP Nutrition Program
13. Norfolk Senior Center
14. Chrysler Museum
15. Jewish Community Center of Tidewater
16. Jewish Family Service of Tidewater
17. Norfolk Botanical Garden
18. Norfolk Public Library (Kirn)
19. Educational Opportunity Center

Ten other groups were contacted for participation in the survey, however, they did not respond as requested.

#### PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Tables 1 and 2 show diversity in the types of educational activities and supportive services provided by those groups which responded to the survey. One may examine the types of activities and services that were sponsored by the groups.

Recreation and fitness programs, as well as wellness programs were reported the most by groups responding to the survey. The seven groups which reported that they sponsor recreation, fitness and dance programs were:

1. Madison Career Center
2. Old Dominion University
3. Community Outreach at Old Dominion University
4. The Ghent Venture
5. William A. Hunton Y.M.C.A.
6. Norfolk Senior Center
7. Jewish Community Center of Tidewater

A major sponsor of recreation and fitness programs did not respond to the survey. Of the seven above that did respond, Madison Career Center was the only one not to offer a wellness program. The Norfolk Center of Tidewater Community College did offer a wellness program.

Six groups reported that they offer craft classes. These groups were the Norfolk Senior Center, Norfolk Botanical Garden, Hunton Y.M.C.A. Jewish Community Center, Ghent Venture, and Old Dominion University.

Literacy training was offered by five groups. These groups were Tidewater Literacy Council, Endependence Center, Community Outreach Center, Hunton Branch Y.M.C.A. and Jewish Community Center. The Tidewater Literacy Council gives a screening test for vision problems as well as a pre-test to determine the student's reading level. Endependence Center offers special education to those who are deaf or blind. English as a Second Language was offered by Madison Career Center, Old Dominion University, Tidewater Community College and Jewish Community Center.

Norfolk Senior Center, Ghent Venture, SEVAMP Nutrition Program and Elderhostel through Community Outreach offer programs specifically for older adults. The Norfolk Senior Center and Ghent Venture offer art instruction, consumer education programs, safety education, tours and travel programs and personal improvement programs in addition to those previously mentioned in this study. Also, Ghent Venture offers foreign languages, car maintenance and financial management. Outside of college programs, Ghent Venture was the only group offering creative writing classes. SEVAMP offered a volunteer training program for older adults.

Other volunteer training programs were offered by Chrysler Museum. Hunton Branch Y.M.C.A., Jewish Family Service and Botanical Garden as indicated in Table 1. At the Chrysler Museum, older adults received training to work as volunteer guides or docents.

Vocational training programs were also represented in this study by Tidewater Community College, Madison Career Center, Norfolk Technical Vocational Center and Norfolk Skills Center. Although their programs are open to adults of all ages, older adults were not enrolled at Norfolk Skills Center and Norfolk Technical Vocational Center. Both programs are administered through Norfolk Public Schools.

A variety of educational services were reported by the groups (Table 2). Eight groups offered information and referral services. These groups were:

1. Endependence Center
2. Norfolk Skills Center
3. Old Dominion University
4. Tidewater Community College (Norfolk Center)
5. SEVAMP Nutrition Program
6. Norfolk Senior Center
7. Jewish Family Service of Tidewater
8. Educational Opportunity Center

Seven groups reported that they offer library services. Old Dominion University, Virginia Wesleyan College, Tidewater Community College Center, and William A. Hunton Y.M.C.A. offer computer lab services.

#### OLDER ADULT PARTICIPATION

Ten organizations reported current enrollment data by age group (Table 3). The mean participation rate was 26% among adults fifty years and over.

The Tidewater Literacy Council in Norfolk trained nine adults who were fifty years or older. This was 9.9% of the group's total enrollment as shown in Table 3.

