

MetLife Foundation

Issues in Aging

The first Baby Boomers will turn 65 in 2011, and by the year 2020, the over-65 population is expected to double. The graying of America presents significant social and economic challenges, including questions of financial security, access to elder care, the ability to remain independent and vital in later life, and caregiver stress. MetLife, with its long history of leadership in responding to health issues and providing information to help individuals of every age lead healthier lives, and MetLife Foundation have created a program that stresses the issues that face older adults.

MetLife Foundation focuses on Alzheimer's disease, mental fitness, civic involvement and public awareness of age-related issues today. Following are highlights of selected activities:

Understanding Alzheimer's disease

Approximately 4.5 million people today are living with Alzheimer's disease and that number is expected to increase dramatically in the coming years. MetLife Foundation provides support for Alzheimer's disease research and education, including such programs as:

- ❑ **Awards for Medical Research** — Since 1986, MetLife Foundation has awarded \$10 million in grants to 55 scientists through the Awards for Medical Research program. The Awards support scientists who have made contributions to the understanding of Alzheimer's disease and provide them with funds to pursue their research. Two of the awardees have gone on to win Nobel Prizes. The 2005 winner is Karen Hsiao Ashe, MD, PhD, University of Minnesota Medical School and Minneapolis VA Center. In addition, Frank LaFerla, PhD, University of California, Irvine, and Christian Haass, PhD, Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich, Germany, were recognized as "Promising Work" winners.
- ❑ **Alzheimer's Association** — MetLife Foundation has provided support to the national Alzheimer's Association for a variety of activities that advance research, enhance care and support, promote public awareness and expand diversity outreach. Grants have supported a public education video for use by caregivers and families of persons with Alzheimer's disease; development of Spanish-language materials and outreach in collaboration with the National Council of La Raza; and an outreach and awareness initiative through local chapters to develop innovative programs to use the PBS documentary, *The Forgetting*, in the community and build greater awareness of the disease. In addition, the Foundation made a major grant to promote *Safe Return*, which provides assistance for people with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia who wander away from home.
- ❑ **Alzheimer's Disease National Education Initiative** — The Foundation is supporting the development of a public education campaign on Alzheimer's research and healthy brain aging at several of the National Institute on Aging's Alzheimer's Disease Centers. A comprehensive education initiative, including videos, toolkit and public forums, will be developed jointly by experts from the ADC sites at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, University of California, San Francisco, Washington University, St. Louis, and the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN.

- ❑ ***PBS Special & Outreach Initiative*** — MetLife Foundation is the sole sponsor of *The Forgetting*, a groundbreaking primetime PBS documentary and educational outreach program created by Twin Cities Public Television. *The Forgetting* —which originally aired on PBS stations in 2004—is aimed at helping people better understand and cope with the disease and providing practical resources and increased access to services. The documentary, which has a Spanish track, was the centerpiece of a comprehensive \$2.2 million project. An interactive Web site (www.pbs.org/theforgetting) provides continuing information on Alzheimer's.

Encouraging civic involvement

The Foundation provides support to organizations working to make longevity synonymous with good health, vitality and community service.

- ❑ ***Harvard-MetLife Foundation Initiative*** — The Harvard School of Public Health's Center for Health Communication has launched the Harvard-MetLife Foundation Initiative on Retirement and Civic Engagement to identify and promote strategies to expand the contributions of older people to civic life. The Initiative released a national report, *Reinventing Aging: Baby Boomers and Civic Engagement*, which distills insights of key thinkers on the implication of aging boomers on society and ways to channel their skills and interest to strengthen local communities. The Initiative is following up on the report by launching a media campaign to promote healthy aging, reshape attitudes about aging and encourage boomers to share what they know with young people and communities.
- ❑ ***National Council on Aging Wisdom Works Initiative*** — This initiative is designed to increase civic engagement by older people working in volunteer teams to address critical community needs. Included in the initiative are: focus groups to determine what worries older adults and the kind of volunteer projects they prefer; a competitive program of grants to organizations which utilize older adults; and a forum of key experts to recommend strategies for national replication.
- ❑ ***Civic Ventures*** —Dedicated to expanding the contributions of older Americans to society, this nonprofit conducted the *MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures New Face of Work* Survey, which identifies opportunities for combining employment with community service among older adults. The national survey shows that 58 percent of adults in their 50s are interested in working in retirement to help improve the quality of life in their communities. The survey was released with *The Boomers' Guide to Good Work*, a publication designed to help boomers find public service jobs. In early 2007, Civic Ventures will launch the *MetLife Foundation Breakthrough Awards* to recognize and encourage organizations making use of older adults in new work roles that take advantage of their experience, skills and desire to contribute to the social good.
- ❑ ***MetLife Foundation Older Adults Enrich Community Awards*** — The awards program celebrates the accomplishments of older adults who already volunteer and make significant contributions to their communities. The award winners span 55 to 90 years of age.
- ❑ ***Washington University George Warren Brown School of Social Work*** – To promote volunteering among older adults age 65+, Washington University is conducting research on the incentives and barriers to volunteering among this population. They will also examine the benefits of volunteering to older adults and the people they serve.

