



North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement Presents:

Paths To Creative Retirement

Newsletter – October 2008

Accomplishments and Insights After the Workshop

Over Labor Day weekend, **a collection of 30 strangers** gathered at the Reuter Center at the University of North Carolina at Asheville for the Paths to Creative Retirement Workshop. Three days later they **left as friends and colleagues who had the shared experience of sorting through choices, concerns, and possibilities to consider** as they moved into their next phase of life – however they defined it.

**Paths Workshop
August 29-31, 2008**

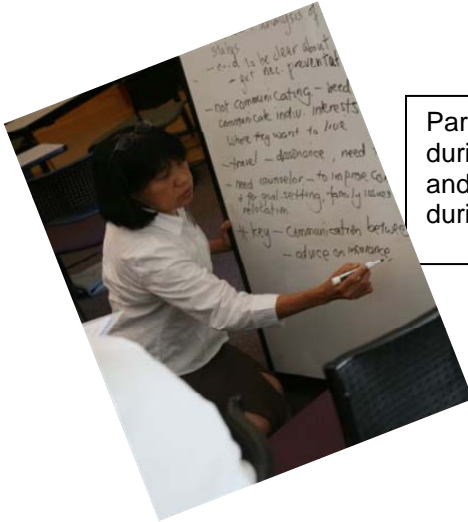
**30 participants
From 14 states
From as far away
as Vancouver, WA**

Whether they came from Washington or New Jersey, Texas or Michigan, or somewhere in between, before they even arrived, in response to our pre-Workshop survey, they listed concerns such as health, finances, relationships, productivity, relocation, identity – and a number of others.

During Workshop discussions, participants sought help and information on a wide variety of next-phase-of-our-lives issues. For example, they wanted to know how to structure a retirement plan or how to evaluate a potential new community as a place to relocate to. They were concerned about the demands of aging parents as well as college-aged children. They wanted to know how to be part of the lives of their at-a-distance grandchildren. They wanted to know what exactly was a healthy lifestyle and how could they make changes in that direction. And how should they synchronize with their partners and satisfy their own desires for affirmation and achievement in the workplace.

Workshop activities included urging the participants to begin embarking after the Workshop on specific steps to move closer to their goals. We routinely follow-up with recent Workshop participants by inviting them to share their experiences and accomplishments. So what happened once they left Asheville? Did the “mountaintop” experience extend beyond the airport lines or the interstate drive home? Here are **a few specific post workshop accomplishments** that participants have shared with us:

- “I booked my trip to South America where I’ll work on becoming fluent in Spanish.”
- “I’ve taken some vacation time to model mini-retirement.”
- “I’ve begun meeting with my financial advisor – a task I had been postponing for some time.”
- “I’ve started keeping a list of potential pursuits, things that catch my attention, that I had never taken time to record before.”
- “We’ve planned an overdue trip to visit relatives.”
- “I attended a retirement seminar to begin exploring when I’ll be eligible to retire.”
- “I’ve delayed my retirement because I realized that I was going to retire because of my age not because I wanted to retire,”



Participants work hard during interactive sessions and relax into conversation during breaks.



Some people found the Paths to Creative Retirement Workshop helped to clarify direction and purpose for life. For others, the Workshop was **an experience in enlightenment and sudden insight**. Here are a few reactions that were shared with us:

- “I feel like a fish that’s been let free from the hook.”
- “I feel reassured that I’m doing all the right steps.”
- “I’m working on my very own definition of retirement.”
- “I’m like a kid in a candy store—I didn’t know that I really had so many options.”
- “I had a ‘Forrest Gump’ moment during one of the sessions: Retirement is like a stereo equalizer—it is all about adjusting the equalizer of skills and interests to create a new mix rather than scrapping the other chapters and identities of your life.
- “We realized that we have a lot more choices than we thought we had.”
- “The best thing for me was realizing that my concerns are pretty normal.”

“I came out with a lot more questions than I had at the beginning—but having questions is not a bad thing—now I have to start pursuing some answers.”

We thank recent participants for sharing with us their experiences, accomplishments, and insights. Their comments and feedback are being used to better prepare us for the next group of strangers who will become our friends during the Paths to Creative Retirement Workshop planned for April 17-19, 2009. We hope that you, as Paths “alumni,” will send your friends and colleagues. Please share this Newsletter with them – and have them visit our Paths web site. They are also welcome to email me at snodgrass@unca.edu if they have questions or would like more information.

Cordially,
Denise Snodgrass
Assistant Director
NC Center for Creative Retirement