ADULT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS	PROGRAMS																							
	Literacy	Spec. Ed.	ABE Classes	ESL Classes	High School	GED Test Review	Vocational	College Programs	Personal Improv.	Art Instruction	Craft Classes	Music Ed.	Rec. & Fitness	Horticulture	Consumer Ed.	Wellness	Bible Study	Creative Writing	Genearl. & Hist.	Tours & Travel	Safety Ed.	Other	Volunteer Train.	
1. Literacy Council	X																							
2. Endependence Center	X	X		X											X							X		
3. Norfolk Skills Center				X			X							X										
4. Tech. Vocational Ctr.						X	X							X										
5. Madison Career Ctr.				X	X	X	X		X				X											
6. Va. Wesleyan College								X													X			
7. Old Dominion Univ.									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
8. Community Outreach (Old Dominion Univ.)									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
9. TCC-Norfolk Center				X											X									
10. Ghent Venture				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
11. Hunton YMCA	X												X											
12. Sevamp Nutrition Prog.	X																							
13. Norfolk Senior Center		X	X	X									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
14. Chrysler Museum	X	X																						
15. Jewish Community Ctr.													X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
16. Jewish Family Service	X																							
17. Botanical Garden	X												X											
18. Kirn Library																					X			
19. Educational Opport. Ctr.																					X			

TABLE 1

ADULT EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS	SERVICES													
	Academic Counsel.	Career Counsel.	Financial Aid C.	Mental Health C.	Retirement C.	Tuition Waiver	Testing Services	Tutorial Assist.	Job Placement	Library Services	Computer Lab	Health Services	Info. & Referral Social Services	Other
1. Literacy Council							X							X
2. Endependence Center													X	
3. Norfolk Skills Center		X	X				X		X	X			X	
4. Tech. Vocational Center									X					
5. Madison Career Center		X	X			X	X							
6. Va. Wesleyan College		X	X	X				X	X	X				
7. Old Dominion University		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			
8. Community Outreach (Old Dominion)												X		
9. TCC-Norfolk Center								X	X	X				
10. Ghent Venture														
11. Hunton YMCA								X		X				
12. SEVAMP Nutrition Program									X					X
13. Norfolk Senior Center											X			
14. Chrysler Museum														
15. Jewish Community Center														X
16. Jewish Family Service											X		X	
17. Botanical Garden									X	X				
18. Kirn Library									X	X				
19. Educational Opportunity Center													X	

TABLE 2

ENROLLMENT REPORTED FOR AGE GROUPS

SURVEY GROUPS	UNDER 50	50-59	60 & OLDER	TOTAL	% 50 & UP
Tidewater Literacy Council	82	5	4	91	9.9
Endeppendence Center	20	2	3	25	20.0
Norfolk Skills Center	300	0	0	300	0.0
Norfolk Technical Vocational Ctr.	639	0	0	639	0.0
Community Outreach (ODU)	1000	500	1400	2900	65.5
Old Dominion University	15,264	373	95	15,732	2.9
Virginia Wesleyan College	1449	63*	1	1513	approx 4.2
Chrysler Museum (Education Dept.)	70	30	10	110	36.4
Hunton Branch Y.M.C.A.	75	10	9	94	20.2
The Ghent Venture	0	1	200	201	100.0

TABLE 3

University and college programs were represented in the study. For the age group fifty to fifty-nine, Old Dominion University reported that 373 students were currently enrolled while 95 were sixty years or over. Out of a total of 15,732 students, 2.9% of its student population are adults fifty years and over. For the current enrollment period, Virginia Wesleyan reported 63 students who were forty-five to fifty-nine years of age and 1 student who was sixty years or older. Out of a student population of 1513, 4.2% were over forty-five years of age.

Table 3 shows Community Outreach and Ghent Venture with the highest percentage of older adult participants. Community Outreach at Old Dominion University offers an Elderhostel program. Of the ten organizations that reported current enrollment data, only Ghent Venture reported that 100% of their participants were over fifty years of age.

At Norfolk Senior Center, all participants are over fifty years of age, however, enrollment was not available for the fifty to fifty-nine age group. It was reported that 1,462 participants were enrolled in educational programs at Norfolk Senior Center during the 1992 fiscal year.

