

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR CREATIVE AGING PRESENTS CREATIVITY
MATTERS! CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & GARDEN SYMPOSIUM
EVENT PROVIDES TRAINING TO COMMUNITIES LOOKING TO DEVELOP GARDEN
PROGRAMS THAT BRING GENERATIONS TOGETHER**

Washington, DC – February 19, 2010 – The National Center for Creative Aging announces that it will be holding the **NCCA-MetLife Foundation Creativity Matters! Symposium with Focus on Civic Engagement Building Communities Through Intergenerational Gardening** in Washington, DC on April 12, 13 and 14. With major funding provided by MetLife Foundation, this innovative symposium will teach social services, horticulture, arts and healthcare professionals how to creatively engage older adults and younger generations through gardening in a variety of healthcare and community settings.

“This symposium will feature workshops and best-practice programs designed to bring together older and younger people through gardening,” said Susan Perlstein, M.S.W., the Founder of NCCA and also Director of Special Projects. “Intergenerational programs bring older and younger people together to learn, create and promote awareness, acceptance and understanding. Creative programs such as gardening give seniors the chance to pass on the wisdom and skills gained from a lifetime of experiences while remaining productive and engaged members of society.”

The Monday, April 12 workshop will be led by Perlstein, who is also the Founder of Elders Share the Arts and a Presidential award-winner for Intergenerational Programming. This primer event will be held at IONA Senior Services, recently named a “Center for Excellence in Dementia Care” by the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, the only day center on the east coast to receive this distinction. The training will focus on how to create, develop, sustain and evaluate intergenerational programs in schools, healthcare and community settings.

Tuesday, April 13 will feature a full-day workshop at the renowned United States Botanic Gardens, the oldest botanic garden in North America located at the foot of the U.S. Capitol. The first half of the day will highlight five groundbreaking best-practice programs from across the country that teach younger and older people how to create beautiful communities together plus the benefits of health through a lifetime of exercise and good nutrition. The second half of the day will feature breakout sessions led by garden experts on how to unite generations through accessible gardening techniques, including container gardens and garden beds, which can be replicated in various settings.

Wednesday, April 14 will focus on civic engagement and community involvement as symposium participants, volunteers and community members put the knowledge they gained into action by visiting and working in several gardens during the height of Washington, DC’s spring season. The gardening sessions will take place at the Common Good City Farm, Washington Parks & People and the US Arboretum’s Washington Youth Garden.

“MetLife Foundation is pleased to support this initiative, which will help build strong communities through creative activities designed to bridge the gap between generations,” said Dennis White, president and CEO, MetLife Foundation.

To register visit www.creativeaging.org or call (202) 895-9456.

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The National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) was founded in 2001 and is dedicated to fostering an understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and healthy aging and to developing programs that build on this understanding. Based in Washington, DC, NCCA is a nonprofit with 2,500 members and is affiliated with The George Washington University. www.creativeaging.org

[MetLife Foundation](http://www.metlife.org), established in 1976 by MetLife, has been involved in a variety of healthy aging initiatives addressing issues of caregiving, intergenerational activities, mental fitness, health and wellness programs, aging in place initiatives, and civic engagement opportunities. For more than 20 years, the Foundation has supported research on Alzheimer's disease and provided support for a number of caregiver initiatives, including education and outreach activities, caregiver videos, Alzheimer's education and awareness resources, and resources for the Hispanic community For more information, visit www.metlife.org.