The Third Annual Plus 50 Initiative Conference Is Just Around the Corner: Are You Ready?
Get ready for the heat. Washington, DC, will be hot in July, and we’ll be steaming up the training center at One Dupont Circle with hot ideas and inspiration galore. Get ready to hear all about new plus 50 resources like JumpStart Plus 50 and the fundraising template. Be prepared to share innovations and bring samples. The conference will be held July 8–9. All grantee colleges attending should have their travel and hotel arrangements in place. If you have any questions, call Mary Sue Vickers at 202-728-0200, ext. 248.

Senior Corps Handbooks Lists Plus 50 Initiative
AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative is listed in the Senior Corps Operations Handbooks FY 2010 annual supplement issued in October 2009. Published by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the supplement offers guidance to program managers operating Senior Corps programs throughout the country. These programs encourage older adults to volunteer and become more engaged in giving back to their communities. See page 14 for information about AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative, and then turn to appendix pages 24–26 for an extensive list of Senior Corps programs that are located near the original grantee community colleges. The list offers contact information to help program managers reach out to Senior Corps programs for partnerships.

Plus 50 Initiative in the News
• “Parkland Joins Nat’l Program to Help Boomers,” Parkland College, June 3, 2010

• “Rich Joins Southwestern,” The Mounainteer, June 4, 2010


• “STLCC Selected to Help Expand AACC Plus 50 Initiative,” Missouri Community College Association, June 2010.
What's New

Transforming Life After 50: A Resource For Libraries and You
An initiative of the California State Library Association, the Transforming Life After 50 initiative aims to inspire library innovation that is responsive to the changing nature of adult aging. As part of the initiative, the libraries created a social network on Ning to share innovations and ideas. They recently announced the selection of 93 fellows in 11 states who will participate in a year-long fellowship program. The fellows will be introduced to a new framework for serving and engaging plus 50 adults. They will participate in an introductory webinar, an in-person training institute in Oregon, and a six-month online learning community in building skills and applying lessons learned. Many of the fellows have started posting their goals to engage plus 50 adults on the Ning site.

Metropolitan Community College’s BoomerBlast Featured on YouTube
Nearly 500 people attended BoomerBlast at Metropolitan Community College. Hear staff discuss their programs for baby boomers and meet presenters through the interactivity of a beautifully done video with cool graphics and an upbeat tempo. Hear student Elaine Neis discuss being trapped in dead-end jobs and why she chose to go back to school at age 52. At 3 minutes and 45 seconds, this YouTube video is both quick and inspiring. This is a great example of a community college using video to maximize a one-day event to create an additional promotional tool and resource. Click here to watch the video.

Student Story: Suzan Mitchell, Joliet Junior College
After dropping out of her suburban Chicago high school in the early 1970s, Suzan Mitchell made a promise to her mother that she would eventually return and get her diploma. Thirty-five years later, she did. “I made a promise and I wanted to keep it,” Mitchell said, matter-of-factly.

The decision to leave high school had led Mitchell to full-time health-care work. For three decades, she worked in nursing homes and hospitals as a nursing aide. “I like helping people,” Mitchell, now 54, said. “I think it’s the way I was brought up. I don’t want to let them down.”

But in 2008, life came to a halt. She lost the job she’d held for 18 years, which led to losing her house. Her mother passed away. Because she did not have her high school diploma, job opportunities were less than scarce. “I was
never one to ask for help,” she added. “I didn’t know what to
do. The only thing I did know was that I’m too strong-willed
to give up.” That willpower, coupled with the promise she
had made to her mother decades earlier, prompted Mitchell
to reach out to Joliet Junior College (JJC) after seeing an
advertisement in the college’s course catalog describing its
Plus 50 program. Part of a nationwide initiative, the Plus 50
program helps workers 50 and over train for new jobs and
sharpen their computer literacy and job search skills. The
three-year project is sponsored by the American Association
of Community Colleges with a $3.2 million dollar grant from
The Atlantic Philanthropies.