As stated previously, vocational training programs and volunteer training programs were also represented in this study. Although Norfolk Technical Vocational Center reported that tuition waivers are available for students

sixty years and over, none of the students were over fifty years of age. Also, Norfolk Skills Center reported no students over fifty and a total enrollment of 300. Older adults represented 36.4% of the number of participants trained (see Table 3) as volunteer guides at the Chrysler Museum.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter presented the survey results from questionnaires returned by nineteen organizations sponsoring various adult education programs. Responses to the survey questions were compiled, analyzed and summarized to examine which educational activities and supportive services are provided by those groups. Some groups reported age group enrollment data which revealed how many participants are older adults. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem of this study was to identify and to describe educational resources available to adults fifty years and over in Norfolk, Virginia. The summary, conclusions, and recommendations are included in this final chapter.

#### SUMMARY

As the older population expands in a time of technological, economic, and demographic changes, programs and services should reflect the diverse educational needs of that population. This study was an attempt to examine those educational resources which have been currently provided in one locality.

In an attempt to examine those resources, a questionnaire was constructed and distributed to directors at twenty-nine educational institutions and community organizations for completion and return. The survey covered research goals to answer questions in this attempt to identify and describe current educational programs and services. What educational institutions and organizations in Norfolk provide learning activities and services to adults fifty years and over? What types of educational activities are provided by each? What supportive services are provided by those groups? How many participants are fifty years or over? Of course, as stated in a previous chapter, resources must enhance educational opportunities for the benefit of older adults as well as for the benefit of

easing the economic burden of a future society. Census studies for Norfolk reveal that the seventy and up age group is expected to rise from 10,755 in 1990 to 13,082 by the year 2000 as reported by Mr. Daniel G. Jones, Chief Economist in the Economic Information Services Division of the Virginia Employment Commission.

In addressing a limitation, one may note that the study didnot include all organizations (the population) providing educational resources to adults in Norfolk. Many of these organizations were requested to participate but did not respond even after follow-up contact.

Of the nineteen that responded, ten gave complete enrollment data to determine participation rates for older adults fifty years and older. A mean participation rate of 26% was determined among those rates.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions were reached in answering research questions addressed in this study:

1. What educational institutions and organizations in Norfolk provide learning activities and services to adults fifty years and over? Norfolk Senior Center, Ghent Venture, Elderhostel through Community Outreach at Old Dominion University, and SEVAMP Nutrition Program offer learning activities and services specifically for older adults. Also, educational resources are provided by Chrysler Museum, Hunton Branch Y.M.C.A.,

Tidewater Literacy Council, and other community groups and schools listed on page 17.

2. What types of educational activities are provided by each?

Table 1 lists educational activities for each group in the survey. Recreation and fitness programs, as well as wellness programs were reported the most by groups. Craft classes and literacy training were next in order. Also, the study revealed that Norfolk Senior Center and Ghent Venture offer art instruction, consumer education programs, safety education, tours and travel programs and personal improvement programs in addition to other activities. Outside of institutions of higher learning, Ghent Venture was the only group offering creative writing classes.

3. What other educational supportive services are provided by those groups? Table 2 lists educational services for each group in the survey. Eight groups stated that they offer information and referral services. Seven groups reported that they provide library services. Computer lab services are offered by Old Dominion University, Virginia Wesleyan College, Tidewater Community College Center, and William A. Hunton Branch Y.M.C.A. These educational services would enhance self-directed learning in older adults.

4. How many participants are fifty years or over? Among the ten organizations that reported current enrollment data by age group, the mean participation rate was 26% among adults fifty years and over. Older adults made up only 2.9% of

Old Dominion University's total student population. At Tidewater Literacy Council, older adults were 9.9% of the total enrollment. Ghent Venture reported that 100% of their participants were older adults. In Chrysler's educational program, 36.4% of the participants trained as volunteer guides were fifty years and over. Twenty and two-tenths percent of the Y.M.C.A. participants were older adults. Two vocational training groups reported that no older adults were enrolled in their programs. Enrollment figures are presented in Table 3.