- ❑ **National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)** – In partnership with the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties and the City/County Management Association, n4a is conducting a national survey to assess the readiness of cities to meet the needs of an aging population. The survey, *The Maturing of America – Getting Communities on Track for the Aging of the Baby Boomers*, will seek to identify communities that are not only good places to grow up but also good places to grow old.
- ❑ **International Longevity Center-USA** completed a study on intergenerational programming and volunteering by older adults in the arts and humanities. The study breaks new ground by examining volunteerism in the arts and the humanities. It takes a close look at selected programs that engage older adults and connect them with young people.

Tips for healthy lifestyles

MetLife's *Healthy Aging* booklet addresses the daily choices that can influence health at all stages of life. It provides practical information on healthy lifestyles for seniors, including nutrition, mental fitness, exercise, preventive medicine, and social activity and planning for the future.

Promoting mental fitness

Mental stimulation and lifelong learning can help or delay the onset of memory loss, dementia and other mental and cognitive declines in later life.

- ❑ **AARP Foundation/Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives** – This initiative is designed to provide consumer information on the importance of maintaining good brain health and mental fitness. Though a series of *Staying Sharp* public forums in major cities across the country, panel discussions with leading neuroscientists will provide the lay public with clear and accurate information about how to preserve memory and other mental abilities during the aging process.
- ❑ **MetLife Foundation MindAlert Program** – To focus on the importance of mental fitness, MetLife Foundation and the American Society on Aging (ASA) developed the *MindAlert Program*—based on the concept that the brain, like the rest of the body, can benefit from exercise and a healthy lifestyle. The *MindAlert Awards* recognize community-based programs that enhance the mental vitality of older adults. The program also includes a lecture series and monograph that disseminates the latest research findings on maintaining and enhancing cognitive fitness in later life.
- ❑ **ASA MetLife Foundation Brain Health Awareness Study** – With support from MetLife Foundation, ASA conducted a 2006 *Attitudes and Awareness of Brain Health* survey. The new survey takes the pulse of the American public regarding mental fitness and brain health.

Care Issues

MetLife Foundation also provides support for several programs dealing with caregiving issues.

- ❑ **National Caregiver Survey of Older Adults** — With support from MetLife Foundation, the National Alliance for Caregiving conducted the *2003 National Caregiver Survey of Older Adults*, an update of the benchmark 1996 survey. The new survey, distributed nationally, touches on all aspects of caregiving, including the demographics of the caregiver and the

care recipient, a national profile of the typical caregiver, problems of long-distance caregivers and impact of chronic illness on caregivers.

- ❑ **National Family Caregiver Awards** - With support from MetLife Foundation, the National Alliance for Caregiving in collaboration with the American Society on Aging is developing a new awards program for community-based organizations doing exemplary work to support family caregivers.

Exhibits

Museums are important education resources for schools and communities. MetLife Foundation is supporting several permanent and traveling exhibitions that help people understand aging and how to maintain good habits for healthy aging.

- ❑ **The Amazing Feats of Aging** – Organized by the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and co-sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, this traveling exhibit looks at various aspects of aging. It will travel to 12 cities in four years.
- ❑ **The Museum of Science and Industry, Tampa** – The Museum is developing a permanent exhibition that will explore the complex human body, including the aging process and Alzheimer’s disease.
- ❑ **The Museum of Science, Boston** – A new exhibit is being developed that will explore the psychology of learning throughout the life span and examine how older adults adapt to new technology to communicate.
- ❑ **Intergenerational Photography Contest** – To celebrate intergenerational relationships, the Foundation supports Generations United’s Intergenerational Photography Contest, which honors pictures taken by younger or older amateur photographers of younger and older people together. The pictures convey the important roles that younger and older people play in each other’s lives.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Grants support health, education and civic and cultural programs throughout the United States. MetLife and MetLife Foundation have invested more than \$15 million for Alzheimer’s research and public information programs, including \$10 million through the Awards for Medical Research program. The Foundation has also expanded its focus on aging issues. For more information about MetLife Foundation, visit the Foundation’s Web site at www.metlife.org or contact MetLife Corporate Contributions at 212-578-6026.

9/06