

AGEISM AWARENESS

A Duke DPT Diversity Club and
Diversity & Inclusion Committee Newsletter



ACCORDING TO THE WHO AND UN:

2 BILLION

People will be over the age of 60 by 2050.

1.34 BILLION

People will be between 15 and 24 years old by 2050.

7.5 YEARS

Increase with life expectancy when one thinks positively about aging.

AGE·ISM

/'āj,izəm/

Ageism is the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age. Ageism is widespread and insidious practice which has harmful effects on the health of older adults. For older adults, ageism is an everyday challenge.

Overlooked for employment, restricted from social services, and stereotyped in the media, ageism marginalizes and excludes older and younger people in their communities."

“ A NEW AGEISM? THE FALLOUT FROM THE PANDEMIC

Has the coronavirus pandemic led to a surge in ageism in America? Of course it has. Ageism is described as “a prejudice against our future selves because you can die young or you can become old.” There has been more media attention on older people and aging. However, they have reinforced the notion that all of old age is frail and vulnerable. The pandemic is altering perceptions on aging and we have to be careful not to overgeneralize populations. Ageism is a public health crisis that deserves to be addressed.

Here is a link to the virtual panel discussion from the “Longevity Project” discussing the pandemic, how society has responded to the most vulnerable population during the pandemic, and perception of older Americans in civil society.

“Shen Wei, the slim body of his youth given way to the thicker forms of middle-age, legs and torso draped in sheer white jersey and feet encased in white socks, danced his 2014 Variations alone (At the 2014 American Dance Festival) on white marley to the gently solemn sounds of Arvo Part’s Variations for the Healing of Arinushka. He is no less graceful than the youth who so amazed us all as a young ADF student, but far more powerful now in his sinuous elegance that never fails to make me think of swifts and swallows soaring and swiveling through the sky. Shen Wei is such a man of the world that it feels extremely complimentary to have him consider Durham his summer home.”

Read the article [here](#)

AGELESS GRACE



OVERLOOKED AND UNDERESTIMATED: AGEISM IN YOUNG, MIDDLE-AGED, AND OLDER ADULTS

The Journals of Gerontology: Series B recently put out [a research article](#) addressing the ageism experience gaps that middle-aged and younger people face. It is well established that older adults face agist actions. However, less is talked about the encounters their younger counterparts face. The results of the research showed that "Young adults most commonly reported experiencing ageism in the workplace with coworkers as perpetrators. Middle-aged and older adults also reported ageism in the workplace; however, they also frequently reported experiencing ageism while seeking goods and services. Perpetrators of ageism varied more widely for middle-aged and older adults. Regardless of one's age, ageism was commonly experienced in the form of a lack of respect or incorrect assumptions."

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2020

August 12, 2020 was International Youth Day. This year the theme was "Youth Engagement for Global Action." With this theme, the United Nations (UN) seeks to highlight the ways in which the engagement of young people at the local, national, and global levels is enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes, as well as draw lessons on how their representation and engagement in formal institutional politics can be significantly enhanced. [Here is a link](#) to the "World Youth Report" created by the UN which addresses youth development issues around the world, especially ageism.



2020
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
FOR GLOBAL ACTION

New Stanford research shows that aging adults play critical roles in the lives of young people, especially the most vulnerable in society. “Contrary to widespread beliefs that older populations consume resources that would otherwise go to youth, there is growing reason to think that older people may be just the resource children need.” Volunteering is one way to bring older adults and young people together. The key is to change social norms to encourage relationship building between generations. Parents matter, of course, but the research shows that significant benefits exist for children who have an older adult mentor in addition to their parents. When older adults contribute to the well-being of youth, it cultivates a sense of purpose and extends benefits both ways. The authors call for a national movement that encourages “intergenerational engagement” between the young and old alike.



OLDER PEOPLE OFFER RESOURCES THAT CHILDREN NEED



COVID-19 AND LGBTQ+ OLDER ADULTS



August 21st is Senior Citizen Day. Research from the CDC indicates older people are at a greater risk for severe illness due to COVID-19. However, we cannot forget our older adults in the LGBTQ+ community. There are currently 3 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Americans 50 years of age and older, with over 1.1 million that are 65 years and older. Having undergone a lifetime of systemic discrimination and in turn poorer health outcomes, older LGBTQ+ people are especially vulnerable. **Here is a link** to a publication that provides resources, information, and explores these vulnerabilities.