Conclusions have been gathered from survey results. It appears that more older adults are participating in age segregated programs and community programs which encourage volunteer service. Also, it has been found that two vocational training programs in Norfolk are not reaching older adults. Unemployed adults fifty years and over could benefit from programs which help students to update job skills, to learn new vocational skills to re-enter the workforce or to become self-employed. Also, older adults in Norfolk could benefit from creative and life-story writing courses to fulfill expressive needs and to provide historical information.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the conclusions of this study:

1. A network of information and referral services should be utilized to recruit older adults for enrollment into the Norfolk Skills Center and the Norfolk Technical Vocational Center.
2. One may study the unemployment rate among older adults in Norfolk and conduct a survey of vocational training needs of that population.
3. The Norfolk Senior Center and other groups should offer creative writing and life-story writing courses for older adults.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A

A SURVEY OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

AVAILABLE TO OLDER ADULTS

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to provide information on current educational programs and services in Norfolk for older adults. Also, the study will provide a foundation for measuring future growth of educational resources.

DIRECTIONS: Please complete this questionnaire in reference to educational programs and services offered since March 1, 1993. The completed form will be collected on Monday, June 7, 1993.

1. Name of educational institution or community organization:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Complete address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please check any of the following educational programs offered by your organization:

A \_\_\_\_\_ Literacy Training

B \_\_\_\_\_ Special Education Programs

C \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Basic Education (ABE) Classes

D \_\_\_\_\_ English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes

E \_\_\_\_\_ High School Diploma Program

F \_\_\_\_\_ General Education Development (GED) Test Review Classes

G \_\_\_\_\_ Vocational and Technical Training (programs that teach job skills or lead to job advancement)

H \_\_\_\_\_ College Programs

I \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Improvement Programs

J \_\_\_\_\_ Art Instruction

K \_\_\_\_\_ Craft Classes

L \_\_\_\_\_ Music Education

M \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation, Physical Fitness, and Dance Programs

N \_\_\_\_\_ Horticulture Classes

O \_\_\_\_\_ Consumer Education Programs

P \_\_\_\_\_ Wellness and Health Education Programs

Q \_\_\_\_\_ Bible Study Classes

R \_\_\_\_\_ Creative Writing Classes

S \_\_\_\_\_ Genealogical and Local Historical Studies

T \_\_\_\_\_ Tours and Travel Study Programs

U \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Education Programs

V \_\_\_\_\_ Training for Volunteer Participation in Community Projects (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are any other educational programs offered which are not listed on the first page of this survey form?
- A  No
- B  Yes (please list): \_\_\_\_\_
- 
5. Please check any of the following services offered:
- A  Academic Counseling
- B  Career Counseling
- C  Financial Aid Counseling
- D  Tuition Waiver for Adults 60 Years and Over
- E  Testing Services
- F  Tutorial Assistance
- G  Job Placement Services
- H  Library Services
- I  Computer Lab
- J  Health Services
- K  Information and Referral Services
- L  Social Services
- M  Mental Health Counseling
- N  Retirement Counseling
6. Are any other services offered which are not listed above?
- A  No. There are no other services that are directly or indirectly related to education.
- B  Yes. Please list: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

DIRECTIONS: Please answer the following. Write "unknown" if the information is unavailable.

7. Total number of students or participants who are sixty (60) years and over: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Total number of students or participants who are fifty (50) to fifty-nine (59) years of age: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Total number of students or participants who are under fifty (50) years of age: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION.

Appendix B

P.O. Box 6364  
Chesapeake, VA 23323

May 28, 1993

Dear Director:

As a graduate student at Old Dominion University, I am currently conducting a research study to identify and to describe educational resources available to older adults in Norfolk, Virginia. The purpose of my study is to provide information for older adults who seek educational opportunities and to provide a foundation to measure future growth of older adult educational programs and services in Norfolk.

I would appreciate your cooperation with the completion of the attached survey form. As stated in the questionnaire, please report information on programs and services offered since March 1, 1993. Privacy is assured since I am not requesting personal information. I will collect the completed survey form on Monday, June 7, 1993. Without your help, I will not be able to complete the study. If you have further questions about the survey or the research study, feel free to call me at 485-8862.

In advance, thank you for your time and cooperation in helping me with this research endeavor.

Sincerely,



Dolores E. McFarland