“We first met Sue in our resource room,” said Kelly
Lapetino, JJC workforce skills manager and Plus 50
program coordinator. “We noticed how timid and nervous
she was—she was literally shaking the day she walked
in.”Sue Errek, JJC workforce development coordinator,
worked with Mitchell extensively that first day in the fall of
2008. “Knowing her highly skittish nature, I knew I would
lose her if I let her leave the resource room that day,” Errek
said. Lapetino and Errek's observations weren't far off. With
no computer skills, no high school diploma, and no job,
Mitchell felt far from secure.“I was freaked out,” Mitchell
admitted. “I was afraid I wouldn’t be able to keep up.”

With support from Errek and Keri Peter, the college’s
education and engagement specialist, Mitchell eventually
developed a resume and learned how to apply for jobs
online. She enrolled in a Plus 50 computer class and
received resume and career advice, job search assistance,
and GED instructional support. Errek said that when Mitchell
took the GED for the first time, she failed two of the five
sections. “At that point, I thought we would lose her for sure.
But since we had developed such a positive rapport, we
maintained contact with her throughout these months
couraging her to complete. We would not let her rest,” she
said.

Then, things began to come together. In March 2009,
Mitchell landed a job as a patient care technician at a local
hospital. This May, she donned a purple cap and gown to
receive her diploma. “It took a village but she stuck with us
and did what needed to be done,” Errek said. “It was a long
process and I couldn’t be prouder of her. It also validates
each and every one of us in what we do in our jobs and as
caring individuals. However, Sue made it easy!” Days before
her graduation, Mitchell said she believes there’s a reason
for everything. “It makes me feel good that JJC took the time
to help me,” she said. “Now, I can turn around and help
other people.”

**Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program**

**LEARNING**

The Breaking Through Practice Guide

Created by Jobs for the Future (JFF), *The Breaking Through Practice Guide* offers to help community colleges serve adults with low literacy and math levels. The guide highlights innovations from community colleges that participated in the Breaking Through initiative between 2005 and 2009. Since then, the colleges have continued to collaborate, explore, refine, and implement these innovations. The guide has four components, each devoted to a “high-leverage strategy” that community colleges can adopt to increase their success with low-skilled younger and older adults. These components are accelerated learning, comprehensive support services, labor market payoffs, and aligning programs for low-skilled adults. They can be used individually or as a set to put low-skilled adults on the path to family-sustaining incomes. The Practice Guide also includes the Contextualization Toolkit and supplementary materials, including information about JFF’s Advisor Training Toolkit.

**TRAINING & RE-TRAINING**

*Job Tips for 50+ Workers*

When you’re trying to find a new job, you need all the help and advice you can get. This helpful AARP Web site is loaded with advice for plus 50 job seekers. It offers resume-writing advice, including how to escape the “over-qualified” label, how to get noticed with your cover letter, and how to write a resume that stands out. Job search strategies and career planning tips are also offered. AARP also offers online groups to support job seekers.

**VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE**

*Generations Serving Generations: Illinois Declares Year of the Engaged Older Adult*

The state of Illinois has declared 2010 the “*Year of the Engaged Older Adult*.” The First Summit on Aging and Education will be held September 20, 2010, by the Illinois Department on Aging and the Illinois State Board of Education at the Illinois State University Alumni Center. Four generations will be able to discuss key economic issues such as increasing graduation rates, fostering healthy lifestyles for all ages, and strengthening the workforce. Illinois Department on Aging Director Charles D. Johnson is leading the statewide initiative with the support of an advisory team. The team is planning activities in each of Illinois’ 102 counties starting in January 2010. Your Plus 50
program may want to look for similar opportunities to collaborate with government and community partners.

The American Association of Community Colleges is a national association representing close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges nationwide. Community colleges are the largest and fastest-growing sector of higher education, serving close to 12 million students each year. AACC is headquartered in Washington, D.C. See www.aacc.nche.edu.

The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic focuses on four critical social problems: aging, disadvantaged children and youth, population health, and reconciliation and human rights. Programs funded by Atlantic operate in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States and Viet Nam. To learn more, please visit www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.

Forward to a Friend