

Family forum

Minnesota
Council on
Family
Relations

State Affiliate
of the
National Council on
Family Relations

Spring Conference Spans the Lifespan

Reserve Thursday, April 22!

The MCFR Spring Conference, *Family connections Across the Lifespan: Intergenerational Aging*, offers something for everyone.

This is an opportunity for professionals from the family field and gerontology to learn together and share perspectives that can benefit interaction between the generations. Often, content has focused on a single time span — young children, adolescents or older adults.

Family Connections Across the Lifespan:

Intergeneration Aging Conference is relevant to families and professionals who relate to the different generations. Noted and honored researcher, Vern Bengtson, will share his groundbreaking longitudinal intergenerational research findings following the sample over 30 years. Workshops will share strategies to enhance the communication between generations. Round table presentations, poster presentations and small discussion groups allow the opportunity for more intimate learning. This conference

shares the richness from cross-generational and cross disciplinary work to guide programming that works for the generations. Space is limited, please register early!

The goal of the conference is to integrate research from the family field and gerontology, shedding light on applications usable in a variety of situations.

The conference objectives are:

1) Become aware of the 3, 4 and 5 generations in



a family and how actions in one affect the others.

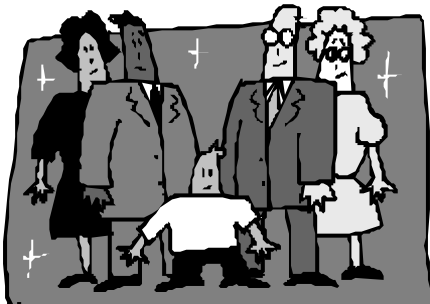
- 2) Broaden the scope of both the content and process of issues and programs that apply to professional and personal applications.
- 3) Sample creative strategies used successfully by others.

The planning committee is once again holding the conference at the North Como Presbyterian Church in Roseville. In an effort to be more inclusive and considerate of religious practices, the conference will be held on a Thursday instead of a Friday. Join us!

The workshop Sessions also offer something for every family professional. The offerings include:

- 1) *Family Connections in Kinship Care: Findings From Four Studies*
- 2) *Change...A Musical About Growing and Healing Relationships*
- 3) *Grief Throughout the Life Span*
- 4) *Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?*
- 5) *The Kinship Safety Net: When Parents Can't Parent*
- 6) *Intergenerational Impact of Loss in the Lives of Southeast Asian Elders in Minnesota*

Continued on page 3



Winter 2004

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inside

Spring Conference	1
President's Letter	2
Fall Conference Review	3
Why Belong?	4

A Note from the MCFR President

Linda Rodgers
MCFR 2003 President



Linda Rodgers

*The work you do
makes the world a better place.*

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Confession: Four years ago, I did not know what MCFR was. I was not a member and had never heard of the organization.

Invitation: A friend who was a member of MCFR talked about the organization and encouraged me to join.

Initiation: Through the next four years, I became active in MCFR by joining, working on conferences and serving on the Board of Directors. I met professionals from many different disciplines, from many different preparatory paths, who work with families in a variety of ways and implement many different strategies from different organizations. But their depth of knowledge, wealth of experience, unswerving dedication and sustained enthusiasm regarding families were absolutely consistent.

Revelation: There was a place for me alongside these amazing people! Working with them, learning with them, and creating with them made a significant difference in my work and life. They have stretched my skills, grounded my work in research, inspired me to take risks and supported me when I needed help. MCFR is a professional network with a family feel. Its conferences share current family research and practice around emerging issues and are an incredible professional resource.

This year's board of directors is buzzing with energy, working on upcoming spring and fall conferences. (Isn't the intergenerational theme for the April 22nd conference just dynamite?) We're also creating a policy group, keeping in touch with newly formed Minnesota Student Council, and maintaining ties with the National Council on Family Relations. Our own Marcie Brooke is running for national office. And we continue efforts to build our membership, which leads me to . . .

Transformation: Now I'm the person talking to family professionals, encouraging them to join MCFR! Won't you do the same? In these tough times, we need each other's professional support more than ever. Please invite colleagues to check out our website at www.mcfr.net. Conference information is available on the site as well as basic information about MCFR. If you have questions or suggestions regarding MCFR please feel free to give me a call or drop me an email.

And in closing . . . for you, fellow family professionals, an affirmation: The work you do makes the world a better place. Thank you.

Linda Rodgers

www.mcfr.net

Fall Conference Well Received

Participants gave high marks to *Given the State of Affairs . . . What are the Possibilities?*, MCFR's fall conference. "Great information! Empowering presentation!" "Thank you for once again speaking to the issues at hand."



Vicki Thrasher-Cronin, MCFR president for 2003 started the day by convening the annual meeting, sharing the organization's annual report, and handing over the gavel to Linda Rodgers, president for 2004. Annual awards were the next item of business. For its innovative business partnership in delivering family education The Working Families Resource Center was honored with the Friend of the

Family Award. Elaine McCormick Wray and Marcie Brooke accepted. For her longstanding record of pioneering work in organizing on behalf of families, Vicki Thrasher-Cronin was honored with the Ruth Hathaway Jewson award.

Minh Ta and Diane Benjamin from the Children's Defense Fund began the conference on a strong note with their latest statistics regarding the well-being of Minnesota families, and with insights about the political



process that impacts them. Ted Bowman explained losses that family practitioners, families, and family-serving organizations have experienced, how to acknowledge them, and how to move through grief. Bill Doherty challenged the audience to create change through political process and to understand others' point of view.

Participants rounded out the day in a series of followup breakout sessions that expanded or added to the morning's themes.

Thanks to the conference committee who continued MCFR's tradition of conferences that meet current issues head-on. The conference committee included Betty Cooke, Karen Dahl, Colleen Gengler, Ray Kilgore, Diane Overgard, Mike Walcheski, Addie Wilson, and co-chairs Vicki Thrasher Cronin and Linda Rodgers.



Join us at the MCFR Spring Conference on Thursday, April 22nd!

Spring Conference

Continued from page 1

7) *Adult Children and Aging Parents; Connections Between Generations*

8) *What's Family About – Support in Rural Families*

In addition, Round Table Discussions will include the following topics:

- *Spirituality In the Face of Dementing Illness*
- *Intergenerational Encounters - Young people learning from interviews with older adults.*
- *Generations in the Household: What's Up with All of Them?*

- *At Home Care Services*

Poster Sessions are also planned, including *Culturally Responsive Healthcare for Diverse Populations in the United States: The Example of the Hmong Has Much to Teach Us.*

Plan to attend. You'll be glad you did. Registration forms are in the mail or go online to www.ncfr.net. Register by April 15 and save!

Why In the World Should You Belong to MCFR?

- It affords you rich networking and connections with other professionals.
- It offers excellent research based conferences in December and April yearly.
- Because you believe in professional citizenship.
- The helpful articles in *The Family Forum* newsletter.
- It provides you the opportunity to unite with other professionals on special pressing issues through the listserve.
- It focuses on professional development (e.g. Ethics of Practice).
- It gives a potential voice to family education – over the lifespan.
- It provides a collective voice for policy and decision-making.
- It integrates research with everyday practice.
- It's the only organization where families are the focus across the lifespan.
- It's an organization that speaks about family from a solid research base as opposed to an "ideology".
- It has an active website: www.mcfr.net
- Its members have a wealth of expertise to share with each other including new members.
- For a professional organization, the dues are an excellent value.
- It provides an opportunity for you to contribute to the family field through your membership & participation.

See for yourself ...

www.mcfr.net

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