



North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement Presents:

## Paths To Creative Retirement

### “Paths” in the Rearview Mirror

We facilitators await each new Paths to Creative Retirement workshop group and ponder the list of concerns and critical questions that participants have sent in advance. During the sessions, we carefully watch for “ah-ha” moments or gut-wrenching insights. We search the participants’ Sunday morning presentations for evidence to personal values, a sense of a direction and next steps in a plan. In just a weekend, complete strangers have opened themselves to one another in sharing their fears and fantasies about the next chapters in their lives. But then, they’re off, leaving us wondering how each person’s best plans will turn out. We often hear from people months or years later. We love hearing from you at any time, but this time we did something different.

One week after their departure, we emailed the members of the April 2008 Paths workshop and asked, “What have you done in the last week as a result of the plan you set out on Sunday morning?” The results are astounding; lives are changing; new chapters have begun—here’s what some of them said:

- “I’m arranging a forum at my house in June where recent retirees from my group will meet and answer questions from a number of us who are close to retirement.”
- “I confirmed with the proper person in the benefits office exactly how my pension is calculated.”
- “I resolved to push ahead on my lifelong dream and not let another’s action deter me-- to find a piece of property with that ‘perfect’ view of the mountains and build my own home.”
- “Tonight, I have a meeting with my financial adviser.”
- “I visited a local community college, spoke to a career counselor, was enrolled in a pre-req course for the pastry chef program, and attended the course Thursday and Friday.”
- “I spoke with my husband about a possible relocation plan. Although neither of us knows what we want to do when we retire, we are discussing selling the house and moving into some city setting.”
- “I realized that I had not been proactive in making connections with our community; I went to church this past Sunday to meet new people.”
- “I talked with my sons about my hopes for the near future and have refined what I want and need in a community.”

We were impressed at how many people immediately went into action. We wondered if they had a greater sense of direction or was it disorienting to learn from fellow participants how many different ways there are to approach retirement-related decisions. Here's what they said:

- “The workshop raised my consciousness level about the organization needed, all of the elements to consider and the energy needed to make changes!”
- “I came away with confidence.”
- “I came away realizing that retirement is simply a new job, a new work location, a new vocation, a new experience.”
- “It made me aware that I need to make time for fun, new things.”
- “The seminar gave me greater insight into how I need to balance my time. The Mansions of the Soul exercise was a concrete tool that shed a harsh light on the realities of how my day is actually spent.”
- “Sharing our ‘war stories’ helped me realize I wasn't alone or becoming ‘crazy’ while helping my parents.”
- “The workshop made me realize I am very disoriented and there is nothing wrong with that; now I need to go on with my life and get through this disorientation and, hopefully, figure it out.”
- “The workshop gave me a greater sense of direction in the sense that I realized I didn't have to have an absolute direction.”
- “When I first read about this seminar, I was excited that it would finally solve my retirement dilemma. It did not solve my retirement dilemma, but it was totally worthwhile.”
- “I learned that it takes thought and considerable time to shift my priorities. The seminar helped this process.”

Their comments and insights are better preparing us for the next group of strangers who will become our friends during the Paths to Creative Retirement on August 29-31. Send your friends and colleagues, or have them email me at [snodgrass@unca.edu](mailto:snodgrass@unca.edu) if they would like more information.

Cordially,  
Denise Snodgrass



On Sunday morning of the April workshop, one participant shared a collage of songs, images, metaphors, goals and dreams that will guide her next steps. Here's a piece of her presentation.