Champions of Diversity:

AGING WITH POWER

Click each picture to learn more!

Fauja Singh: World's oldest marathon runner at 109, with a book!

Fauja Singh, a British Sikh centenarian who in 2011 became the oldest person believed to have run a marathon. A children's book was recently written about him and it's the first children's picture book by a major publisher to center on a Sikh story. The book chronicles the challenges Fauja Singh faced as a young child, from the birth defect that prevented him from walking until age 5 to how his disability hindered him from getting an education to his persistent efforts to build up his own strength. One of the key lessons that Singh wanted to instill in young readers was being able to see the humanity in others, even those who look different from themselves.



James Warren: Original Tuskegee Airman who is the oldest person to obtain their private pilot license at 87

James Warren's distinguished career started out with the strife of racial tensions within the armed forces. In 1945, he was one of 104 African American protestors arrested at Freeman Field, Indiana simply for having the wrong skin color. He served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. His 35 years of service culminated in more than 12,000 flying hours. "Tuskegee Airmen never quit," Warren said. To his death, Warren maintained this mantra. At the age of 87, he became certified for his private pilot's license. We thank him for his service and may he rest in peace.



Patricia Davies: WWII veteran who came out as transgender at 90

Patricia Davies of Leicestershire, England spent 87 years of her life known as "Peter" to the outside world. Although Davies knew she was really a woman, expressing it was not an option. The term "transgender" was unknown back then. She kept her true self a secret to friends, family, and the British Army, in which she served from April 1945 until April 1948. "I was 60 when it all came pouring out to my wife, she was very sympathetic and helped me all the way but we agreed to keep it quiet." Now she says life's too short to not be who she really is. "It feels like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders."



Whang Od Oggay: at 103, the last remaining Mambabatok - traditional Philippines hand-tap tattoo artist

To keep an ancient tradition alive in the Kalinga province of the Philippines, Whang Od is the country's oldest mambabatok, a traditional Kalinga tattooist. She inks multiple tattoos a day using a few tools—a thorn from a pomelo tree, a foot-long bamboo stick, coal, and water. The handmade ink is tapped deep into the skin using the thorn and bamboo to push it in. Although many come to see her, their journey is no small feat. Visitors make a 15-hour drive north of Manila to the mountain village of Buscalan, then hike!



LASTING IMPACTS

ANECDOTES ABOUT OLDER ADULTS WHO HAVE INSPIRED YOU

"My grandpa competes with me on my Apple Watch and bikes at least ten miles a day and he's in his mid 80s. If that isn't inspiring, I don't know what is!"

-ANONYMOUS

"While working as a water aerobics instructor, seeing geriatric individuals have consistent, competitive swim routines and workouts was inspiring to continue a healthy lifestyle regardless of age. Also, the determination of learning a new skill like swimming was great to see."

-TYLER RAY

"My grandma loves to be active and loves to encourage her friends to as well! Every time I see her she shows me her exercises that she learned from the YMCA and tells how she positively influences her friends. She is a positive influence to me as well!"

-ANONYMOUS

As a kid, I lived multiple states away from my grandparents, so I would only see them about once a year. I was, however, very fortunate to have a sweet older neighbor who lived a few doors down that became something of a surrogate grandmother for me. She was kind, patient, fully present in conversations, and always eager to be together. I have many fond memories of times spent with my neighbor Fran and they all remind me of what it looks like to love others well.

-BRIAN CARPER

Of all the older adults who stand out in my life, George Holroyd holds a special place in my memory. He was wise and respected and under no obligation to be a friend to a lonely 13-year-old who just moved there from California, but once a week for nearly 8 years he chose to talk to me. He told me about growing up in England, sledding during World War II, his garden, and good theology books, but most importantly, he told me life was worth living. Not everyone says that at the end of their life, but he was my friend, and I choose to believe him.

-ANONYMOUS