

AGE MARCH SF HERALDS NEW VISION OF GROWING OLDER

March Celebrates Age Pride and Prepares San Francisco for Innovative Conference on Aging

(PoeticsofAging.org, September 14, 2011) San Francisco, CA – With the landmark Golden Gate Bridge symbolically spanning the background, people of all ages and abilities will join together in solidarity on October 1st at Chrissy Field to celebrate a new vision of growing older at the second annual AGE MARCH SF.

Festivities kick off at 10:00 a.m., starting with registration and warm up activities. AGE MARCH SF will begin promptly at 11 a.m. with elders leading the one-mile march around Chrissy Field.

As the marches of the Civil Rights, Women's Rights, and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Rights movements sought to challenge society's prejudices and discriminatory practices, AGE MARCH SF seeks to challenge ageism today and to promote a new understanding and pride in growing old.

William H. Thomas, MD, an aging activist and founder of the Eden Alternative and Green House Project, two holistic alternative approaches to institutional long term care, defines old age as elderhood, distinct from adulthood, just as childhood is distinct from adulthood. Just as adolescence bridges childhood to adulthood, senescence bridges adulthood to elderhood, and the date of arrival differs for each individual. Despite the high pressure from Madison Avenue and popular culture to be "forever young", we can not be, nor should we want to be, adults forever. If we live long enough, we should strive to become an elder - an honorable and valuable member of the human tribe. While acknowledging the inherent challenges of growing older, Thomas, like a growing number of his colleagues, argue that elderhood bears its own gifts and abilities, not in spite of living longer, but because of it.

As 78 million baby boomers begin entering their mid-sixties, a growing number are finding themselves facing the oppression of being negatively stereotyped and discriminated against because of their age. In their sixties, will their spirit of the sixties rise up again?

On the cutting-edge for decades of social change movements, San Francisco is once again in the vanguard of challenging the dominant paradigm by hosting the Poetics of Aging Conference, November 16 - 19, 2011. This inaugural conference is designed to bring together, in an interactive learning environment, elders, artists, professionals, academics and students interested in reinvisioning what it means to grow old.

Each day of the four-day conference features a different theme:

- November 16: Poetics of Aging Politics will ask “How can we redefine the debate [on aging] and what can we learn by listening to other points of view?”
- November 17: Poetics of Evolving Abilities will examine a kaleidoscope of possibilities, despite the challenges we may face in growing elder physically, mentally, or emotionally. Organizers offer: “Our eyesight might be less sharp, but we’ve improved our vision of the world.”
- November 18: Poetics of Caring will demonstrate how care partnering (a philosophy that embraces “I depend on you as much as you depend on me”) can change the way we care for our elders and for ourselves.
- November 19: Poetics of Life/Work will explore how metaphors can be used as conceptual containers for both understanding and enhancing experience. This day also offers attendees ways to apply, to their own lives, the ideas offered over the four day event.

Registration now for AGE MARCH SF, www.agemarchsf.org . Registration for the Poetics of Aging Conference at Early Bird rates until September 30, www.poeticsofaging.org. Free admission for those over 80 and under 20. Come join people of all ages and abilities march forward to celebrate a generation of Age Pride!

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